

ISOPANISHAD SAMPLE QUESTION BANK

INTRODUCTION:

Q.1. What is Veda? Why one should accept it?

Ans. Veda means knowledge. Any knowledge, one accept, is Veda. Vedas are not compilation of human knowledge; it descends from the spiritual world from Lord Krishna. One should accept Vedas because the teachings of the Vedas are the original knowledge. For knowing anything that is beyond sense perception, beyond experimental knowledge and beyond the activities of the senses one should accept Vedas.

Q.2. What are the Vedas? Why one should refer to Vedas?

Ans. Bhavisya Purana says: "The Rig Veda, Yajur Veda, Sama Veda, Atharva Veda, Mahābharata [which includes Bhagavad Gītā], Pancaratra, the original Rāmāyaṇa and the Puranas are considered as Vedas".

The Chandogya Upaniṣad (7.1.4) mentions the Puranas and Itihasas (which are generally known as histories), as the fifth Veda.

There are eighteen major Puranas, six composed for people in the mode of ignorance, six for those in the mode of passion and six for those in the mode of goodness. Śrīmad Bhāgavatam is the most direct commentary on the Vedānta-sūtra.

Vedas are actually user manual, provided by the creator at the dawn of creation of this universe. The purpose of the Vedas is to guide the soul on the path of perfection. Therefore, anybody interested in knowing the way of life, that God wanted us to lead, should refer to the Vedic scriptures.

Q.3. What is the purpose of taking assistance of the Vedas?

Ans. There is a spiritual sky which is another nature and is beyond manifestation and non-manifestation. But how to know that there is a sky where the planets

and inhabitants are eternal? All this knowledge is there, but it is not possible to experiment? Therefore one has to take assistance of the Vedas to know this transcendental knowledge. The Vedas provides knowledge of that eternal and transcendental nature which is full of variety.

Q.4. What is the goal of the Vedas? How are the Vedas to be understood in this modern age?

Ans. The actual goal of the Vedas is to reveal and show the Supreme Personality of Godhead – Krishna. *vedaischa sarvair aham eva vedyo* – of all the Vedas I am to be known (says Krishna in Bg.).

Another name for the Vedas is śruti. Śruti refers to that knowledge which is acquired by hearing. It is not experimental knowledge. Śruti is considered to be like a mother. We take so much knowledge from our mother. For example, if you want to know who your father is, who can answer you? Your mother. If the mother says, "Here is your father," you have to accept it. It is not possible to experiment to find out whether he is your father. Similarly, if you want to know something beyond your experience, beyond your experimental knowledge, beyond the activities of the senses, then you have to accept the Vedas. There is no question of experimenting. It has already been experimented. It is already settled. The version of the mother, for instance, has to be accepted as truth. There is no other way.

The Vedas are considered to be the mother, and Brahmā is called the grandfather, the forefather, because he was the first to be instructed in the Vedic knowledge. In the beginning the first living creature was Brahma. He received this Vedic knowledge and imparted it to Narada and other disciples and sons, and they also distributed it to their disciples. In this way, the Vedic knowledge comes down by disciplic succession. It is also confirmed in the Bhagavad-Gītā that Vedic knowledge is understood in this way. If you make experimental endeavor, you come to the same conclusion, but just to save time you should accept. If you want to know who your father is and if you accept your mother as the authority, then whatever she says can be accepted without argument. There are three kinds of evidence: *pratyakṣa*, *anumāna* and *śabda*. *Pratyakṣa* means "direct evidence." Direct evidence is not very good because our senses are not perfect. We are seeing the sun daily, and it appears to us just

like a small disc, but it is actually far, far larger than many planets. Of what value is this seeing? Therefore we have to read books; then we can understand about the sun. So, direct experience is not perfect. Then there is anumāna, inductive knowledge: "It may be like this"-- hypothesis. For instance, Darwin's theory says it may be like this, it may be like that. But that is not science. That is a suggestion, and it is also not perfect. But if you receive the knowledge from the authoritative sources, that is perfect. If you receive a program guide from the radio station authorities, you accept it. You don't deny it; you don't have to make an experiment, because it is received from the authoritative sources. Therefore, one should accept knowledge from authority and this is the perfect method for all the ages.

Q.5. What are the deficiencies to which our knowledge is subjected in conditioned state?

Ans. In the condition state, our knowledge is subjected to many deficiencies of which the following are most prominent:-

In the conditioned state, knowledge acquiring senses are imperfect

The conditioned soul is prone to illusion

The conditioned being is prone to make mistake

In conditioned state one develops the cheating tendency

Q.6. What is the difference between the conditioned soul and the liberated soul?

Ans. The difference between a conditioned soul and a liberated soul is that the conditioned soul has four kinds of defects, whereas the liberated soul does not.

Q.7. "To err is human"; explain this deficiency with the example.

Ans. One of the deficiencies of the conditioned life is commit mistake i.e. "to err is human". Śrīla Prabhupāda explains this deficiency by giving example of Mahātmā Gāndhī and President Kennedy. Mahātmā Gāndhī was considered to be a very great personality, but he committed many mistakes. Even at the last stage of his life, his assistant warned, —Mahātmā Gāndhī, don't go to the New Delhi meeting. I have some friends, and I have heard there is danger. But he

did not hear. He persisted on going and was killed. To err is human. This is one defect of the conditioned soul.

Q.8. What does māyā (illusion) mean?

Ans. Māyā means —that which is not . It means to accept something which is not. Example is given that everyone accepts the body to be the self which they are not. When the identification is asked, people say their names, their position, their birth, belongings, etc. They actually specify their bodily identifications. But none of us are this body. To identify our actual identity with something which we are not is māyā or illusion.

Q.9. What is cheating? Explain.

Ans. The propensity of posing one-self as a very intelligent and efficient, in spite of having the deficiencies of the conditioned life is called cheating. The conditioned being does not even have the knowledge of his own self, however, he propounds varieties of theories posing him-self to be a learned scientist, philosopher.... etc. This is cheating. It is one of the defects of the conditioned life.

Q.10. What does a Vaishnava denote?

Ans. The vaishnavas denote the followers of the Vedas.

Q.11. Why Vedic knowledge should be accepted as axiomatic truth?

Ans. Since it is beyond the 4 defects of conditioned souls, it should be accepted as an axiomatic truth.

Q.12. Explain the three kinds of the evidences.

Ans. There are three kinds of evidence: (i) pratyakṣa (ii) anumāna and (iii) śabda. Pratyakṣa means —direct evidence . Direct evidence is not very good because our senses are not perfect.

We are seeing the sun daily, and it appears to us just like a small disc, but it is actually far, far larger than many planets. Of what value is this seeing?

Therefore we have to read books, then we can understand about the sun. So direct experience is not perfect. There is anumāna, inductive knowledge: —It may be like this – hypothesis. For instance, Darwin’s theory says it may be like

this, it may be like that. But that is not science. That is a suggestion, and it is also not perfect. But if you receive the knowledge from the authoritative sources, that is perfect. If you receive a program guide from the radio station authorities, you accept it. You don't deny it; you don't have to make an experiment, because it is received from the authoritative sources.

Vedic knowledge is called śabda-pramana. Another name is śruti. Śruti means that this knowledge has to be received simply by aural reception. The Vedas instruct that in order to understand transcendental knowledge, we have to hear from the authority.

Q.13. Who are the two classes of transcendentalists?

Ans. There are two classes of transcendentalists (i) impersonalists (Māyāvādīs) They are generally known as Vedantists, led by Śaṅkarācārya and (ii) Vaishnavas, like Rāmānujācārya, Mādhvācārya, Viṣṇusvami, Nimbakaracarya.

Both the Śaṅkara-sampradaya and the Vaisnava-Sampradaya have accepted Krishna as the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

Q.14. Why it is difficult to acquire full knowledge?

Ans. In the material universe there is material knowledge and beyond this universe is the transcendental knowledge. We cannot even go to the end of this material universe, so how can we go to the spiritual world? Thus to acquire full knowledge is impossible.

Q.15. What are the two systems of knowledge in the material world?

Ans. There are two systems of knowledge in the material world called inductive and deductive. From deductive, you accept that man is mortal. Your father says man is mortal, your sister says man is mortal, everyone says man is mortal – but you do not experiment. You accept it as a fact that man is mortal. If you want to research to find out whether man is mortal, you have to study each and every man, and you may come to think that there may be some man who is not dying but you have not seen him yet. So in this way your research will never be finished. In Sanskrit this process is called aroha, the ascending process. If you want to attain knowledge by any personal endeavor, by exercising your imperfect senses, you will never come to the right conclusions.

Q.16. What is the necessity of accepting a bona fide spiritual master?

Ans. There is a statement in brahma Samhita that even if someone travels with the speed of mind for millions of years then also he can never come to know the limit of the spiritual sky, but if one accept a bona fide spiritual master than he can understand the spiritual reality. Therefore, it is necessary to accept a bona fide spiritual master.

Q.17. What are the two important qualifications of a bona fide spiritual master?

Ans. The two important qualifications of a bona fide spiritual master is that (i) He is one who has rightly heard the Vedic message from the right source and (ii) He must practically be firmly established in Brahman. Without these two aspects, the spiritual guide is not a bona fide guide.

Q.18.What is the difference between the form of Krishna and form of conditioned Jiva?

Ans.

<u>Form of Krishna</u>	<u>Form of Conditioned Jiva</u>
Innumerable, but one	Only one
Infallible	Fallible
Has no beginning	Has beginning
All forms are eternal	All forms are temporary
Has multi forms and has no ends	Single forms – ends over a period
Simultaneously can be every where	Simultaneously cannot be at two places
Never changing (Always young)	Keeps changing (Not always young)
Not subjected to birth, old age, disease and Death	Subjected to birth, old age, disease and Death

Q.19. What is the potency of Krishna’s devotees?

Ans. The potency of Krishna’s devotees is that, that they can deliver Krishna to anyone. If one endeavor himself to know Krishna through research of Vedic literature, he would be baffled because it is very difficult (generally impossible).

Q.20. Why Śrīla Vyasadeva put down the Vedas in writing?

Ans. Originally there was only one Veda, and there was no necessity of reading it. People were so intelligent and had such sharp memories that by once hearing from the lips of the spiritual master they would understand. They would immediately grasp the whole purport. But five thousand years ago Vyasadeva put the Vedas in writing for the people in this age, Kali-yuga. He knew that eventually the people would be short-lived, their memories would be very poor, and their intelligence would not be very sharp. "Therefore, let me teach this Vedic knowledge in writing." He divided the Vedas into four: Rig, Sama, Atharva and Yajur.

Then he gave the charge of these Vedas to his different disciples. He then thought of the less intelligent class of men--stri, sudra and dvija-bandhu. He considered the woman class and sudra class (worker class) and dvija-bandhu.

Q.21. Who is called a dvija-bandhu?

Ans. Dvija-bandhu refers to those who are born in a high family but who are not properly qualified. A man who is born in the family of a brahmana but is not qualified as a brahmana is called dvija-bandhu.

Q.22. Mahābharata and other puranas are compiled for what type of people?

Ans. For less intelligent class of men--stri, sudra and dvija-bandhu- Śrīla Vyasadeva compiled the Mahābharata, called the history of India, and the eighteen Puranas.

Q.23. What is the work of Śrīla Vyasadeva for scholars and philosophers?

Ans. Śrīla Vyasadeva summarized all Vedic knowledge for scholars and philosophers in what is called the Vedanta-sutra. He personally wrote the Vedanta-sutra under the instructions of Narada, his Guru Mahārāja. This is the last word of the Vedas.

Q.24. What compilation of Śrīla Vyasadeva is a commentary on Vedanta-Sutra?

Ans. After compilation of all the Vedic literature, Śrīla Vyasadeva was not very satisfied, then his spiritual master, Śrīla Nārada instructed him to explain the

Vedanta-Sutra. Then, Śrīla Vyasadeva wrote Śrīmad Bhāgavatam which is written as commentary on Vedanta-Sutra. It is written in full maturity and it describes only the glories of the Supreme Personality of Godhead – Śrī Krishna.

Q.25. What does Vedanta means? What is the ultimate knowledge?

Ans. Vedanta means ultimate knowledge and ultimate knowledge is Krishna. Krishna says that throughout the Vedas one has to understand Him. Vedanta-krid veda-vid eva caham,

Krishna says, —I am the compiler of the Vedanta-sutra, and I am the knower of the Vedas.

Q.26. What is the Gaudiya vaishnava commentary on Vedanta philosophy? Who wrote it?

Ans. Govinda bhasya is the Gaudiya Vaishnava commentary on Vedanta philosophy. Śrīla Baladeva Vidyabhusana wrote this commentary.

Q.27. Other than Śaṅkarācārya, who else wrote commentary on Vedanta philosophy?

Ans. Śrīla Vyasadeva, the compiler of Vedanta, himself wrote his Vedanta commentary which is the Śrīmad Bhāgavatam. Besides this, Śrīla Rāmānujācārya, Śrīla Madhavacarya, Śrīla Baladeva Vidyabhusana wrote commentaries on Vedanta philosophy. Śaṅkarācārya is not the only person to write commentary on Vedanta philosophy.

Q.28. What is the complete summary of Vedas?

Ans. Vedanta-sutra is the whole summary of Vedas or Vedic knowledge and the Vedanta-sutra has been explained in detail by the author in Śrīmad Bhāgavatam. For example, Vedanta-sutra begins with the aphorism ‘janmady asya yatah’ stating that the Absolute Truth is one from whom everything emanates. This is a summary statement, but it is explained in detail in Śrīmad Bhāgavatam - that if everything is emanating from the Absolute Truth, then what is the nature of the Absolute Truth.

Q.29. Why is Vedic knowledge a more authentic source of knowledge than that obtained through the mind and senses?

Ans. The Vedic knowledge is the more authentic source of knowledge because it is coming from the source of all knowledge – the Supreme Personality of Godhead Śrī Krishna (Vedanta krid). It is described as ‘apauruseya’, meaning that they do not come from any materially conditioned person but from the Supreme Lord {a source transcendental to mundane duality}. Vedic knowledge descends from the spiritual world. It was first of all spoken to Lord Brahmā – the secondary creator- which was passed down by him to His son and disciple Śrīla Nārada who then passed to his disciple Śrīla Vyasadeva and thus it is coming down through a chain of disciplic succession. The knowledge acquired through hearing from higher authority is most perfect knowledge. Whereas, the knowledge acquired by direct perception and inferences from series of observations is not so perfect because it is acquired by the material senses which have so many limitations. Therefore the knowledge received independently through the mind and senses can never be perfectly authentic.

INVOCATION

Q.1. Who is the Supreme Absolute Truth? What is its complete realization?

Ans. The complete Personality of Godhead (Śrī Krishna) is the Supreme Absolute Truth. Realization of the aspect of the sat, cit and ānanda (eternity, knowledge and bliss) is the realization of the Absolute Truth in His completeness.

Q.2. What is the Brahman and Supersoul realization of the Absolute Truth? Why these features are understood to be incomplete realization of the Absolute Truth?

Ans. The Supreme Personality of Godhead is sac-cid-ananda vigraha i.e. a complete form of eternity, knowledge and bliss. Realization of all these transcendental aspects of the Personality of Godhead is the complete realization.

Realization of impersonal Brahman (effulgence of the Lord) is realization of His sat feature or the aspect of His eternity only. The Supersoul (Paramatma) realization is the realization of His sat and cit features – the aspect of eternity and knowledge only. Therefore the Brahman and Supersoul realization of the Absolute Truth is the incomplete or partial realization of the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

Q.3. What is the complete realization of the Complete Whole?

Ans. The complete realization of the Complete Whole is that it must contain everything both within and beyond our experience; otherwise He cannot be complete.

Q.4. How can we say that this phenomenal world is also complete in itself?

Ans. Based on the following facts we can say that this phenomenal world is also complete in itself. It is self-sufficient insofar as creation, maintenance and destruction are concerned.

Creation: The Supreme Personality of Godhead is Supremely Complete and anything that emanates from Him is also perfectly complete. Therefore all His

energies are also complete as He is. This phenomenal world is creation of His external energy; therefore it is complete in itself.

Maintenance: We observe that the 24 elements of which this material world is a temporary manifestation are arranged to produce everything necessary for the maintenance and subsistence of this universe. No other unit in this universe need make any extraneous effort to try to maintain the universe.

Destruction: The universe functions on its own time scale, which is fixed by the energy of the Complete Whole and when that schedule is completed, this temporary manifestation will be annihilated by the complete arrangement of the Complete Whole, this proves that this phenomenal world is complete in itself.

Q.5. When this phenomenal world is perfect as to the purpose of its creation, then why the living being experiences incompleteness in its attempts to become happy in this world?

Ans. This phenomenal material world is perfectly designed to completely entangle and perplex those living entities who are engaged in pursuing happiness in this world which is designed as a place of miseries. This world is compared to a prison cell which is meant to reform the miscreants and not for providing them comforts; otherwise how will they reform. This is the reason that those living entities who are engaged in pursuing happiness in this place of misery, experience only frustration and incompleteness.

Q.6. How is Bhagavan realization the most complete understanding of the transcendence?

Ans. Bhagavan realization is the most complete understanding of the transcendence because it includes realization of all the transcendental aspects of the Supreme Personality of Godhead which is sat-cid-ananda vigraha. It is realization of the aspects of the eternity(sat), knowledge(cit) and form of bliss (ananda swarup) of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Whereas Brahman realization is only realization of the 'sat' aspect & the Supersoul realization of the Supreme Lord is only the 'sat' and 'cit' aspects

Q.7. How can the living entity realize its completeness?

Ans. The living entity can realize its completeness by knowing the completeness of the complete whole the Supreme Personality of Godhead. All forms of incompleteness are experienced due to incomplete knowledge of the Complete Whole.

Q.8. What is the purpose of human form of life? Explain its significance?

Ans. The purpose of the human form of life is to utilize it for realization of the completeness of the Complete Whole. This human form is a complete manifestation of the consciousness of the living being and it is obtained after evolving through 8,400,000 species of life in the cycle of birth and death. If a living entity in the human form of life does not use this form of life for realization of the Complete Whole, he loses the chance and is again put into evolutionary cycle of birth and death by the law of this material nature.

Q.9. Why do we make efforts to utilize the resources of the nature to create a so-called complete life of sense enjoyment?

Ans. Because we do not know that there is a complete arrangement in nature for our maintenance, we make efforts to utilize the resources of the nature to create a so-called complete life of sense enjoyment.

Q.10. What is illusion? Why the illusory representation cannot fully satisfy? Explain with an example.

Ans. The misleading life of sense enjoyment is illusion. The living entities being part and parcel of the Complete Whole (The Supreme Personality of Godhead), if they are cut off from Krishna, cannot enjoy independently.

Just like a severed hand which was originally a part of the body, although still looks like a proper hand, now has no life and cannot do anything worthwhile. Therefore the illusory representation cannot fully satisfy the living entity.

Q.11. How can one enjoy senses?

Ans. One can enjoy the life senses by dovetailing with the Complete Whole – the Supreme Personality of Godhead – Śrī Krishna.

Q.12. How the completeness of the human life can be realized?

Ans. The completeness of the human life can be realized only when one engages in the service of the Complete Whole (Śrī Krishna). Until one engages in the service of the Complete Whole all other services in this world – whether social, political, communal, international or even interplanetary – will remain incomplete.

Q13 Essay: Explain the complete comprehension of God as sac-cid-ānanda.

MANTRA 1

Q.1. Explain the principle of Īśāvāsyam?

Ans. The concept of Īśāvāsyam states that —Everything animate or inanimate that is within the universe is controlled and owned by the Supreme Lord. One should therefore accept only those things necessary for himself, which are set aside as his quota, and one should not accept other things, knowing well to whom they belong.

Q.2. Why the Vedic knowledge is infallible? How it can be acquired and realized?

Ans. The Vedic knowledge is infallible because it comes down through the perfect disciplic succession of spiritual masters, beginning with the Lord Himself. Since He spoke the first word of Vedic knowledge, the source of this knowledge is transcendental. The words spoken by Lord are called apaurusheya, which indicates that they are not delivered by any mundane person.

The Vedic knowledge can be acquired and realized through the unbroken bona fide disciplic succession of spiritual masters which starts from the Supreme Personality of Godhead – Śrī Krishna – tad vīgyānartham sa gurum eva abhigachhet – to acquire and realize this knowledge one must approach a bona fide spiritual master. tad viddhi pranipatena pariprashnena sevaya – one must approach a bona fide spiritual master (who has seen (realized) the Absolute Truth), surrender to him, offer service and put up questions with utter humility only then one can acquire and realize the Vedic wisdom. This is the process.

Q.3. Explain, how the source of Vedic knowledge is transcendental?

Ans. The source of Vedic knowledge is transcendental because it is apaurusheya. The words spoken by the Supreme Personality of Godhead – Śrī Krishna (who is beyond the reach of the mundane modes) are called apaurusheya, which indicates that they are not delivered by any mundane person (who dwells within the clutches of the mundane modes).

The Supreme Personality of Godhead – Śrī Krishna – is ‘avranam’ which means He is without any fault. (ISO text 8) He is also ‘suddham’ which means He is

without any contamination or impurity. He is completely pure – rather He can purify all impure things that come in His contact. Contrary to this, the living being who lives in the mundane world has four defects (1) he is certain to commit mistakes (2) he is subject to illusion (3) he has a propensity to cheat others and (4) his senses are imperfect. No one with these four imperfections can deliver perfect knowledge. The Vedas are not produced by such an imperfect creature.

The Vedic knowledge originates from the Supreme Personality of Godhead – Shri Krishna who is actual Vedanta-krid and Veda-vid.(BG 15.15) He impregnates this knowledge in the heart of Brahmā (the first created being),(SB 1.1.1) who in turn passes down this knowledge through disciplic succession. Thus the source of the Vedic knowledge is transcendental.

Q.4. Explain the concept of apauruseya?

Ans. The living being under the clutches of 3 modes are affected by the four definite limitations which are (i) he is certain to commit mistakes (ii) he is subject to illusion (iii) he has a propensity to cheat others and (iv) his senses are imperfect. Therefore, the things delivered by the people with these four definite defects cannot be called apauruseya.

The word purusa also means living being of this material world, which is gunamayi (consisting of the three modes of sattva, rajas and tamas). Such living beings in this material world are governed and conditioned by these three gunas or modes. Therefore, anything delivered by such living beings cannot be called apauruseya.

Apauruseya – means it should be delivered by someone who is beyond or transcendental to these imperfections and modes of material nature and it is only the Supreme Personality of Godhead – Śrī Krishna – who is completely transcendental or beyond the modes of material nature and beyond any imperfection. Therefore, anything given by Him is considered and called apauruseya.

Q.5. What is principle subject discussed in Śrī Īśopaniṣad?

Ans. Īśopaniṣad is the foremost among all the Upanishadas. This Upanishad's name gives the clue: Isha means "the supreme controller." This Upanishad discusses the subject matter for understanding the Supreme Personality Godhead—Śrī Krishna. It discusses sambandha (relationships), abhideya (process) and the prayojana (ultimate result) of spiritual practices. Relationship or sambandha is discussed in the Invocation and mantras 4, 5, 8 and 14. The process or abhideya is discussed in mantras 1, 2, 3, 9, 11, 15, 16, 17 and 18 whereas the Prayojana or result is discussed in mantras 6, 7, 10, 12 and 13.

This Īśopaniṣad is part of the yajurveda and contains information concerning the proprietorship of all things existing within the universe.

Q.6. How everything is the property of the Supreme Personality of Godhead?

Ans. The Lord has proprietorship over everything within the universe. This is also confirmed in Bhagavad Gītā (7.4-5) where para and apara prakṛti are discussed. The element of nature – earth, water, fire, air, ether, mind, intelligence and ego – all belong to the Lord's inferior, material energy (apara prakṛti), whereas the living being, the organic energy, is His superior energy (para prakṛti). Both of these prakṛtis, or energies, are emanations from the Lord, and ultimately He is the controller of everything that exists. There is nothing in the universe that does not belong either to the para or the apara prakṛti; therefore everything is the property of the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

Q.8. Explain the analogy of the fire, heat and the light with respect to the Supreme Personality of Godhead and the living entity?

Ans. The Supreme Personality of Godhead (the Supreme Being) is the complete person. He has complete and perfect intelligence to adjust everything by means of His different potencies. The Supreme Being is often compared to a fire, and everything organic and inorganic is compared to the heat and light of that fire. Just as fire distributes energy in the form of heat and light, the Lord displays His energy in different ways. He thus remains the ultimate controller, sustainer and dictator of everything. He is the possessor of all potencies, the knower of everything and the benefactor of everyone. He is full of inconceivable opulence, power, fame, beauty, knowledge and renunciation.

Q.9. Explain with example what should be the proper approach of the living entity while enjoying things of the nature?

Ans. While enjoying things of the nature one should be intelligent enough to know that except for the Lord no one is a proprietor of anything and therefore one should only accept things that are set aside by the Lord as one's quota. The cow, for instance, gives milk, but she does not drink that milk; she eats grass and straw, and her milk is designated as food for human beings. One should, therefore, remain satisfied with those things which are assigned as one's quota, understanding that it is an arrangement of the Lord. One must know whom the things actually belong and enjoy things as per the principle of *īśāvāsyam*.

Q.10. When the laborer has worked hard for construction then why he should not claim proprietorship on the construction?

Ans. A laborer cannot claim to be a proprietor of a thing(e.g skyscraper) just because he has worked hard to manufacture it because he is not the person who has supplied the material for construction – rather he has only put his labor in exchange for wages. Similarly, everything is provided by the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Nothing is there which we have produced or we can produce. We can simply bring them together and transform them into different shapes by our labor. This does not give us proprietorship over anything of this world. We must follow the principles of *īśāvāsyam* and remain content with whatever is provided as our quota. We should not encroach upon somebody else's property. That is stealing.

Q.11. The teaching of Śrī Īśopaniṣad is projected for whom and why?

Ans. The teaching of Śrī Īśopaniṣad is meant for human being who possesses higher intelligence. Not for cats and dogs and those people who have tendencies like cats and dogs who face one another in enmity and snarl at each other for petty gains of temporary things of this world. It cannot give advice to cats and dogs or people like that, but it can deliver the message of Godhead to man through the bona fide acaryas (holy teachers). The human race should take the Vedic wisdom of Śrī Īśopaniṣad and not quarrel over material possessions.

Human beings are not meant to quarrel like cats and dogs. They must be intelligent enough to realize the importance and aim of human life. The Vedic

literature is meant for humanity and not for cats and dogs. Cats and dogs can kill other animals for food without incurring sin, but if a man kills an animal for the satisfaction of his uncontrolled taste buds, he is responsible for breaking the laws of nature, consequently he must be punished.

Q.12. Why the imports of Vedic literature are not applicable for animals and why there is no question of sin for them?

Ans. The Vedic literature is meant for humanity and not for cats and dogs. The standard of life for human beings cannot be applied to animals. The animals do not transgress the laws of nature that has been ordained by the will of the Lord. The tiger does not eat rice and wheat or drink cow's milk, because he has been given food in the shape of animal flesh. Among the many animals and birds, some are vegetarian and others are carnivorous, but none of them transgress the laws of nature. Cats, dogs and tigers can kill other animals for food without incurring sin, but if a man kills an animal for the satisfaction of his uncontrolled taste buds, he is responsible for breaking the laws of nature, consequently he must be punished. Animals, birds, reptiles and other lower life forms strictly adhere to the laws of nature; therefore there is no question of sin for them, nor are the Vedic instructions meant for them. Human life alone is a life of responsibility.

Q.13. How simply becoming vegetarian is not sufficient to transgress the law of nature?

Ans. It is wrong to think that simply by becoming a vegetarian one can avoid transgressing the laws of nature because vegetables also have life, and while it is nature's law that one living being is meant to feed on another, for human beings the point is to recognize the Supreme Lord. One should not be proud of being a strict vegetarian. Animals do not have developed consciousness by which to recognize the Lord, but human being is sufficiently intelligent to take lessons from the Vedic literature and thereby know how the laws of nature are working and derive profit out of such knowledge. If a man neglects the instructions of the Vedic literature, his life becomes very risky. Bhagavad Gītā (3.13) mentions that whatever one partakes one must first of all offer to the Supreme Personality of Godhead otherwise he is eating verily sin. Therefore a human being should not only become a strict vegetarian but should also

become a devotee of the Lord, offer the Lord all his food and then partake of such prasadam, or the mercy of God. Only those who act in this way can properly discharge the duties of human life

Q.14. How a human being can discharge his duties perfectly?

Ans. A human being can discharge his duties perfectly when he-

Recognizes the authority of the Supreme Personality of Godhead

Becomes devotee of the Lord Śrī Krishna

Offer everything for the service of the Lord

Partakes only of the remnants of food offered to the Lord

Accepts the authority of the Vedic literature and acts accordingly

Not only becomes vegetarian but becomes strict Prasadian (this is the word used by Prabhupāda, Krishnatarians is not the right word, we don't eat Krishna).

Accepts and acts by the principle of īśāvāsyam

Q.15. When the life of human being becomes risky?

Ans. When the man neglects the instructions of the Vedic literature, acts whimsically by deliberately disregarding the proprietorship of the Supreme Personality of Godhead his life becomes very risky.

Q.16. What is the root of sin? What are its consequences?

Ans. The root of sin is deliberate disobedience of the laws of nature through disregarding the proprietorship of the Lord. Disobeying the laws of nature or the order of the Lord brings ruins to a human being.

Q.17. Who is recognized by the Lord? What does he achieve?

Ans. When one becomes sober and knows the laws of nature and does not become influenced by unnecessary attachment or aversion, he is sure to be recognized by the Lord and thus become eligible to go back to Godhead, back to the eternal home.

Q.18. Who becomes eligible to go back home back to Godhead?

Ans. One who does not become influenced by unnecessary attachment or aversion and knows the laws of nature becomes eligible to go back home back to Godhead.

Q.19. Why should no one else other than the Supreme Personality of Godhead claim the property of this material world?

Ans. Everything animate or inanimate emanates from the Supreme Personality of Godhead – Śrī Krishna. And everything is meant for the pleasure and satisfaction of the Lord only. He is the source of all ingredient required for creation therefore He alone is the claimant of the property of this material world. Take for example, our dwelling, which is made of earth, wood, stone, iron, cement and so many other material things. If we think in terms of Śrī Īśopaniṣad, we must know that we cannot produce any of these building materials ourselves. We can simply bring them together and transform them into different shapes by our labor. A laborer cannot claim to be a proprietor of a thing just because he has worked hard to manufacture it. Similarly, the living being may be manipulating with the material elements but can never claim to be the proprietorship in this world because the source of everything is the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

Q.20. Write an essay entitled —Vedic knowledge is infallible||

Ans. The word infallible means never wrong or never making mistakes. Thus, Vedic knowledge being infallible means that Vedic knowledge is never wrong or there can never be any mistake – whatsoever – in the knowledge propounded by the Vedas.

The Vedic principles coming down in disciplic succession is accepted as axiomatic truth, for there cannot be any mistake in them. There are many examples which illustrate how Vedic wisdom is infallible, although it may take many years by scientists to prove them:

Vedas assert that plants, animals and human beings all have living force in their bodies. But science defined living thing to be moving from place to place and so concluded that plants have no life, but later it was proved by Dr. Jagadish Chandra Bose that plants also have life.

Vedas recommend smearing of cow dung on floors & walls and cow dung is considered very pure. In Calcutta, a very prominent scientist analysed cow dung and found that it contains all antiseptic properties.

Vedas claim that there are living entities even in fire. Scientists once upon a time used to laugh, because they thought bacteria cannot survive even in boiled water (that's why they do sterilization). But recent medical advances have proved that bacteria lives even within fire and is named as "Fire bacteria".

There are innumerable examples which can be cited this way.

In India, if one person tells another, —You must do this," the other party may say, —What do you mean? Is this a Vedic injunction that I have to follow you without any argument?" Vedic injunctions cannot be interpreted. But ultimately, if you carefully study why these injunctions are there, you will find that they are all correct.

The Vedas are not compilations of human knowledge. Vedas are word of God. Another name for the Vedas is Śruti. Śruti refers to that knowledge which is acquired by hearing. It is not experimental knowledge. Śruti is considered to be like a mother. The version of mother, regarding our father, brothers, sisters etc., for instance, has to be accepted as truth. There is no other way. There is no question of experimenting.

If you make experimental endeavor, you come to the same conclusion, but just to save time you should accept. If you want to know who your father is and if you accept your mother as authority, then whatever she says can be accepted without argument. The other cumbersome method would be to deride the authority of mother and test every man on earth medically to evaluate who one's father is.

Because Vedic knowledge is pure and authoritative, we accept it. That saves much time. If you accept the right authority or the source of knowledge, then you save much time. For example, there are two systems of knowledge in the material world -- Inductive and Deductive. From deductive, you accept that man is mortal. Your father says man is mortal; your sister says man is mortal; everyone says man is mortal -- but you do not experiment. You accept it as fact that man is mortal. If you want to research to find out whether man is mortal,

you have to study each and every man, and you may come to think that there may be some man who is not dying, but you have not seen him yet. So in this way your researching will never be finished. If you want to attain knowledge by personal endeavor, by exercising your imperfect senses, you will never come to the right conclusions. That is not possible. There is no need to experiment. Vedas are self-authoritative. They are infallible and must be accepted as it is.

Q.21. Discuss the cause for war and strife and suggest a peace formula.

Ans. The major cause of war and strife are –

Forgetting or disregarding the proprietorship of the Supreme Personality of Godhead

Claiming proprietorship over the resources of nature which belong to the Lord

Not being satisfied with the quota of necessary things set aside for oneself.

Unlawfully encroaching upon somebody else's share

Hoarding things unnecessarily and debarring others

Deliberately disobeying and disregarding law of nature

Quarrelling like cats and dogs over the property of the Lord

Not offering things to God when it actually belongs to Him

Not using the gift of higher intelligence to understand transcendental things and instead use it merely for mundane achievements

Becoming more and more attached or averse to things of this mundane world

Suggested peace formula:

Firstly we must endeavor to know, 'to whom do our possessions actually belong'?

Take advice from Vedic literature especially Śrī Īśopaniṣad and conduct accordingly

Remain satisfied with whatever privileges are given by the mercy of the Lord

Do not claim proprietorship over the resources of nature

Recognize the proprietorship of the Supreme Personality of Godhead

Recognize that any claim for proprietorship is actually stealing

Do not quarrel like cats and dogs – rather behave like human beings

Do not attempt to disregard or disobey the law of nature

Offer everything to God as token of appreciation of His mercy upon us

Use your intelligence to elevate your consciousness and reach to God

Strive to become free from attachment and aversion (BG 2.64)

Q.22. If everything belongs to Krishna, can I take your bathing soap without asking? Explain based on Mantra -1 of Īśopaniṣad.

Ans. It's good to know that everything belongs to Krishna, but that's only half of the complete statement of mantra-1 of Śrī Īśopaniṣad. The other half is —one should take only those things which are kept aside as his quota and not encroach upon things which are allotted for others' use. Thus the complete statement is —everything animate or inanimate that is within the universe is controlled and owned by the Lord. One should therefore accept only those things necessary for himself, which are set aside as his quota, and one should not accept other things, knowing well to whom they belong.

The example is given of a Cow. The cow gives milk which is designated as food for human being. The cow does not herself drink the milk. Rather she eats grass and leaves. Similarly, the Tiger does not eat rice, wheat etc. because the quota of food allotted to him is flesh of animals.

Thus, you cannot take somebody else's bathing soap without asking him, because the soap is allotted for him to use and not for your use.

MANTRA 2

Q.1. How can a man make the best use of his lifetime?

Ans. A man can make best use of his lifetime by living a life centered on God. One should endeavor to carry on such activity that does not bind to the cycle of birth and death. This means that he should carry out those works which will free him from the reactions of both good and bad work. Such liberating work is described in the pages of Śrī Īśopaniṣad. Therefore, by conducting one's life in accordance with the instructions of the Īśopaniṣad and other Vedic literature and performing devotional service at the Lotus feet of the Supreme Personality of Godhead – Śrī Krishna, one can make best use of his human form of life and at the end can go back home back to Godhead.

Q.2. Define karma, vikarma and akarma. How would you categorize work done in the Īśāvāsyam conception?

Ans. Karma – actions that are performed in terms of one's prescribed duties, as mentioned in the revealed scriptures, are called Karma.

Akarma – Actions that free one from the cycle of birth and death are called akarma.

Vikarma – Actions that are performed through the misuse of one's freedom and that direct one to the lower life forms are called vikarma.

Of these three types of actions, that which frees one from the bondage to karma is preferred by intelligent men. Ordinary men wish to perform good work in order to be recognized and achieve some higher status of life in this world or in heaven, but more advanced men want to be free altogether from that actions and reactions of work. Intelligent men well know that both good and bad work equally bind one to the material miseries. Consequently they seek that work which will free them from the reactions of both good and bad work.

When a person perform his activities in full consciousness of the Lord, knowing well that Lord is the ultimate beneficiary of all sacrifices and austerities, He is the proprietor of everything that exists and He is the supreme well-wisher of every living entity. He therefore uses everything that he possesses in the service

of the Lord for His satisfaction and accepts things necessary for his maintenance as the mercy of the Lord. Work of such a person is categorized as the work done in the Īśāvāsyam conception.

Q.3. How one can go on living hundreds of years without being affected by the law of karma?

Ans. When one conducts his life in accordance with the concept of Īśāvāsyam which means everything animate or inanimate that is within the universe is controlled and owned by the Lord. One should therefore accept only those things necessary for himself, which are set aside as his quota, and one should not accept other things, knowing well to whom they belong, one can go on living hundreds of years without being affected by the law of karma.

Q.4. Why does everyone desire to live as long as possible?

Ans. The living being is eternal by nature therefore everyone desires to live as long as possible. Although, there is a hard struggle for life by all kinds of living entities, no one wants to die; everyone wants to live as long as he can drag on. This tendency is visible not only individually but also collectively in the community, society and nation.

Q.5. Why one has to keep changing bodies?

Ans. Although, the living is eternal by nature, but due to his bondage in material existence one has to keep changing one's body over and over in the process of transmigration or karma bandhana.

Q.6. What is transmigration or karma-bandhana?

Ans. The process of changing body over and over due to material existence is called transmigration or karma-bandhana or bondage by one's work.

Q.7. How does one transgress the law of nature? What is its effect?

Ans. The living entity has to work for his livelihood because that is the law of material nature, and if he does not act according to his prescribed duties, he transgresses the law of nature. The effect of this transgression is that he binds himself more and more to the cycle of birth and death in the many species of life.

Q.8. How different categories of men approach the process of karma?

Ans. Bound by the law of material nature, everyone has to work for maintenance of their body and soul together. In this process people perform various karmas, and vikarmas too.

Those who are intelligent prefer performing those activities that would free them from the bondage of karma. Ordinary men wish to perform good work in order to be recognized and achieve some higher status of life in this world or in heaven, but those who are more advanced want to be free altogether from the actions and reactions of work. Intelligent men well know that both good and bad work equally bind one to the material miseries. Consequently they seek that work which will free them from the reactions of both good and bad work.

Q.9. How Gitopanishad (Bhagavad Gītā) helps one to realize authority of the Supreme Being?

Ans. Śrī Krishna states in the Bhagavad Gītā that one cannot attain the state of naiskarmya or akarma without executing the prescribed duties mentioned in the Vedic literature (Bg.3.9-16). Following those prescribed duties can help regulate the working energy of a human being in such a way that he can gradually realize the authority of the Supreme Being.

Q.10. What is positive knowledge and who can attain it?

Ans. To realize the authority of the Supreme Personality of Godhead (Śrī Krishna or Vasudeva) is the stage of positive knowledge. At this stage the modes of material nature viz. Goodness, Passion and Ignorance cannot act. In this stage one can perform activities that can be called naiskarmya i.e. the activity that does not bind one to the cycle of birth and death. Any who can understand the imports of Śrīmad Bhagavad Gītā which is the essence of all Vedic scripture can attain the stage of positive knowledge. This is possible only by the mercy of Guru and Krishna (tad vigyanartham sa gurum eva abhigachhet) (upadeshanti te gnynam gnyaninam tatva darsinah)

Q.11. What type of action does not bind oneself to the cycle of birth and death?

Ans. Those activities executed at the stage of positive knowledge of the Supreme Personality of Godhead do not bind one to the cycle of birth and death because activities at this state are not influenced by the material modes of goodness, passion and ignorance. These activities are called *naiskarmya* and such work does not bind one to the cycle of birth and death.

Q.12. What is the ultimate duty of a human being?

Ans. The ultimate duty of a human being is to perform devotional service at the Lotus Feet of the Supreme Personality of Godhead – Śrī Krishna. (*sa vai pumsam paro dharmo yato bhaktir adhokshajae ahaituki apratihata yayaatma suprasidati*). No one has to do anything more than render devotional service to the Lord.

Q.13. What are different forms of karma-bandhana? What is the way out?

Ans. Although, the ultimate activity of a human being is to render devotional service to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, in the lower stages of life one cannot immediately adopt the activities of devotional service, nor can one completely stop fruitive work. A conditioned soul is accustomed to working for sense gratification – for his own selfish interest, immediate or extended. An ordinary man works for his own sense enjoyment, and when this principle of sense enjoyment is extended to include his society, nation or humanity in general, it assumes various attractive names such as altruism, socialism, communism, nationalism and humanitarianism. These different ‘isms’ are the different forms of *karma-bandhanas*. These karmic bondages are certainly very attractive, but the Vedic instruction of Śrī Īśopaniṣad is that if one actually wants to live for any of the above isms, he should make them God-centered. There is no harm in becoming a family man, or an altruist, a socialist, a communist, a nationalist or a humanitarian, provided that one executes his activities in relation with *Īśāvāsyā*, the God-centered conception.

Q.14. What is the greatest danger of life and how one becomes trapped? What is the way out?

Ans. The greatest danger of life is the danger of gliding down again into the evolutionary cycle of birth and death among the 8,400,000 species. When living entities, those who have attained the human form of life, misuse their freedom and act whimsically by deliberately disregarding the law of the nature and the proprietorship of the Supreme Lord then they become trapped in the cycle of birth and death. The only way which can put one out of this trap is the devotional service to the Supreme Personality of Godhead – Śrī Krishna. Lord Krishna says in Bhagavad Gītā (2.40) that God-centered activities are so valuable that just a few of them can save a person from the greatest danger. In case the performer fails to attain perfection in the present life time, he will be given another chance by the Lord in the next life time, but he would never glide down to the lower species of life. How can one execute God-centered activities is elaborately explained in the Bhakti Rasāmṛta Sindhu by Śrīla Rupa Gosvāmī.

Q.15 Why are altruistic or humanitarian activities not considered very beneficial when God is not the focus of such activities?

Q.16. If we abandon the idea of trying to claim this world for our own enjoyment and instead take up the process of self- realization won't society fall into a state of passivity and chaos? Explain.

MANTRA 3

Q.1. Who is a “killer of the soul”? Illustrate with an example.

Ans. Anyone who does not utilize the opportunity to engage in the activity/nature of the soul is a killer of the soul.

The most natural activity of the soul is to engage in the service of the Supreme Personality of Godhead – Śrī Krishna (jivera svarupa haya Krishner nitya dasa) and the biggest opportunity to engage in the service of the Lord is available in the human form of life. Intelligent human beings must always remember that the soul obtains a human form after an evolution of many millions of years in the cycle of transmigration.

The material world is sometimes compared to an ocean, and the human body is compared to a solid boat designed especially to cross this ocean. The Vedic scriptures and the acaryas, or saintly teachers are compared to expert boatmen, and the facilities of the human body are compared to favorable breezes that help the boat ply smoothly to its desired destination. With all these facilities, if a human being does not fully utilize his life for self-realization, he must be considered atma-ha, a killer of the soul. Śrī Īśopaniṣad warns in clear terms that a killer of the soul is destined to enter into the darkest region of ignorance to suffer perpetually.

Q.2. What destination does the ‘killer of the soul’ attain?

Ans. The killer of the soul, whoever he may be, must enter into the planets known as the worlds of the faithless, full of darkness and ignorance.

Q.3. Analyze economic problems from a Krishna Consciousness viewpoint and establish how to solve the real problem of life?

Ans. Economic problems are the problems related with the maintenance of the body and soul. It is a matter of demand and supply. Every living entity in this material world requires things to maintain his body and soul together. The Supreme Personality of Godhead has provided everything necessary for all living entities under his proprietorship. Everyone is expected to know this fact and accept things of this material world only as per the quota set aside for his

maintenance. There is no shortage for the necessity of the living entity, however, because people are excessive greedy they artificially create economic problem by encroaching upon others share or depriving others for their necessities.

The life of human being is more important because of the higher responsibility of self-realization and God realization. There are swine, dogs, camels, asses, etc. whose economic necessities are just as important to them as ours to us, but the economic problem of these animals are solved only under nasty and unpleasant conditions. The human being is given all facilities for a comfortable life by the laws of the nature because the human form of life is more important and valuable than animal life. Why is man given a better life than that of the swine and other animals? Why is a highly placed government servant given better facilities than those of an ordinary clerk? The answer is that a highly placed officer has to discharge duties of a higher nature. Similarly, the duties human beings have to perform are higher than those of animals, who are always engaged in simply feeding their hungry stomachs. Yet the modern soul-killing civilization has only increased the problems of the hungry stomach. When we approach a polished animal in the form of a modern civilized man and ask him to take interest in self-realization, he will say that he simply wants to work to satisfy his stomach and that there is no need of self-realization for a hungry man. The laws of nature are so cruel, however, that despite his denunciation of the need for self-realization and his eagerness to work hard to fill his stomach, he is always threatened by unemployment.

Therefore the Krishna conscious approach of economic problems is that one should accept the proprietorship of the Lord and accept only those things necessary for his maintenance and not encroach upon somebody else's share. Depend on the Lord and every necessary thing will be supplied. There is no need to work hard only to fill the belly rather work hard to realize self and God.

If we waste our life attempting to solve economic problems, without solving the actual problems of material life, we will be destined to enter the darkest region of ignorance to suffer perpetually.

Q.4. Who is an asura (demon)? What is the destination of asuric life?

Ans. People who are neglectful or have no information of the responsibilities of human form of life are called asuras (demons). Such people are destined to transmigrate to the asuryā planets and take birth in the degraded species of life to work hard in ignorance and darkness. Demoniac nature is characterized by pride, arrogance, conceit, anger, harshness and ignorance. The word asura is constituted of two words 'asu+ra' where 'asu' means 'breath' and 'ra' means 'enjoys'. Thus anyone who simply tries to enjoy body and senses is an asura.

Asuras sometimes make a show of religion, but their ultimate aim is material prosperity. The Bhagavad-Gītā (16.17-18) rebukes such men by calling them atma-sambhavita, meaning that they are considered great only on the strength of deception and are empowered by the votes of the ignorant and by their own material wealth. Such asuras, devoid of self-realization and knowledge of Īśāvāsya, the Lord's universal proprietorship, are certain to enter into the darkest regions.

Those who are demoniac do not know what is to be done and what is not to be done. Neither cleanliness nor proper behaviour nor truth is found in them. They say that this world is unreal, with no foundation, no God in control. They say it is produced of sex desire and has no cause other than lust. Such people engage in unbeneficial, horrible works meant to destroy the world. They take shelter of insatiable lust and always remain absorbed in the conceit of pride and false prestige. Thus illusioned, they are always sworn to unclean work, attracted by the impermanent. They believe that to gratify the senses is the prime necessity of human civilization.

Q.5. Who is a sura (godly persons)?

Ans. Human life is distinguished from animal life due to its heavy responsibilities. Those who are cognizant of these responsibilities and who work in that spirit are called suras (godly persons). In all circumstances of life they are always dependent on the Supreme Personality of Godhead – Śrī Krishna.

Fearlessness, purification of one's existence, cultivation of spiritual knowledge, charity, self-control, performance of sacrifice, study of the Vedas, austerity,

simplicity, nonviolence, truthfulness, freedom from anger, renunciation, tranquility, aversion to fault-finding, compassion for all living entities, freedom from covetousness, gentleness, modesty, steady determination, vigour, forgiveness, fortitude, cleanliness, and freedom from envy and from the passion of honor – these transcendental qualities belong to godly men endowed with divine nature. Such godly persons are eligible to liberation from the cycle of birth and death.

Q.6. Why human form of life is distinct from animal life? What is its purpose?

Ans. The human beings are expected to perform duties of higher nature than that of animals because of which the human form of life is distinct from animal life. Human beings are given higher intelligence, better facilities for comfortable life by the law of nature. We can see that swine, dogs, camels, asses, etc. whose economic necessities are just as important to them as ours are to us, but the economic problems of these animals are solved only under nasty and unpleasant conditions. The purpose of a better facility to human being is that they are not only expected to engage in to eating, mating, sleeping and defending but to engage in higher activity of realization of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. If a person remains engaged only in the activities of eating, mating, sleeping and defending he is no more than an animal. Such a person is considered the killer of the soul because he is wasting the opportunity of God realization.

Q.7. Explain the significance of human form of life with example of ocean and boat?

Ans. The soul obtains a human form of life after an evolution of many millions of years in the cycle of transmigration. This material world is sometimes compared to an ocean, and the human body is compared to a solid boat designed especially to cross this ocean. The Vedic scriptures and the acaryas, or saintly teachers, are compared to expert boatmen, and the facilities of the human body are compared to favorable breezes that help the boat ply smoothly to its desired destination. If, with all these facilities, a human being does not fully utilize his life for self-realization, he must be considered atma-ha, killer of the soul.

Q.8. Explain with example why human being is given more facility than animals?

Ans. Like the highly placed government servant who takes higher responsibility is given better facilities than those of ordinary employees, the human form of life is given better facilities as compared to the animals because it is expected from him that he will engage in the process of God-realization and successfully use the opportunity of attaining the perfection of life – love of Godhead. The human form of life is given not for working hard like asses, swine and dogs but to attain the highest perfection of life. If one does not care for self-realization, the laws of nature forces us to work very hard, even though we may not want to do so. Human beings in this age have been forced to work hard like the asses and bullocks that pull carts and they are continuously being frustrated in their pursuit of material happiness.

Q.9. What destination is obtained on failure to discharge duties of a human being?

Ans. If one fails to discharge his duties as a human being, he is forced to transmigrate to the asuryā planets and take birth in degraded species of life to work hard in ignorance and darkness. Those who do not understand or neglect the duties of human life are called asuras and asuras are destined to be degraded to the lower species of life in the darkest regions of the creation.

Q.10. What do the word suci and srimat indicate?

Ans. In the Bhagavad Gītā (6.41-43) it is stated that a man who enters upon the path of self-realization but does not complete the process, despite having sincerely tried to realize his relationship with God, is given a chance to appear in a family of suci or srimat. The word suci indicates a spiritually advanced brahmana and srimat indicates a vaisya, a member of the mercantile community.

Q.11. What is the fate of a person who tried sincerely but failed on the path of perfection?

Ans. When a person tried sincerely but failed on the path of perfection is given another chance for self-realization by the arrangement of the Lord. As confirmed in Bg. (6.41-43), he either appears in the family of suci (brahmanas)

or srimat (aristocratic mercantile family) where he can peacefully pursue further for his goal of self-realization and God-realization.

Q.12 Why does a person who lives a life devoid of self-realization deserve to fall into the lower species of life?

Q.13 Describe in your own words, practical ways, and the benefits therein, of applying the Īśāvāsyā principle in:

a.society in general

b.ISKCON

c.your own life

Give reference to Śrī Īśopaniṣad Mantras 1-3 and purports in your response.
(Open book)

MANTRA 4

Q.1. Which qualities of the Lord are mentioned in mantra 4 of Īśopaniṣad?

Ans. The different qualities of Lord mentioned in mantra 4 of Īśopaniṣad are-

The Lord is swifter than the mind although fixed in His abode

Unapproachable even by powerful demigods

Although in one place, He controls every one including those who supply air and rain

The Lord surpasses everyone in excellence

Q.2. Why even the great demigods misunderstand Krishna's position?

Ans. The Supreme Personality of Godhead – Śrī Krishna is completely transcendental to all mundane qualities. He is unlimited – vibhu whereas the living entity (right from Lord Brahmā to the smallest insect) is anu – like a minute particle and conditioned with material modes. How can something minute understand the unlimited that has no beginning and end.

In Bhagavad-Gītā it is mentioned that neither the host of demigods nor the great sages can know the opulence of the Supreme Lord because the Lord is the source of these demigods and the sages. The demigods and the sages try to know the Lord by mental speculation, but, because they are limited they become perplexed and misunderstand Krishna's position. To know, Krishna, He has to reveal Himself otherwise by speculative process, instead of knowing Him they will misunderstand Him.

Q.3. Establish the Absolute Truth as the Supreme Person. Analyze His potencies and explain the ultimate duty of the part and parcel living entity?

Ans. There is common controversy over whether the Supreme Absolute Truth is personal or impersonal. Bhagavad-Gītā (7.7) establishes that the Absolute Truth is the Personality of Godhead – Śrī Krishna and this is confirmed in every step. Brahmā Samhita says Īśvarah paramah krishnah sac-cid-ananda-vigrahaḥ that the Supreme Absolute Truth is Personality of Godhead Śrī Krishna. Mantra 4 of Śrī Īśopaniṣad also describes many features of the Absolute Truth which

indicate of personality. Features like having abode, being swifter than mind, overcoming all in running, controlling and surpassing in excellence all are indicative of the AT of being a person. If the Absolute Truth is not a person then what is the use of mentioning so many details in support of His personal feature?

The Lord is the source of all energies. He has innumerable energies which are principally categorized into three different categories viz. Internal, Marginal and External. The living entities including demigods and great sages are the marginal energy of the Lord. The material creation is done by the External energy of the Lord and the spiritual creation is made possible by the Internal energy of the Lord.

The different energies of the Lord are present everywhere. Although the Lord and His different energies are non-different, one should not mistake these energies for the Supreme Truth. Nor should one wrongly consider that the Supreme Lord is distributed everywhere impersonally or that He loses His personal existence.

The Lord is Complete Whole and the living beings are His parts and parcels. Every part and parcel of the Complete Whole is endowed with some particular energy to act according to the Lord's will. When the part and parcel living entity forgets his particular activates under the Lord's will, he is considered to be in *māyā* or illusion. Therefore it is the duty of every living entity to serve the Lord as per the capacity endowed to him by the Lord. Because all power is obtained from the Lord; therefore each particular power must be utilized to execute the will of the Lord and not otherwise. When the living being will surrender to the Lord in this way, then only it is possible that he can understand the Lord.

Q.4. Why the mental speculators cannot know the Supreme Personality of Godhead?

Ans. The Lord cannot be known through mental speculation. He can be known only by His devotees through His mercy. In the *Brahmā Samhita* (5.34) it is stated that even if a non-devotee philosopher travels through space at the speed of wind or the mind for hundreds of millions of years, he will still find that the Absolute Truth is far, far away from him. Thus by mental speculation it

is not possible to know God who is transcendental to all mundane reality. Men are accustomed to reach conclusions according to their capacity for understanding, but the Supreme Lord is not subject to our limited capacity for understanding. This is the reasons why the Upaniṣads warn us that no one can approach the Lord by his own limited potency. Although the individual parts and parcels of the Lord's potencies have all the symptoms of the Lord Himself, they have limited spheres of activity and are therefore limited and with limited sphere of activity it is quite impossible to understand the Supreme Lord. This is the reason why the mental speculators cannot know the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

Q.5. Explain about the potencies of the Lord giving the analogy of heat and light?

Ans. The Absolute Truth – Śrī Krishna – possesses innumerable energies. In the Viṣṇu Purana His potencies are compared to the heat and light that emanate from a fire. Although situated in one place, a fire can distribute its light and heat for some distance; similarly, the Absolute Personality of Godhead, although fixed in His transcendental abode, can diffuse His different energies everywhere.

The different energies of the Lord are present everywhere. Although, the Lord and His energies are non-different, one should not mistake these energies for the Supreme Truth. Nor should one wrongly consider that the Supreme Lord is distributed everywhere impersonally or that He loses His personal existence.

Q.6. What are the principle divisions of the innumerable energies of the Lord?

Ans. Although, the Lord's energies are innumerable, they can be divided into three principal categories: the internal potency, the marginal potency and the external potency. There are hundreds and millions of sub-headings to each of these categories. The dominating demigods who are empowered to control and administer such natural phenomena as air, light and rain are all classified within the marginal potency of the Absolute Person. Lesser living beings, including humans, also belong to the Lord's marginal potency. The material world is the creation of the Lord's external potency and the Spiritual sky,

where the kingdom of God is situated, is the manifestation of His internal potency.

Q.8. Why so many details of the personal features of the Lord are mentioned?

Ans. In the material world, people are accustomed to reach conclusions according to their capacity of understanding. So when they observe the presence of the different energies of the Lord everywhere, they conclude that the Lord is present in the form of His energies and not personally. They claim He has no personality. Under the influence of material nature, foolish and ignorant living beings who are but parts and parcels of the Lord try to conjecture about the Lord's transcendental position. Therefore to eliminate their doubt about the Lord's actual position the scripture describe so many personal features so that people can have actual understanding of the Lord's personal feature because ultimately the Absolute Truth is the Absolute Person, otherwise there would have been no need to mention so many details in support of His personal feature.

Q.9. Why the living entities cannot appreciate the full potency of the Supreme Lord?

Ans. The living entities are parts and parcels of the Absolute Truth and although the individual parts and parcels of the Lord's potencies have all the symptoms of the Lord Himself, they have limited spheres of activity and are therefore all limited. The parts and parcels are never equal to the whole; therefore they cannot appreciate the Lord's full potency.

Q.10. When the living entity is considered to be in māyā or illusion?

Ans. Every part and parcel of the Complete Whole is endowed with some particular energy to act according to the Lord's will. When the part and parcel living entity forgets his particular activities under the Lord's will, he is considered to be in māyā or illusion. To get out of the clutches of the māyā the living entity has to very carefully play the part designated by the Lord.

Q.11. What is initiative? Who can revive his original consciousness?

Ans. The active nature of the living entity is known as initiative. When a person properly utilizes his initiative or active nature with intelligence, understanding that everything is the Lord's potency, he can revive his original consciousness which was lost due to association with māyā, the external energy of the Lord.

Q.12. Why must all powers be utilized to execute the will of the Lord?

Ans. All power is obtained from the Lord; therefore each particular power must be utilized to execute the will of the Lord and not otherwise. The Lord can be known by one who has adopted such a submissive service attitude.

Q.13. What does perfect knowledge mean?

Ans. Perfect knowledge means knowing the Lord in all His features, knowing His potencies and knowing how these potencies work by His will. This matter is described by the Lord in Bhagavad-Gītā, the essence of all Upaniṣads.

MANTRA 5

Q.1. What are the contradictory qualities of the Lord mentioned in this mantra?

Ans. Some of the contradictory qualities of the Lord which are mentioned in this mantra are:

The Lords walks and does not walk

The Lord is very near as well as very far away

The Lord is within everything and yet He is outside of everything

Q.2. What do contradictory qualities of the Lord prove?

Ans. The contradiction in the qualities and activities of the Lord prove His inconceivable potencies. For example, the contradiction that: —He walks, and He does not walk , will mean ordinarily that, if someone can walk, it is illogical to say that he cannot walk. But in reference to God, such a contradiction simply serves to indicate His inconceivable power. With our limited fund of knowledge we cannot accommodate such contradictions, and therefore we conceive of the Lord in terms of our limited powers of understanding. For example, the impersonalist philosophers of the Māyāvāda School accept only the Lord's impersonal activities and reject his personal features. But the members of the Bhāgavata School, adopting the perfect conception of the Lord, accept His inconceivable potencies and thus understand that He is both personal and impersonal.

Q.3. Why one cannot understand the transcendental Lord?

Ans. The Lord possess inconceivable potencies which He can do apparently contradictory things. Contradictory things appear to be illogical to people in mundane world. The statement that —Lord can walk and He cannot walk is a contradiction. This we cannot fathom with our limited fund of knowledge. This is the reason some people accept one feature of the Lord and reject another feature of the Lord.

Q.4. How Śrī Īśopaniṣad refutes the argument that Lord has no personal existence?

Ans. By declaring that The Lord is within everything and yet He is outside of everything , Śrī Īśopaniṣad refutes the argument that Lord has no personal existence. Impersonalists take it for granted that since they cannot see the Lord with their naked eye, the Lord has no personal existence.

Q.5. How the Lord can become present within no time when He is situated in His abode of Goloka which is far, far beyond our conception?

Ans. One of the features of the Lord is that —He is very far away as well as He is very near. Because He is very near, He can present within no time even when He is situated in His abode of Goloka which is far, far beyond our conception.

Also the Lord is so swift that He can be faster than the speed of mind or wind and can descend before us within no time. Example is given of the appearance of Lord Nrisimhadeva who appeared from a pillar within no time to prove the word of His devotee Prahlada although there was no other reason for Him to appear from a pillar.

Q.6. What type of people neglect the presence of the God?

Ans. People with poor fund of knowledge neglect the presence of the God. Foolish and negligence people who cannot conceive the potencies of the Lord neglect Him considering him to be mortal being.

Q.7. What type of people equate the Supreme Lord with ordinary people?

Ans. Foolish people with poor fund of knowledge, not knowing the transcendental nature of the Lord think that the Lord descends in a body made of matter, just like an ordinary living being. Not knowing His inconceivable power, such foolish men place the Lord on an equal level with ordinary men.

Q.8 What is the conception of nonbelievers about the incarnation of the Supreme Lord?

Ans. The conception of the nonbelievers about the incarnation of the Supreme Lord is that the Lord cannot incarnate Himself at all; or that if He does He

descends in a form of material energy. These arguments are nullified if we accept the existence of the Lord's inconceivable potencies.

Q.9. How the Lord makes his appearance in this material world?

Ans. The Lord makes His appearance in this material world by His internal potency. When He appears in this world, He converts this material energy into His spiritual energy or internal energy. Since the source of the energies is one and the same, the energies can be utilized according to the will of their source. For example the Lord can appear in the form of the Arca-Vigraha, a Deity supposedly made of earth, stone or wood. Deity forms, although engraved from wood, stone or other matter, are not idols, as the iconoclasts contend.

Q.10. Why we cannot see the Supreme Lord? How one can see Him?

Ans. In our present state of imperfect material existence, we cannot see the Supreme Lord due to imperfect vision. Yet, those devotees who want to see Him by means of material vision are favoured by the Lord, who appears in a so-called material form to accept His devotee's services. One should not think that such devotees, who are in the lowest stage of devotional service, are worshiping an idol. They are factually worshiping the Lord, who has agreed to appear before them in an approachable way; nor is the 'Arca' form fashioned according to the whims of the worshiper. This form is eternally existent with all paraphernalia. This can be actually felt by a sincere devotee, not but by an atheist.

Q.11. To whom does the Lord reveal Himself?

Ans. The Lord says in Bhagavad Gītā (4.11) that how He treats His devotees depends on the devotee's degree of surrender. The Lord reserves the right not to reveal Himself to anyone and everyone but to show Himself only to those souls who surrender unto Him. Thus for the surrendered soul He is always within reach, whereas for the not-surrendered soul He is far, far away and cannot be approached.

Q.12. Discuss the concept of saguna and nirguna?

Ans. Two words are coined in the Vedic Scriptures about Lord : saguna (with qualities) and nirguna (without qualities). The word saguna does not imply that

when the Lord appears with perceivable qualities He must take on a material form and be subject to the laws of material nature. For Him there is no difference between the material and spiritual energies, because He is the source of all energies. As the controller of all energies, He cannot at any time be under their influence, as we are. The material energy works according to his direction; therefore He can use that energy for his purposes without ever being influenced by any of the qualities of that energy (In this sense He is nirguna, or without qualities). Nor does the Lord become a formless entity at any time, for ultimately He is the eternal form, the primeval Lord. His impersonal aspect, or Brahman effulgence, is but the glow of His body, just as the sun's rays are the to the Sun.

Q.13. Why the Lord cannot come under the influence of His energies?

Ans. The Lord is the source of all energies. He can utilize any one of His different energies in any way He like. He can convert one form of His energy into any other form as per His whims. Being the source and controller of all energies, He can never come under the influence of His energies (mayadhyakshena prakriti suyate sa characharam hetunanen kaunteya jagatdviparivartate).How can He be controlled by something which He Himself controls.

Q.14. Explain how the Lord is not a formless entity?

Ans. The Lord is the source of all forms. How can He be formless? He is the eternal form, the primeval Lord. His impersonal aspect, or Brahman effulgence, is but the glow of His personal rays, just as the sun's rays are the glow of the sun-god.

By definition God is perfect and complete. If someone says: 'God is only impersonal, He cannot be personal', that means he is limiting God. If God were formless, or if He were any less than His creation in any way, He could not be complete. The complete whole must contain everything both within and beyond our experience, otherwise He cannot be complete. God to be perfect and complete must be both personal and impersonal.

According to Śrīmad Bhāgavatam, God exists in three aspects: Brahman, Paramatma and Bhagavan:

Vadanti tat tatva vidas

tatvam yaj jñānam advayam

Brahmeti, paramatmeti,

bhagavan iti sabdyate

(S.B.1.2.11)

Brahman is the impersonal brahmajyoti which can be compared to the sunshine or energy of the sun. This Brahmajyoti is the effulgence emanating from the transcendental body of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Jñanis realise this Brahman aspect of God.

Paramatma is the all-pervading localized aspect of God present in every atom as well as in the hearts of all living beings. This can be compared to the reflection of sun in a water body. A Yogi through the process of meditation sees in his heart the localized representation of the Lord, called "Paramatma". This Paramatma is the four handed form of Viṣṇu who is situated within every atom & in the hearts of every living entity.

Bhagavan is the ultimate realization of the Absolute Truth and is the last word in transcendence. This is the all-glorious, all-beautiful two handed form of Lord Śrī Krishna in a three-fold bend posture. Realizing this Bhagavan feature also includes the realization of Brahman and Paramatma features, because once you see the sun face to face then you will know that the sun is the source of the sunshine and reflection in water.

Ancient India's Vedic literature which predates the Bible as well as the Koran and was written in a highly advanced spiritual culture, specifically reveals God's form, His features, His pastimes, and His personality. Of course God's attributes are infinite, and words can only hint at His glory. Certainly, God's form is not like ours - made of flesh, bone and stool. It is completely transcendental, beyond the limits of sense perception. But it is a form nonetheless.

Om Shri Krishnaya namah

Om sac cid ananda rupaya

[Gopāla Tapani Upanishad 1.1-1.2]

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

The first verse of Brahmā Samhita says:

Īśvara parama Krishna

sac cid ananda vigraha

anadir adir govindah

sarva karana karanam

Krishna (God) is the supreme controller. He has a form of eternity, knowledge, and bliss. He is the prime cause of all causes. The word vigraha represents the form.

From the above verses we can see that the Supreme Lord is not a formless entity. He has a very beautiful, very attractive and charming form which is the source of all emanations.

Q.15. How the Lord is within everything. Explain with an example?

Ans. The Lord is present within everything in the form of Paramatma who is all-pervading localized aspect of God present in every atom as well as in the hearts of all living beings. He is the four handed form of Viṣṇu who is situated within every atom & in the hearts of every living entity. Example of the pastimes of appearance of Lord Nṛsīṃha is given to make this point clear that the Lord is present within everything. When the atheist father of Prahlaḍa (the powerful demon Hiraṇyakaśipu) asked his son about the presence of the Lord, Prahlaḍa replied that the Lord is present within every atom and within everything, he further asked whether the Lord is present within this pillar, the reply was yes the Lord is present within them pillar also. When the demon smashed the pillar, Lord Nṛsīṃha appeared from the pillar. This shows that the Lord is within everything.

Q.16. What is the secret of Lord's appearance? What is the purpose of his appearance?

Ans. The Lord appears for the pleasure of His devotees and not on demands of atheistic people. He appears to give pleasure to His devotees and protect them (satyam vidhatum nija bhritya bhasitam khambhe sabhayam ... na nrm na manusam). When He appears He re-establishes the principal of religion and kills the demonic people.

Q.17. How the Lord is within and outside of everything. Explain?

Ans. The primeval Lord Govinda enters everything by His plenary portion (Paramatma form). He enters the universe as well as all the atoms of the universe. He is outside in His 'Virat' form and he is within everything as 'antaryami'. As antaryami He witnesses everything that is going on, and He awards us the results of our actions as karma-phala. We ourselves may forget what we have done in previous lives, but because the Lord witnesses our actions, the results of our actions, the result of our actions are always there, and we have to undergo the reactions nonetheless. The fact is that there is nothing but God within and without. Everything is a manifestation of His different energies, like heat and light emanating from a fire.

MANTRA 6

Q.1. Analyze the three stages of realization of the Supreme Lord's presence.

Ans. The Supreme Lord's presence is realized in three stages. These are (i) kanistha stage (ii) madhyama stage and (iii) uttama stage.

Kanistha stage is the lowest stage of realization. The devotee at the kanistha stage goes to a place of worship, such as a temple, church or mosque, according to his religious faith and worships there according to scriptural injunctions. Devotees in this stage consider the Lord to be present at the place of worship and nowhere else. They cannot ascertain who is in what position in devotional service, nor can they tell who has realized the Supreme Lord. Such devotees follow the routine formulas and sometimes quarrel among themselves, considering one type of devotion better than another. These kanistha-adhikaris are actually materialistic devotees who are simply trying to transcend the material boundary to reach the spiritual plane.

Those who have attained the second stage of realization are called madhyama-adhikaris. These devotees observe the distinctions between four categories of being (i) the Supreme Lord (ii) the devotees of the Lord (iii) the innocent, who have no knowledge of the Lord and (iv) the atheists, who have no faith in the Lord and hate those in devotional service. The madhyama adhikari behaves differently toward these four classes of persons. He adores the Lord, considering Him the object of love; he makes friends with those who are in devotional service; he tries to awaken the dormant love of God in the hearts of the innocent and he avoids the atheists, who deride the very name of the Lord.

Above the madhyama-adhikari is the uttama-adhikari, who sees everything in relation to the Supreme Lord. Such a devotee does not discriminate between an atheist and a theist but sees everyone as part and parcel of God. He knows that there is no essential difference between a vastly learned brahmana and a dog in the street, because both of them are part and parcel of the Lord, although they are encaged in different bodies on account of the different qualities of their activities in their previous lives. He sees that the brahmana particle of the Supreme Lord has not misused his little independence given him by the Lord and that the dog particles has misused his independence and is

therefore being punished by the laws of nature by being encaged in the form of a dog. Not considering the respective actions of the brahmana and the dog, the uttama adhikari tries to do well to both. Such a learned devotee is not misled by material bodies but is attracted by the spiritual spark within them.

Q.2. Explain the process of attaining Vedic wisdom and establish the real conclusion of the Vedas by discussing the complete agreement among the Vedas, Upaniṣadas, Vedanta, Bhagavad-Gītā and Śrīmad Bhāgavatam.

Ans. The process of attaining the Vedic wisdom is through disciplic succession which starts from the Supreme Personality of Godhead – Śrī Krishna. The Lord imparts the Vedic truth or knowledge to the first created being and the secondary creator Brahma, who gives this knowledge to his son and disciple Śrīla Nārada, from Nārada to Vyasa and from Vyasa to many of his disciples (tad vidhi pranipatena pariprashnena sevaya).

At present there are many commentaries on the revealed scriptures, but most of them are not in the line of disciplic succession coming from Śrīla Vyasadeva, who originally compiled the Vedic wisdom. The final, most perfect and sublime work by Śrīla Vyasadeva is Śrīmad Bhāgavatam, which is the natural commentary on the Vedanta sutra. There is also the Bhagavad-Gītā, which was spoken by the Lord Himself and recorded by Vyasadeva. These are the most important revealed scriptures, and any commentary that contradicts the principles of the Bhagavad-Gītā or Śrīmad Bhāgavatam is unauthorized. There is complete agreement among the Upaniṣads, Vedanta-sutra, Vedas, Bhagavad-Gītā and Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam and no one should try to reach any conclusion about the Vedas without receiving instructions from members of Vyasadeva's disciplic succession, who believe in the Personality of Godhead and His diverse energies as they are explained in Śrī Īśopaniṣad.

Q.3. Analyze the defects of materialistic plans of politicians and philanthropists for bringing about universal brotherhood.

Ans. According to the Bhagavad-Gītā (18.54), only one who is already on the liberated platform (brahma-bhuta stage) can become an uttama-adhikari devotee and see every living being as his own brother. This vision cannot be

had by politicians or philanthropists, who are always after some material gain. The politicians and philanthropists talk big words about universal brotherhood, but allow slaughter of poor animals and hamper their progress on the scale of evolution. They merely try to imitate the symptoms of an uttam-adhakari and outwardly serve another's body for the purpose of fame or material reward, but they do not serve the spirit soul. Such an imitator can have no information of the spiritual world. The uttama-adhikari sees the spirit soul within the material body and serves him as spirit. Thus the material aspect is automatically served.

Q.4. How is Madhyama Vaishnava different from the Kanistha?

Ans. Kanistha stage is the lowest stage of realization. The devotee at the kanistha stage goes to a place of worship, such as a temple, church or mosque, according to his religious faith and worships there according to scriptural injunctions. Devotees in this stage consider the Lord to be present at the place of worship and nowhere else. They cannot ascertain who is in what position in devotional service, nor can they tell who has realized the Supreme Lord. Such devotees follow the routine formulas and sometimes quarrel among themselves, considering one type of devotion better than another. These kanistha-adhikaris are actually materialistic devotees who are simply trying to transcend the material boundary to reach the spiritual plane.

Whereas a madhyama-adhikari vaishnava observe the distinctions between four categories of being (i) the Supreme Lord (ii) the devotees of the Lord (iii) the innocent, who have no knowledge of the Lord and (iv) the atheists, who have no faith in the Lord and hate those in devotional service. The madhyama adhikari behaves differently toward these four classes of persons. He adores the Lord, considering Him the object of love; he makes friends with those who are in devotional service; he tries to awaken the dormant love of God in the hearts of the innocent and he avoids the atheists, who deride the very name of the Lord.

Q.5. Who never hates anything or any being?

Ans. The maha-bhāgavat devotee of the Lord who sees everything in relation to the Supreme Lord, who sees all living entities as His parts and parcels, and

who sees the Supreme Lord within everything never hates anything or any being.

Q.6. Who is a false philanthropist?

Ans. Those who imitate an uttama adhikari by flaunting a sense of oneness or fellowship but who behave on the bodily platform are actually false philanthropists.

Q.7. From whom one should learn the conception of universal brotherhood?

Ans. The conception of universal brotherhood must be learned from an uttama adhikari and not from a foolish person who does not properly understand the individual soul or the Supreme Lord's Supersoul expansion, who dwells everywhere.

Q.8. What is the meaning of anupasyati?

Ans. The word anupasyati means that one should —observe or systematically see. To observe or systematically see means that one must follow the previous acaryas, the perfected teachers. Anupasyati is the Sanskrit word used for systematically seeing. Anu means —to follow , and pasyati means —to observe . Thus, the word anupasyati means that one should not see things as he does with the naked eye but should follow the previous acaryas.

Q.9. Why one cannot “see” with naked eye? How one can see properly?

Ans. Due to material defects, the naked eye cannot see anything properly. One cannot see properly unless one has heard from a superior source, and the highest source is the Vedic wisdom, which is spoken by the Lord Himself.

Q.12. What sorts of commentaries of Vedic literature are unauthorized?

Ans. Any commentary on Vedic literature that contradicts the principles of the Bhagavad-Gītā and Śrīmad Bhāgavatam is unauthorized.

Mantra 7

Q.1. What is the meaning of oneness?

Ans. The meaning of oneness is to perceive qualitative equality. Like fire and spark. Spark is fire only qualitatively. The word fire has meaning when it is actually understood to be the synthesis of heat, light and fire. Seeing actual oneness is seeing everything as the energy of the Supreme Lord. The word oneness has meaning when everything is seen in the relation with the Supreme Personality of Godhead and as His energy. This is how the maha-bhāgavat devotees of the Lord see oneness or 'ekatvam'.

Q.2. Analyze how godless civilization results in confusion and lamentation and suggest a practical formula for real universal harmony.

Ans. A godless civilization arises from illusion, and the result of such a civilization is lamentation. A godless civilization, such as that sponsored by the modern politicians, is always full of anxiety because it may be crushed at any moment. That is the law of nature. As stated in the Bhagavad gītā (7.14), no one else save those who surrender at the lotus feet of the Supreme Lord can surpass the stringent laws of nature. Thus if we wish to get rid of all sorts of illusion and anxiety and create unity out of all diverse interests, we must bring God into all our activities. The result of our activities must be used to serve the interest of the Lord, and not for any other purpose.

Q.3. What are the two ways of understanding oneness of the soul and God?

Ans. The two ways of understanding oneness of the soul and God is by considering the following two examples.

First example is given of fire and spark. Fire and spark are qualitatively one but quantitatively different. The spark also emits heat and light but it is very minute and insignificant as compared to the fire. The spark can be called fire only qualitatively but at the level of quantity it is not fire. Another way to look at oneness of fire is that fire produces heat and light. Generally, fire, heat and light are understood to be separate entities. However, in the actual sense without heat and light the fire cannot be called fire. Similarly, the Supreme Lord is fire and the individual living entity is spark. They are qualitatively one

but quantitatively different. As the spark has no existence without the fire, the living entity has no existence without the Supreme Lord. Seeing oneness is possible only in relation with the Lord. Everyone is part and parcel of the Supreme Lord only qualitatively because the Lord as well as the living entity is constituted by eternity, knowledge and bliss.

Another example is given of the water in the ocean and ocean water in a glass. Both the waters are qualitatively one but quantitatively different. The ocean water can sail big, big boats, ships, give shelter of innumerable living entity but the same water in a glass cannot do any such things. Even the quantity of salt present in the Ocean is far beyond comparison then the amount of salt available in the ocean water in a glass. However, the chemical properties of the ocean water in the glass and in the ocean are same. Thus there is oneness between Supreme Lord and the living entity – but only qualitatively. The Supreme Lord is vibhu and His parts and parcels – the living being are anu (atomic). Knowing the actual spiritual position is actually seeing oneness of both the Lord and the living entity and also oneness among the living entities.

Q.4. Who can become a true knower of things?

Ans. One who always sees all living entities as spiritual sparks, in quality one with the Lord, becomes a true knower of things. For such a person there cannot be any illusion or anxiety.

Q.5 Who can correctly see the spiritual position of a living being?

Ans. Only a madhyama and uttama adhikari (devotees at the middle stage and highest state) can see the actual spiritual position of a living being i.e. the living entities are qualitatively one with the Supreme Lord, just as the spark of a fire are qualitatively one with the fire. Yet sparks are not fire as far as quantity is concerned, for the quantity of heat and light present in the sparks is not equal to that in the fire. Similarly, the madhyama and uttama adhikaris can see the living being qualitatively one but quantitatively different from the Lord.

Q.6. What is the great devotee's vision of oneness in the God and living entity?

Ans. The maha-bhāgavat devotee sees oneness in the sense that he sees everything as the energy of the Supreme Lord. Since there is no difference

between the energy and the energetic, there is the sense of oneness. Although from analytical point of view heat and light are different from fire, there is no meaning to the word 'fire' without heat and light. In synthesis, therefore, heat, light and fire are the same.

Q.7. What does the word 'ekatvam anupasyatah' indicate?

Ans. The word ekatvam anupasyatah indicate that one should see the unity of all living entities from the viewpoint of the revealed scriptures. The word ekatvam in a broader sense indicate that there is one interest, just as in a family the interest of all members is one, or in a nation the national interest is one, although there are many different individual citizens. Since all living entities are all members of the same supreme family, there interest and that of the Supreme Being are not different.

Q.8. What percent of quality of the Complete Whole does the individual spark possess?

Ans. The Individual spark possesses about 80% of the known qualities of the whole, but they are qualitatively one with the Complete Whole.

Q.9. What is actual aspiration of the spiritual being and how it can be obtained?

Ans. The spiritual entities are meant for enjoyment, as stated in the Vedanta-sutra (1.1.12) anand-mayo 'bhyasat. Therefore, the actual aspiration of all spiritual being is to seek enjoyment. By nature and constitution, every living being – including the supreme Lord and each of His parts and parcels – is meant for eternal enjoyment. The actual enjoyment or happiness is available only on the spiritual platform where the Supreme Lord is eternally enjoying with all his innumerable associates. The living beings who are en-caged in the material tabernacle are constantly seeking enjoyment, but they are seeking it on the wrong platform. They need to change their focus and try to approach the spiritual platform. The part and parcel (living entities) is enjoying by serving the Supreme Whole and the Supreme Whole (Personality of Godhead) is enjoying the service of the parts and parcel. This is the constitutional position of both the Lord and the living entity.

Q.10. What is the platform of nirguna? What is its characteristic?

Ans. The spiritual platform which is free from any trace of material qualities is known as platform of nirguna. On the nirguna platform there is never a clash over the object of enjoyment. At this platform the centre of enjoyment is the Supreme Lord, who is the centre of the sublime and spiritual rasa dance.

Q.11. What is the highest platform of spiritual interest?

Ans. The Supreme Lord is eternally enjoying with His associates at the spiritual platform. Since we are all looking for real enjoyment, we must try to reach the spiritual platform where the real centre of enjoyment is the Supreme Personality of Godhead – Śrī Krishna, who is the centre of the sublime and spiritual rasa dance. We are all meant to join Him and enjoy life with one transcendental interest and without any clash. This is the highest platform of spiritual interest, and as soon as one realizes this perfect form of oneness, there can be no question of illusion (moha) or lamentation (soka).

Q.12. How a Godless civilization arises and what are its results?

Ans. A Godless civilization arises from illusion, and the result of such a civilization is lamentation. A godless civilization, such as that sponsored by the modern politicians, is always full of anxieties because it may be crushed at any moment.

Q.13. How one can surpass the stringent laws of nature?

Ans. As stated in the Bhagavad Gītā (7.14), no one but those who are surrendered at the lotus feet of the Supreme Lord can surpass the stringent laws of nature. Thus if one wish to get rid of all sorts of illusion and anxiety and create unity out of all diverse interests, one must bring God into all our activities. Create a society which is God centered.

Q.14. How one can perceive the atma-bhuta interest?

Ans. Only by serving the Lord's interest can one perceive the atma-bhuta interest. The atma-bhuta interest and the brahma-bhuta interest mentioned in Bhagavad Gītā (18.54) are one the same. The supreme atma, or soul, is the Lord Himself and the minute atma is the living entity.

Q.15. Why the supreme atma maintains all minute atmas?

Ans. The supreme atma or Paramatma alone maintains all individual minute beings, for the Supreme Lord wants to derive pleasure out of their affection. Like the father extends himself through his children and maintain them in order to derive pleasure. If the children obey the father's will, family affairs will run smoothly, with one interest and a pleasing atmosphere is created. The same situation is transcendently arranged in the absolute family of the Parabrahman, the Supreme Spirit.

Q.16. When does a living being completely surrender at the lotus feet of the Supreme Being – Śrī Krishna?

Ans. As soon as one is fully cognizant of the transcendental fact that both the Supreme Soul (Lord Krishna) and the individual soul (living entities) are persons with thinking, feeling and willing, and that Krishna is all-in-all, he at once surrenders unto the lotus feet of the Supreme Being, Śrī Krishna. But such a mahatma, or great soul is very rarely seen because such transcendental realization is achieved only after many, many births. Once it is attained, there is no longer any illusion or lamentation or the miseries of material existence or birth and death, which are all experienced in our present life.

Mantra 8

Q.1. What an uttama-adhikari must factually know about the Supreme Personality of Godhead?

Ans. Such a person (an uttama adhikari) must factually know the greatest of all, the Personality of Godhead, who is un-embodied, omniscient, beyond reproach, without veins, pure and uncontaminated, and the self-sufficient philosopher who has been fulfilling everyone's desire since time immemorial.

Q.2. Discuss the transcendental and eternal form of the Absolute Personality of Godhead?

Ans. The Supreme Personality of Godhead is not formless. He has His own transcendental form, which is not at all similar to the forms of the mundane world. The transcendental body of the Lord has nothing like veins. He is un-embodied which means that there is no difference between His body, mind and His soul. Nor is He forced to accept a body according to the laws of nature. He is the Complete Whole and His mind, body and He Himself are all one and the same. The Lord is sac-cid-ananda-vigraha, which means that He is the eternal form fully representing transcendental existence, knowledge and bliss. As such He does not require a separate body or mind, as we do in material existence. The Lord's transcendental body is completely different from ours. Each and every part of His body can do the work of the other senses. This means that the Lord can walk with His hands, accept things with His legs, see with His hands and feet, eat with His eyes, etc. In śruti-mantras it is also said that although the Lord has no hands and legs like ours. He has a different type of hands and legs, by which He can accept all that we offer Him and run faster than anyone.

Q.3. What does the word un-embodied indicate about the Supreme Lord?

Ans. The word 'un-embodied' about the Supreme Lord indicates that there is no difference between the His body, mind and His soul. Nor is He forced to accept a body according to the laws of nature.

Q.4. What does the word ‘formless’ mean with regard to the Supreme Lord?

Ans. The Vedic literature clearly states that the Lord’s transcendental body is completely different from our bodies, thus He is sometimes described as formless. Thus the Lord is sometimes described as formless. This means that He has no form like ours and that He is devoid of a form we can conceive of.

Q.5. What does the word ‘sukram’ (omnipotent) confirm about the Supreme Lord?

Ans. The use of the word ‘sukram’ (omnipotent) confirms that each and every part of the Lord’s body can do the work of any other senses, which means that the Lord can walk with His hands, accept things with His legs, see with His hands and feet, eat with His eyes, etc. It also indicates that although the Lord has no hands and legs like ours. He has a different type of hands and legs, by which He can accept all that we offer Him and run faster than anyone.

Q.6. What is archa-vigraha (deity form)? How does He descend?

Ans. Archa-vigraha is the worshipable form of the Supreme Lord, which is installed in temples by authorized acaryas who have realized the Lord in terms of Mantra Seven of Śrī Īśopaniṣad. This form of the Lord is non-different from the original form of the Lord. The Lord’s original form is that of Śrī Krishna, and Śrī Krishna expands Himself into an unlimited number of forms, such as Baladeva, Rama, Nrsimha and Varaha. All of these forms are one and the same Personality of Godhead. Similarly, the archa-vigraha worshiped in the temples is also an expanded form of the Lord. By worshiping the archa-vigraha, one can at once approach the Lord, who accepts the service of a devotee by His omnipotent energy. The archa-vigraha of the Lord descends at the request of the acaryas, the holy teachers, and works exactly in the original way of the Lord by virtue of the Lord’s omnipotence. Foolish people who have no knowledge of Śrī Īśopaniṣad or of any of the other śruti-mantras consider archa-vigraha, which is worshiped by pure devotees, to be made of material elements. This form may be seen as material by the imperfect eyes of foolish people or kanistha-adhikaris, but such people do not know that the Lord, being omnipotent and omniscient, can transform matter into spirit and spirit into matter, as He desires.

Q.7. What is the cause of the fallen condition of the living entity?

Ans. The fallen condition of the living entities is due entirely to forgetfulness of their relationship with God. The Lord regrets the fallen condition of men with little knowledge who deride Him because He descends like a man into this world.

Q.8. What type of people do not know the omnipotence of the Lord?

Ans. Those who deride the Lord seeing Him descended in the human form are considered fools and rascals. Such fallen conditioned people who are poorly informed persons do not know the omnipotence of the Lord.

Q.9. To whom the Lord does not manifest fully?

Ans. The Lord does not manifest Himself in full to the mental speculators. He can be appreciated only in proportion to one's surrender to Him.

Q.10. Explain with example how a person's good qualification by itself is insufficient to enable him to occupy a post?

Ans. Mere good qualification only is not sufficient to receive awards. Consent of the awarding authority is also necessary. For example, if one wants to be a high court judge, he must acquire not only the necessary qualification but also the consent of the authority that can award the title of high-court judge. The qualifications in themselves are insufficient for one to occupy the post; it must be awarded by some superior authority. Similarly, when a living being desires something, the Lord supplies the object of that desire in proportion to one's qualification, but good qualifications in themselves are not sufficient to enable one to receive awards. The mercy of the Lord is also required.

Q.11. What does the living entity, who knows his constitutional position, demand from Lord?

Ans. Ordinarily the living entity does not know what to ask from the Lord, or which post to seek. However, when he comes to know his constitutional position, he asks to be accepted into the transcendental association of the Lord in order to render transcendental loving service unto Him.

Q.12. What type of people are described to be of divided or splayed intelligence?

Ans. Living being under the spell of material nature who asks many other things from the Supreme Lord other than devotional service is described of having divided or splayed intelligence. Their intelligence is many branched.

Q.13. What is the real goal of life? Who forgets this real goal?

Ans. The real goal of life is to go back home back to Godhead. However, those who are captivated by the temporary beauties of the external energy forget the real aim of life. Such people try to adjust things by various plans and programs but this is like chewing what has already been chewed.

Q.14. What does the word *yāthātathyataḥ* indicate?

Ans. The word *yāthātathyataḥ* indicate that the Lord rewards the living entities just in pursuance of their desires. If a living wants to go to hell, the Lord allows him to do so without interference, and if he wants to go back home, back to Godhead, the Lord helps him.

Q.15. What does the word *paribhuh* mean? Illustrate its significance.

Ans. The word *paribhuh* mean the greatest of all. No one is greater than or equal to the Lord. Other living entities are described as beggars who ask goods from the Lord. The Lord supplies the things the living entities desire. If the entities were equal to the Lord in potency – if they were omnipotent and omniscient – there would be no question of their begging from the Lord, even for so called liberation. Real liberation means going back to Godhead. Liberation as conceived by impersonalists is a myth and begging for sense gratification has to continue eternally unless the beggar comes to his spiritual senses and realizes his constitutional position.

Q.16. In what sense the Lord is *suddham* (antiseptic) and *apāpa-viddham* (prophylactic)? Discuss.

Ans. The Lord is *Suddham* (antiseptic) in the sense that even an impure thing can become purified just by touching Him. The word “prophylactic” refers to the power of His association. As mentioned in the *Bhagavad-Gītā* (9.30-31), a devotee may appear to be *su-duracara* (not well behaved) in the beginning, but

he should be accepted as pure because he is on the right path. This is due to prophylactic nature of the Lord's association. The Lord is apapa-viddham because sin cannot touch Him. Even if He acts in a way that appears to be sinful, such actions are all-good, for there is no question of His being affected by sin. Because in all circumstances He is suddham, most purified. He is often compared to the sun. The sun extracts moisture from many untouchable places on the earth, yet it remains pure. In fact, it purifies obnoxious things by virtue of its sterilizing powers. If the sun (a material object) is so powerful, then we can hardly begin to imagine the purifying strength of the all-powerful Lord.

Q.17. Establish that the Supreme Lord is not formless, despite apparent Vedic statement that He is so, and explain why the Deity form of the Lord is not material.

Ans. Sometimes in the Vedic literatures Lord is sometimes described as formless but this means that He has no form like ours. He is devoid of a form we can conceive with our material senses. The Lord's transcendental body is completely different from our bodies. He is not formless. He has His own transcendental form, which is not at all similar to the forms of the mundane world. The transcendental body of the Lord has nothing like veins. He is unembodied which means that there is no difference between His body, mind and His soul. Nor is He forced to accept a body according to the laws of nature. He is the Complete Whole and His mind, body and He Himself are all one and the same. The Lord is sac-cid-ananda-vigraha, which means that He is the eternal form fully representing transcendental existence, knowledge and bliss. As such He does not require a separate body or mind, as we do in material existence. Each and every part of His body can do the work of the other senses. This means that the Lord can walk with His hands, accept things with His legs, see with His hands and feet, eat with His eyes, etc. In śruti-mantras it is also said that although the Lord has no hands and legs like ours. He has a different type of hands and legs, by which He can accept all that we offer Him and run faster than anyone.

Archa-vigraha or deity form of the Lord is His worshipable form, which is installed in temples by authorized acaryas who have realized the Lord. This form of the Lord is non-different from the original form of the Lord. The Lord's original form is that of Śrī Krishna, and Śrī Krishna expands Himself into an

unlimited number of forms, such as Baladeva, Rama, Nrsimha and Varaha. All of these forms are one and the same Personality of Godhead. Similarly, the archa-vigraha worshiped in the temples is also an expanded form of the Lord. By worshiping the archa-vigraha, one can at once approach the Lord, who accepts the service of a devotee by His omnipotent energy. The archa-vigraha of the Lord descends at the request of the acaryas, the holy teachers, and works exactly in the original way of the Lord by virtue of the Lord's omnipotence.

Q.18. What do we learn by knowing that the Lord has no veins ?

Ans. The concept of veins indicates a material body. The anatomy of a material body must have mechanical construction with veins and so forth. The transcendental body of the Supreme Lord has nothing like veins. It is clearly stated that the Lord is un-embodied which means the body; mind and soul of the Lord are non-different. They are all the same thing – sac-cid-ananda-vigraha. Lord's body having no veins means Lord's body is not material – it does not require any mechanical sort of functioning. It is completely transcendental.

MANTRA 9

Q.1. How can knowledge be considered worse than ignorance?

Ans. Avidyā or ignorance is undoubtedly dangerous, but vidya, or knowledge, is even more dangerous when mistaken or misguided. This mantra of Śrī Īśopaniṣad is more applicable today than at any time in the past. Modern civilization has advanced considerably in the field of mass education but the result is that people are unhappy than ever before because of the stress placed on material advancement to the exclusion of the most important part of life, the spiritual aspect.

Those who simply engage in the profitless pursuit of sense gratification are worshipping avidyā, they are ignorant fools but worse than these people are those who play the role of helping this sort of civilization in the name of educational advancement. These people are actually doing more harm than those who are on the platform of gross sense gratification.

As far as vidya is concerned, it is to know that the proprietor of everything is the Supreme Personality of Godhead and forgetful of this fact is ignorance. The more a man forgets this fact of life, the more he is in darkness. In view of this a godless civilization directed toward the so called advancement of education is more dangerous than a civilization in which the masses of people are “less educated”.

Q.2. What is real education and what are its aims?

Ans. As far as vidya or real knowledge is concerned it is to know that everything animate or inanimate that is within the universe is controlled and owned by the Lord. The Supreme Lord is the proprietor of everything that exists. And one should accept only those things necessary and kept as his quota for his maintenance.

The aim of real education should be self-realization, realization of the spiritual values of the soul. Any education which does not lead to such realization must be considered avidyā or nescience. Vidya means to become aware of the transcendental reality and lead life with God in the centre of all activities. If we

forget this fact of life and culture nescience we will be pushed down to the darkest region of ignorance.

Q.3. Discuss the four kinds of men who worship ignorance?

Ans. Four kinds of men who worship ignorance are (i) Those miscreants who are grossly foolish (ii) Those who are lowest among the man kind (iii) Those whose knowledge is stolen by illusion and (iv) Those who partake of the atheistic nature of demons.(BG 7.15) These people who are engaged in the work of gross sense gratification are mudhas – asses. The ass is a symbol of stupidity. Those who simply engage in the profitless pursuit of sense gratification are worshipping avidyā. And those who play the role of helping this sort of civilization in the name of educational advancement are actually doing more harm than those who are on the platform of gross sense gratification.

Q.4. What is avidyā? What types of people are engaged in the pursuit of avidyā?

Ans. Avidyā is ignorance. Ignorance is the lack of knowledge of the position of the Supreme Personality of Godhead – Śrī Krishna. Any education which does not lead to realization of the self and realization of the spiritual value of the soul must be considered avidyā or nescience.

Those who are in deep ignorance deride the position of the Lord. The Lord is the sole proprietor of everything that exists, enjoyer of everything that is there and the greatest well-wisher of everyone. Forgetfulness of this fact is ignorance. The more a man forgets this fact of life, the more he is in darkness. The godless civilization directed towards the so-called advancement of education is actually advancing more and more towards deep dark ignorance. Culture of nescience means to go down to the darkest region of ignorance.

Those who do not believe in the authority of the Supreme Lord are actually engaged in the pursuit of avidyā. They are categorized in for different types viz. (i) Those miscreants who are grossly foolish (ii) Those who are lowest among the man kind (iii) Those whose knowledge is stolen by illusion and (iv) Those who partake of the atheistic nature of demons.

Q.5. Which class of men are called karmīs and what are their activities?

Ans. Of the different classes of men – karmīs, jnanis and yogis – the karmīs are those who are engaged in the activities of sense gratification. In the modern civilization, 99.9 percent of people are engaged in the activities of sense gratification under the flags of industrialism, economic development, altruism, political activism, and so on. All these activities are more or less based on satisfaction of the senses. In the language of Bhagavad-Gītā (7.15), people who are engaged in gross sense gratification are mudhas – asses. The ass is a symbol of stupidity. Those who simply engage in the profitless pursuit of sense gratification are worshiping avidyā, according to Śrī Īśopaniṣad.

Q.6. How do the scriptures evaluate the advancement of learning by godless people?

Ans. The advancement of learning by godless people is evaluated to be like a jewel on the hood of a cobra. A cobra decorated with a valuable jewel is more dangerous than one not decorated. In the Hari-bhakti-sudhodaya (3.11.12), the advancement of education by a godless people is compared to decorations on a dead body.

Q.7. Explain how the modern civilization is a patchwork of activities meant to cover the perpetual miseries of material existence.

Ans. The modern civilization is a patchwork of activities meant to cover the perpetual miseries of material existence because all the activities of the modern civilization are aimed towards sense gratification. It does not reveal the reality of the material existence. It is just like decorations on a dead body. In India, as in many other countries, some people follow the custom of leading a procession with a decorated dead body for the pleasure of the lamenting relatives. In the same way the modern civilization by its misguided education tries to cover up the reality of this miserable material existence.

Q.8. Who is veda-vada-rata? Illustrate their disposition and destination?

Ans. According to the Bhagavad-Gītā (2.42, 7.15), mistaken mundane educators are known as veda-vada-rata and mayayapahrta-jñāna. They may also be atheistic demons, the lowest of men. Those who are veda-vada-rata pose themselves as very learned in the Vedic literature, but unfortunately they are

completely diverted from the purpose of the Vedas. In the Bhagavad-Gītā (15.15) it is said that the purpose of the Vedas is to know the Personality of Godhead, but these veda-vada-rata men are not at all interested in the Personality of Godhead. On the contrary, they are fascinated by such fruitive results as the attainment of heaven.

Veda-vada-rata people, instead of realizing that the purpose of the Vedas is to revive the forgetful soul's lost relationship with the Personality of Godhead, take it for granted that attainment of heavenly pleasure, which is the cause of material bondage, as the ultimate end of the Vedas. Such people misguide others by misinterpreting the Vedic literature. Sometime they even condemn the puranas, which are authentic Vedic explanations for laymen. The veda-vada-ratas give their own explanations of the Vedas, neglecting the authority of great teachers (acaryas). They also tend to raise some unscrupulous person from among themselves and present him as the leading exponent of Vedic knowledge. The veda-vada-rata people have their own acaryas, who are not in the chain of transcendental succession.

Veda-vada-rata people with their misunderstanding and misinterpretation of Vedic literatures and by following their unscrupulous acaryas gradually progress into the darkest region of ignorance. They fall even further into ignorance than those who have no knowledge of the Vedas at all.

Q.9. What is the ultimate purpose of all religions?

Ans. The ultimate purpose of all religions is to bring the forgetful living being back to Godhead by awakening God consciousness in the forgetful living being. This same purpose is presented in various different ways in different scriptures of the world.

Q.10. Who is mayayapahrta-jñāna? Explain their attributes?

Ans. The mayayapahrta-jñāna class of men are self-made 'Gods'. Such men think that they themselves are God and that there is no need to worshiping any other God. They will agree to worship an ordinary man if he happens to be rich, but they will never worship the Personality of Godhead. Such men, unable to recognize their own foolishness, never consider how it is that God can be entrapped by māyā, His own illusory energy. If God were ever entrapped by

māyā, māyā would be more powerful than God. Such men say that God is all-powerful, but they do not consider that if He is all-powerful there is no possibility of His being overpowered by māyā. These self-made 'Gods' cannot answer all these questions very clearly; they are simply satisfied to have become "God" themselves (danda dharan matrena naro narayana bhaveh).

Q. 11. a) What is the English translation of atma-ha?

b) Explain what an atma-ha is.

c) Describe the 3 different types of atma-ha or ignorant people mentioned in Śrīla Prabhupāda's purport to verse 9. What are the destinations of the atma-ha?

MANTRA 10

Q.1. What are the different processes of culturing knowledge?

Ans. The process of culturing knowledge has been advised in Bhagavad-Gītā (13.8-12). These are given as follows:

One should become a perfect gentleman and learn to give proper respect to others

One should not pose himself as a religionist simply for name and fame

One should not become a source of anxiety to others by the action of his body, the thoughts of his mind or by his words

One should learn forbearance even in the face of provocation from others

One should learn to avoid duplicity in his dealings with others

One should search out a bona fide spiritual master who can lead him gradually to the stage of spiritual realization, and one must submit himself to such a spiritual master, render him service and ask relevant questions

In order to approach the platform of self-realization, one must follow the regulative principles enjoined in the revealed scriptures

One must be fixed in the tenets of the revealed scriptures

One should completely refrain from practices which are detrimental to the interest of self-realization

One should not accept more than he requires for the maintenance of the body

One should not falsely identify himself with the gross material body, nor should one consider those who are related to his body to be his own

One should always remember that as long as he has a material body he must face the miseries of repeated birth, old age, disease and death. There is no use in making plans to get rid of these miseries of the material body. The best course is to find out the means by which one may regain his spiritual identity

One should not be attached to more than the necessities of life required for spiritual advancement

One should not be more attached to wife, children and home than the revealed scriptures ordain

One should not be happy or distressed over desirables and undesirables, knowing that such feelings are just created by the mind

One should become an unalloyed devotee of the Personality of Godhead, Śrī Krishna, and serve Him with rapt attention

One should develop a liking for residence in a secluded place with a calm and quite atmosphere favorable for spiritual culture, and one should avoid congested places where non-devotees congregate

One should become a scientist or philosopher and conduct research into spiritual knowledge, recognizing that spiritual knowledge is permanent whereas material knowledge ends with the death of the body

The above eighteen items combine to form a gradual process by which real knowledge can be developed. Except for these, all other methods are considered to be in the category of nescience.

Q.2. What, according to Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Thākura, are the features of the illusory energy?

Ans. According to Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Thākura, a great acarya, all forms of material knowledge are merely external features of the illusory energy and that by culturing them one becomes no better than an ass. This same principle is found in Śrī Īśopaniṣad. By advancement of material knowledge, modern man is simply being converted into an ass.

Q.3. Analyze the loss human society has incurred because of the culture of nescience and explain why modern politicians cannot be instructive leaders of society?

Ans. The major loss that the human society has incurred because of the culture of nescience is that the society is simply being converted into an ass. It is becoming satanic. In the modern society, even a boy thinks he is self-sufficient

and pays no respect to elderly men. Due to wrong type of education being imparted in our universities, boys all over the world are giving their elders headaches. In the modern society, universities are actually centres of nescience only. Scientists are busy discovering lethal weapons to wipe out the existence of other countries. University students today are not given instructions in the regulative principles of brahmacharya (celibate student life), nor do they have any faith in any scriptural injunctions.

In the modern society, religions principles are taught for the sake of name and fame only and not for the sake of practical action. Thus there is animosity not only in social and political fields but in the field of religion as well. Nationalism has developed in different parts of the world due to the cultivation of nescience by the general people.

Some politicians in spiritual guise decry the present system of civilization as satanic, but unfortunately they do not care about the culture of real knowledge as it is described in the Bhagavad-Gītā. Thus they cannot change the satanic situation. They cannot do anything. Others misguide the general masses and force them on the path of material existence.

The modern politicians who possess themselves as dhiras are actually adhiras, one cannot expect perfect knowledge from them. They are simply busy seeing to their own remuneration in dollars and cents. How, then can they lead the mass of people to the right path of self-realization?

Q.4. Analyze the modern education system and how it kills the spiritual consciousness of the students?

Ans. The modern education system all over the world is that kind of system which is engaged only in the culturing of nescience in the students. It is actually killing the original consciousness of the soul which is to serve the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Service to the Supreme Personality is possible only when the soul understands the supremacy of the Godhead – Śrī Krishna. The soul must know that it has no independence and when it tries to become independent or enjoy independent of Krishna then he suffers perpetually in this existence of continuous miseries. The consequence of the modern day education is that even a small boy thinks he is independent and self-sufficient and pays no respect to God or any other elderly men. Due to the wrong type of

education being imparted in our schools and universities, boys all over the world are giving their elders headaches. The universities are, so to speak, centres of nescience only; consequently scientists are busy discovering lethal weapons to wipe out the existence of other countries. University students today are not given instructions in the regulative principles of brahmacharya (celibate student life), nor do they have any faith in any scriptural injunctions. Religious principles are taught for the sake of name and fame only and not for the sake of practical action. Thus there is animosity not only in social and political fields but in the field of religion as well.

Q.5. What are the effects of the culture of nescience or avidyā?

Ans. Because of the culture of nescience or avidyā -

People are becoming fools and rascals like an ass

The spread of satanic situation in the society is taking place

There is disharmony in the society – no one respects to anyone

Nationalism has developed in different parts of the world

People are generally frustrated because of the repeated cycle of birth, old age, disease and death

People have created their own nations within the small planet in order to grasp sense enjoyment more effectively for very short period

Each and every nation has become a source of anxiety for other nations

More than 50% of a nation's energy is devoted to defence measures

No one cares for the cultivation of real knowledge

People are becoming falsely proud of being advanced in both material and spiritual knowledge

Q.6. Who is a dhira and what are his qualifications?

Ans. A dhira is one who is not disturbed by material illusion. No one can be undisturbed unless he is perfectly spiritually realized, at which time one neither hankers nor laments for anything. A dhira realizes that the material

body and mind he has acquired by chance through material association are but foreign elements; therefore he simply makes the best use of a bad bargain. The dhira know that this material body and mind are bad bargains for the spiritual living entity and they have realized this knowledge by hearing from higher authorities and by following the regulative principles. One can become a dhira only by submissively hearing from a bona fide spiritual master like Arjuna became a dhira by submissively hearing from Lord Krishna, the Personality of Godhead Himself.

Q.7. Analyze the concept of nationalism that has developed in different parts of the world in accordance of Mantra 10 of Śrī Īśopaniṣad.

Ans. As a consequence of culture of nescience Nationalism has developed in different parts of the world. Due to false identification of the real self, people generally think the body to be the self and the things related to the body to be theirs in the mood of me and mine. The concept of nationalism indicated that people think the place of their birth as their country and develop a sense of nationalism. No one considers that this tiny earth is just a lump of matter floating in immeasurable space along with many other lumps. In comparison to the vastness of space, these material lumps are like dust particles in the air. Because God has kindly made these lumps of matter complete in themselves, they are perfectly equipped with all necessities for floating in space. The drivers of our spaceships may be very proud of their achievements, but they do not consider the supreme driver of these greater, more gigantic spaceships called planets.

There are innumerable suns and innumerable planetary systems also. As infinitesimal parts and parcels of the Supreme Lord, we small creatures are trying to dominate these unlimited planets. Thus we take repeated birth and death and are generally frustrated by old age and disease. The span of human life is scheduled for about a hundred years, although it is gradually decreasing to twenty or thirty years. Thanks to the culture of nescience, befooled men have created their own nations within these planets in order to grasp sense enjoyment more effectively for these few years. Such foolish people draw up various plans to render national demarcations perfectly, a task that is totally impossible. Yet for this purpose each and every nation has become a source of

anxiety for others. More than 50% of the nation's energy is devoted to defence measures and thus spoiled.

Q.8. From whom the real knowledge can be acquired from?

Ans. The real knowledge can be acquired from a dhira. A dhira is one who is not disturbed by material illusion. One has become a dhira by submissively hearing from a bona fide spiritual master therefore, he can impart the real knowledge that is coming from the Supreme Personality of Godhead through the bona fide disciplic succession.

Q.9. What is a bad bargain for the spiritual living entity?

Ans. This material body and mind are the bad bargain for the spiritual living entity. The living entity has actual functions in the living, spiritual world, but this material world is dead.

Q.10. How this dead world appears to be living?

Ans. As long as the living spiritual spark manipulates the dead lumps of matter, the dead world appears to be living world. Actually it is the living souls, the parts and parcels of the supreme living being, which move the world.

Q.11. How do the transcendental message and regulative principles come to the disciples? How can one become dhira?

Ans. The transcendental message and the regulative principles come to the disciples from the spiritual master. Therefore to receive the transcendental message and follow regulative principles, one must take shelter of the Spiritual Master. One can become a dhira by submissively hearing from a bona fide spiritual master.

Q.12. Explain who is adhira?

Ans. One who has not undergone the training of a dhira is an adhira. An adhira cannot be an instructive leader. Modern politicians who pose themselves as dhiras are actually adhiras, and one cannot expect perfect knowledge from them. They are simply busy seeing to their own remuneration in dollars and cents. How, then, can they lead the mass of people to the right part of self-realization.

MANTRA 11

Q.1. Who can transcend the influence of repeated birth and death and enjoy immortality?

Ans. Only one who can learn the process of nescience and that of transcendental knowledge side by side can transcend the influence of repeated birth and death and enjoy the full blessings of the immortality.

Q.2. Why no one can avoid the hands of the death?

Ans. Although, no one wants to die, the laws of material nature are so stringent and cruel that no one has been able to avoid the hand of death. The law of nature does not allow anyone immunity from old age, disease or death.

Q.3. Can the advancement of material knowledge solve the problems of birth, old age, disease and death? What it actually can do?

Ans. The advancement of material knowledge can never solve the problems of birth, old age, disease and death, rather it accelerate the process of death by discovering the nuclear bomb.

Material knowledge cannot help anyone to protect from the cruel hand of old age, disease and death. It cannot influence the laws nature. Example of the demoniac king Hiranyakasipu is given to illustrate the fact no one can surpass the process cruel hands of death. Hiranyakasipu was so powerful and learned in material knowledge that He was practically a parallel ruler of the universe, but he also could not surpass the cruel hands of death.

Q.4. In order to attain a permanent life what one must do?

Ans. In order to attain a permanent life, one must be prepared to go back to Godhead. The process by which one goes back to Godhead is a different branch of knowledge and it can be learned from the revealed Vedic scriptures such as the Upaniṣadas, Vedānta-sūtra, Bhagavad-Gītā and Śrīmad Bhāgavatam. To become happy in this life and attain a permanent blissful life after leaving this material body, one must study this sacred literature and obtain transcendental knowledge.

Q.5. What is purpose of revelation of the scripture by the Lord?

Ans. The living being has forgotten the eternal relationship with the God and has mistakenly accepted the temporary place of his birth as all in all. The Lord has kindly delivered the Vedic literatures and other scriptures to remind the forgotten human being that his home is not here in this material world. The living being is a spiritual entity, and he can be happy only by returning to his spiritual home.

Q.6. What are the arrangements made by the Lord to reclaim the fallen souls?

Ans. To reclaim the fallen souls and bring them back to their eternal home back to Godhead, the Lord has very kindly (i) revealed the Vedic literatures and other scriptures throughout the World for different class of people (ii) He also sends His bona fide servants to propagate the message of scripture and (iii) Sometimes He, Himself comes to do this work. Because all living beings are His beloved sons, His parts and parcels. God is sorrier to see our suffering conditions than we ourselves.

Q.7. What is the purpose of the miseries of this material world?

Ans. The miseries of this material world serve to indirectly remind us of our incompatibility with dead matter. Intelligent living entities generally take note of these reminders and engage themselves in the culture of vidya or transcendental knowledge.

Q.8. Who are called as narādhama, the lowest of human being?

Ans. The human form of life is the best opportunity for the culture of spiritual knowledge, and a human being who does not take advantage of this opportunity is called a narādhama, the lowest of human beings.

Q.9. What is the path of the repeated birth and death?

Ans. The path of avidyā, or advancement of material knowledge for sense gratification, is the path of repeated birth and death.

Q.10. What does the birth and death apply to? Explain with an example.

Ans. The birth and death applies to outward covering of the spirit soul, the body. Death is compared to the taking off and birth to the putting on of outward garments. Foolish human beings who are grossly absorbed in the culture of avidyā, nescience, do not mind this cruel process. Enamoured with the beauty of the illusory energy, they undergo the same miseries repeatedly and do not learn any lessons from the laws of nature.

Q.11. What is wrong in endeavouring for a peaceful and permanent life in this world?

Ans. Endeavoring for a peaceful and permanent life in this world is wrong in so many ways.

First of all the living being is a spiritual entity, and he can be happy only by returning to his spiritual home

Other than the Supreme Personality of Godhead, no one else can control or influence the stringent laws of the nature – no one can escape the powerful hands of death.

Material world means avidyā or place ignorance which is the path of repeated birth, old age, disease and death – no one can escape this cycle

Unrestricted sense enjoyment in the bodily condition is the path of ignorance and death

Activities of the material senses are perverted; they can only perceive illusory happiness not the real happiness.

Real enjoyment is possible only when the disease of materialism is removed.

Q.12. Why the culture of vidya or transcendental knowledge is necessary for human being?

Ans. Foolish human beings who are grossly absorbed in the culture of avidya or nescience do not know this avidya to be the cause of bondage in the cycle of repeated birth, old age, disease and death and perpetual suffering birth after birth. Such fools, enamoured by the beauty of the illusory energy of the Lord undergo the same miseries repeatedly and do not learn the lesson from the

law of nature. Therefore, the culture of vidya, or transcendental knowledge, is essential for the human being.

Q.13. Why unrestricted sense material enjoyment must be restricted?

Ans. Unrestricted sense enjoyment in the bodily conditions is the path of ignorance and death therefore, this must be restricted as far as possible.

Q.14. When is real sense enjoyment possible?

Ans. The real sense enjoyment is possible only when the disease of materialism is removed. The activities of the material senses are perverted reflection of the activities of the original, spiritual senses. In his diseased condition, the spirit soul engages in material activities under the material covering. In our pure spiritual form, free from all material contamination, real enjoyment of the senses is possible. Like a patient must regain his health before he can truly enjoy sense pleasure again.

Q.15. What does the aggravation of material disease indicate?

Ans. The aggravation of material disease indicates signs of avidya, ignorance. It is not the sign of vidya or knowledge. For a good health a person should not increase his fever from 105 to 107 degrees but should reduce his temperature to the normal 98.6 degree. That should be the aim of life. The modern trend of the material civilization is to increase the temperature of the feverish material conditions which has reached the point of 107 degrees in the form of atomic energy. The result of aggravation of material disease is that any time the world may go to hell.

Q.16. Does culturing of vidya mean stopping all activities of maintenance of mind and body?

Ans. No, culturing of vidya does not mean stopping all activities of maintenance of mind and body. There is no question of stopping activities, just as there is no question of wiping out one's temperature altogether when trying to recover from a disease. —To make the best use of a bad bargain is the appropriate expression. The culture of spiritual knowledge necessitates the help of the body and mind; therefore maintenance of the body and mind is required if we are to reach our goal. The normal temperature should be

maintained at 98.6 degrees, which the great sages and saints of India have attempted to do by balanced program of spiritual and material knowledge. They never allow the misuse of human intelligence for diseased sense gratification.

Q.17. How Vedic principles of salvation distinct from the present day culture of knowledge?

Ans. Human activities diseased by a tendency toward sense gratification have been regulated in the Vedas under the principles of salvation. This system employs religion, economic development, sense gratification and salvation, but at the present moment people have no interest in religion or salvation. They have only one aim in life – sense gratification – and in order to achieve this end they make plans for economic development. Misguided men think that the religion should be maintained because it contributes to economic development, which is required for sense gratification. Thus in order to guarantee further sense gratification, after death, in heaven, there is some system of religious observance. But this is not the purpose of religion.

Q.18. What is the path of religion meant for?

Ans. The path of religion is actually meant for self-realization. Not for economic development because the path of economic development is required just to maintain the body in a sound healthy condition.

Q.19. What is the purpose of Vedic activities of religious sense gratification? Does it fulfill the actual purpose of religion?

Ans. Human activities diseased by a tendency toward sense gratification have been regulated in the Vedas under the principles of salvation. This system employs religion, economic development, sense gratification and salvation. In order to guarantee further sense gratification, after death, in heaven, there is some system of religious observance.

But this is not the purpose of religion. The path of religion is actually meant for self-realization. A man should lead a healthy life with a sound mind just to realize vidya, true knowledge, which is the aim of human life. This life is not meant for working like an ass or for culturing avidya for sense gratification.

The path of vidya is most perfectly presented in Śrīmad Bhāgavatam which directs a human being to utilize his life to inquire in to the Absolute Truth which is realized step by step as Brahman, Parmatma and Bhagavan. The Absolute Truth is realized by the broadminded men who have attained knowledge and detachment by following the principles of knowledge. The guaranteed path to the aim of vidya is described by Śrīla Rupa Goswami in his Bhakti-Rasamrta Sindhu (Nectar of Devotion).

Unless religion, economic development and sense gratification aim towards the attainment of devotional service to the Lord, they are all simply different forms of nescience.

Q.20 Give the English meaning of the name Hiraṇyakaśipu.

Q.21 Explain in your own words, how the process of spiritual life as given to us by Śrīla Prabhupāda, enables us to achieve a balanced program of spiritual and material knowledge. In your response:

give reference to Śrī Īsopaniṣad Mantra 11 verse and purport

give examples from your own experience and from the experience of devotees in ISKCON in general (Open Book)

MANTRA 12

Q.1. What is destination of the demigod worshipers?

Ans. Those who are engaged in the worship of the demigods enter into the darkest region of ignorance.

Q.2. What is the destination of the worshipers of the impersonal Absolute?

Ans. The Worshipers of the impersonal Absolute enters into the still deeper darkness of ignorance. They attain a destiny worse than the demigod worshipers.

Q.3. Describe the two kinds of people who finally enter the darkest regions of ignorance. Explain which kind is worse?

Ans. Two kinds of people who finally enter the darkest regions of ignorance are (i) worshipers of the demigods and (ii) worshipers of the impersonal Absolute. The worshipers of the impersonal Absolute are worse because such impersonalists do not even worship the demigods according to the scriptural recommendations. In the scriptures there are recommendations for worshipping demigods under certain circumstances, but at the same time these scriptures state that there is normally no need for this.

Q.4. What do the words 'asambhuti' and 'sambhuti' refer to?

Ans. The Sanskrit word asambhuti refers to those who have no independent existence. Sambhuti is the Absolute Personality of Godhead, who is absolutely independent of everything. The absolute Personality of Godhead is Śrī Krishna.

Q.5. Why it is difficult for the great demigods and sages to know how Krishna appears in the form of a man?

Ans. In Bhagavad-Gītā (10.2) Krishna says, —Neither the host of demigods nor the great sages know My origin or opulence, for in every respect I am the source of the demigods and sages . Thus, Krishna is the origin of the powers and delegated to the demigods, great sages and mystics. Although they are endowed with great powers, these powers are limited, and thus it is very

difficult for them to know how Krishna Himself appears by His own internal potency in the form of a man.

Q.6. Explain, why the Absolute cannot be understood by the process of negation?

Ans. Many philosophers and great rsis, or mystics, try to distinguish the Absolute from the relative by their tiny brain power. This can only help them reach the negative conception of the Absolute without realizing any positive trace of the Absolute. Absolute can never be understood by negation because definition of the Absolute by negation is not complete. Such negative definitions lead one to create a concept of one's own; thus one imagine that the Absolute must be formless and without qualities. Such negative qualities are simply the reversals of relative material qualities and are therefore also relative. By conceiving the Absolute in this way, one can at the most reach the impersonal effulgence of God, known as Brahman, but one cannot make further progress to Bhagavan, the Personality of Godhead.

Q.7. What does the mental speculators not know about Lord Krishna?

Ans. Such mental speculators, who try to know the Absolute Truth by the process negation, do not know that the Absolute Personality of Godhead is Krishna. They also do not know that the impersonal Brahman is the glaring effulgence of His transcendental body, nor that the Parmatma, the Supersoul, is His all-pervading plenary representation. Nor do they know that Krishna has His eternal form with its transcendental qualities of eternal bliss and knowledge. The dependent demigods and great sages imperfectly consider Him to be a powerful demigod and they consider the Brahman effulgence to be the Absolute Truth.

Q.8. How the devotees of the Lord know that He is the Absolute Truth?

Ans. The devotees of Śrī Krishna by the dint of their surrendering unto Him and their unalloyed devotion can know that He is the Absolute Truth, the Absolute Person and that everything emanates from Him. Such devotees continuously render loving service unto Krishna, the fountainhead of everything.

Q.9. Explain about the futility of the demigod worship as mentioned in mantra 12.

Ans. In the Bhagavad-Gītā (7.20,23) it is said that only unintelligent, bewildered persons driven by a strong desire for sense gratification worship the demigods for the temporary relief of temporary problems. Since the living being is materially entangled, he has to be relieved from material bondage entirely to attain permanent relief on the spiritual plane, where eternal bliss, life and knowledge exist. Śrī Īśopaniṣad therefore instructs that we should not seek temporary relief of our difficulties by worshiping the dependent demigods, who can bestow only temporary benefit and can't help in any other way. Rather, we must worship the Absolute Personality of godhead, Krishna, who is all-attractive and who can bestow upon us complete freedom from material bondage by taking us back home, back to Godhead.

Q.10. What are the different ways to visit different planets?

Ans. Human beings are naturally inclined to travel in outer space and to reach other planets. One can visit these planets either by spaceships, by mystic powers or by demigod worship. It is said that the worshipers of the demigods can go to the planets of the demigods. The moon worshiper can go to the moon, the sun worshipers can go to sun. Modern scientists are now venturing to the moon and mars with the help of space crafts/rockets. The Vedic scriptures says that one can reach other planets by any one of the above three ways, but the most common way is by worshiping the demigod presiding over a particular planet.

Q.11. How are the vaikunthalokas different from the material universes?

Ans. Right from the Brahmaloḥa (the highest planet in material universe) to the nether or the lowest planets of this universe known as patal lokas all are filled with dense darkness which is the reason it requires arrangements of illumination by sun and moon. The whole universe is covered by a gigantic material elements; it is just like a coconut covered by a shell and half-filled with water. Since its covering is airtight, the darkness within is dense, and therefore the sun and moon are required for illumination.

Outside the universe is the vast and unlimited brahmajyoti expansion, which is filled with Vaikunthalokas. The biggest and highest planet in the brahmajyoti is Krishnaloka, or Goloka Vrindavana, where the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Śrī Krishna Himself, resides.

Q.12. How do impersonalists assist the atheists?

Ans. The atheists deny the existence of the Supreme Personality of Godhead and the impersonalists support them by stressing the impersonal aspect of the Supreme Lord. The impersonal conception of the Supreme Lord is another form of ignorance, arising from the imperfect conception of the Absolute Truth.

Q.13. What is destination of the impersonalists and their followers who pose as God?

Ans. The impersonalists generally pose themselves as incarnations of god to foolish persons who have no knowledge of Vedic wisdom. This type of ignorant pseudo religionists and the manufacturers of so-called incarnations who directly violate the Vedic injunctions are liable to enter into the darkest region of the universe because they misled those who follow them. This type of people would have destination even worse than those who worship demigods because such impersonalists do not even worship the demigods according to the scriptural recommendations. In the scriptures there are recommendations for worshiping demigods under certain circumstances, but at the same time these scriptures state that there is normally no need for this.

Q.14. Describe how pseudo-religionists ruin the life of innocent people?

Ans. The ignorant pseudo religionists and the manufacturer of so-called incarnations by directly violating the injunctions of the Vedas are liable to enter in to the worst of the darkest region of the ignorance with their followers. These impersonalists generally pose themselves as incarnation of God to the foolish followers who have no knowledge of the Vedic wisdom. If such foolish men have any knowledge at all, it is more dangerous in their hands and ignorant itself. The pseudo-religionists have neither knowledge nor detachment which is essential for freedom of bondage. Such people by their

false display of religious sentiments present a show of devotional service while indulging in all sorts of immoral activities.

These rogues are the most dangerous elements in human society. Because there is no religious government, they escape punishment by the law of the state. They cannot, however, escape the law of the supreme, who has clearly declared in the Bhagavad-Gītā that envious demons in the garb of religious propagandists shall be thrown into the darkest region of hell (Bg.16.19-20).

Q.15. Briefly explain why one cannot know what the Absolute Truth is by negation?

Ans. Definition of the Absolute Truth by negation is not complete therefore one cannot know the Absolute Truth by the process of negation. This helps one to reach the negative conception of the Lord. Such negative definition leads one to create a concept one's own which makes one imagine that the Absolute must be formless and without qualities. Such negative qualities are simply the reversals of relative, marginal qualities and are therefore also relative. By conceiving the Absolute in this way, one can at the most reach the impersonal effulgence of God, known as Brahman, but one cannot make further progress to Bhagavan, the Personality of Godhead.

Q. 16 Essay : What should our attitude be towards the demigods?

Mantra 13

Q.1 How one can have the real key to transcendental knowledge?

Ans. One can have the real key to transcendental knowledge by hearing from bona fide acarya who is never disturbed by the changes of this material world. The bona fide spiritual master, who has also heard the śruti mantras, or Vedic knowledge, from his undisturbed acarya, never presents anything that is not mentioned in the Vedic literature.

Q.2. Indicate the underlying message of mantra 13 of Śrī Īśopaniṣad?

Ans. The underlying message of mantra 13 of Śrī Īśopaniṣad is very similar to the message conveyed by Bhagavad-Gītā (9.25) wherein it clearly said that those who worship the pitris, or forefathers, attain the planets of the forefathers, that the gross materialists who make plans to remain here, stay in this world and that the devotees of the Lord who worship none but Lord Krishna, the supreme cause of all causes, reach Him in His spiritual sky. Similarly, this mantra also verifies and confirms that one achieves different results by different modes of worship. If we worship the Supreme Lord, we will certainly reach Him in His eternal abode, and if we worship demigods like the sun-god or the moon-god, we can reach their respective planets without a doubt. And if we wish to remain on this wretched planet with our planning commissions and our stopgap political adjustments, we can certainly do that also.

Q.3. How would you counter someone who preaches that —all paths lead to the same goal?

Ans. It is completely absurd to say that —all paths lead to the same goal . From our common understanding also everyone knows that not all paths lead to same goal. We cannot take a train to Chennai and reach to Delhi. Nowhere in the authentic scriptures also is it said that one will ultimately reach the same goal by doing anything or worshiping anyone. Such theories are offered by self-made —spiritual masters who have no connection with the parampara, the bona fide system of disciplic succession. The bona fide spiritual master cannot say that all paths lead to the same goal and that anyone can attain this goal by

his own mode or worship of the demigods or the supreme or whatever. Any common man can very easily understand that a person can reach his destination only he has purchased a ticket for that destination. A person who has purchased a ticket for Calcutta can reach Calcutta, but not Bombay. But the so-called spiritual masters say that any and all paths will take one to the supreme goal. Such mundane and compromising offers attract many foolish creatures and become puffed up with their manufactured methods of spiritual realization. The Vedic instructions, however, do not uphold them. The Vedic literatures clearly say that one result is obtained by worshiping the supreme cause of all causes and that another result is obtained by worshiping what is not supreme. Therefore, it is not at all bona fide to accept the statement that —all paths lead to the same goal .

Unless one has received knowledge from the bona fide spiritual master who is in the recognized line of disciplic succession, one cannot have the real thing as it is. Krishna tells to Arjuna in the Bhagavad-Gītā (4.2) —This supreme science was thus received through the chain of disciplic succession, and the saintly kings understood it in that way. But in course of time the succession was broken, and therefore the science as it is appears to be lost . This chain of knowledge was re-started by the Supreme authority of all Knowledge, Śrī Krishna through Arjuna. The Lord imparted this knowledge to Arjuna, because Arjuna was His devotee and friend. Only a devotee and a friend of the Lord can understand the imports of Bhagavad-Gītā. At the present movement there are many unscrupulous interpreters of Bhagavad-Gītā who has no regards for Krishna; they give their own motivated interpretations of the Bhagavad-Gītā, so how can such people do any good to people. Such people can never understand Bhagavad-Gītā and they will continue hovering on the material platform with their paltry ways of worship and thus will be misled from the real path under the false impression that all paths lead to the same goal.

Q.4. Establish the supremacy of Lord Krishna citing Vedic evidences and prove that Lord Krishna is “sambhavat” which is mentioned in mantra 13 of Śrī Īśopaniṣad.

Ans. In this mantra of Śrī Īśopaniṣad the word ‘sambhavat’, which means ‘by worship of the supreme cause’, is very significant. Lord Śrī Krishna is the original Personality of Godhead and everything that exists has emanated from

Him. In the Bhagavad-Gītā (10.8) the Lord says aham sarvasya prabhavo mattah sarvam pravartate iti matva bhajante mam budha bhava samanvitah - I am the source of all spiritual and material worlds. Everything emanates from Me. The wise who perfectly know this engage in My devotional service and worship Me with all their hearts.

Here is a correct description of the Supreme Lord, given by the Lord Himself. The words sarvasya prabhavah indicate that Lord Krishna is the creator of everyone, including Brahma, Viṣṇu and Śiva. And because these three principal deities of the material world are created by the Lord, the Lord is the creator of all that exists in the material and spiritual worlds.

In the Atharva Veda (Gopālā-tapani Upaniṣad 1.24) it is similarly said, —He who existed before the creation of Brahmā and who enlightened Brahmā with Vedic knowledge is Lord Śrī Krishna.

Similarly, the Nārāyaṇa Upaniṣad (1) states, —Then the Supreme Person, Nārāyaṇa, desired to create all living beings. Thus from Nārāyaṇa, Brahmā was born. Nārāyaṇa created all the Prajapatis. Nārāyaṇa created Indra. Nārāyaṇa created the eight Vasus. Nārāyaṇa created the eleven Rudras. Nārāyaṇa created the twelve Adityas . Since Nārāyaṇa is the plenary manifestation of Lord Krishna, Nārāyaṇa and Krishna is one the same.

The Nārāyaṇa Upaniṣad (4) also states —Devaki's son [Krishna] is the Supreme Lord. The identity of narayana with the supreme cause has also been accepted and confirmed by Śrīpada Śaṅkarācārya, even though Śaṅkara does not belong to the Vaisnava, or personalist cult.

The Atharva Veda (Mahā Upaniṣad 1) also states —only Nārāyaṇa existed in the beginning, when neither Brahma, nor Śiva, nor fire, nor water, nor stars, nor sun, nor moon existed. The Lord does not remain alone but creates as He desires.

Krishna Himself states in the Moksa-dharma, —I created the Prajapatis and the Rudras. They do not have complete knowledge of Me because they are covered by My illusory energy.

It is also stated in the Varaha Purana —Nārāyaṇa is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and from Him the four-headed Brahmā was manifested, as well as Rudra, who later became omniscient .

Thus all Vedic literature confirms that Nārāyaṇa or Krishna is the cause of all causes. In the brahma Samhita (5.1) also it is said that the Supreme Lord is Śrī Krishna, Govinda, the delighter of every living being and the primeval cause of all causes. The really learned persons know this from evidence given by the great sages and the Vedas, and thus they decide to worship Lord Krishna as all in all. Such persons are called budha, or really learned, because they worship only Krishna.

Q.5. How the conviction that Lord Krishna is all in all can be established?

Ans. The conviction that Lord Krishna is all in all can be established when one hears the transcendental message from the undisturbed acarya with faith and love. One who has no faith in and no love for Krishna cannot be convinced of this simple truth.

Q.6. Which types of people are considered mudhas?

Ans. Those who have no faith in and no love for Lord Krishna such people are considered as mudhas –fools or asses - in Bhagavad-Gītā (9.11). It is said that the mudhas deride the Personality of Godhead because they do not have complete knowledge from the undisturbed acarya.

Q.7. Who has no qualification to become acarya?

Ans. One who is disturbed by the whirlpool of material energy is not qualified to become an acarya.

Q.8. How Arjuna became a pure devotee of the Lord?

Ans. Before hearing the Bhagavad-Gītā, Arjuna was disturbed by the material whirlpool, by his affection for his family, society and community. Thus Arjuna wanted to become a philanthropic, nonviolent man of the world. But when he became budha by hearing the Vedic knowledge of the Bhagavad-Gītā from the Supreme Person, he changed his decision and became a worshiper of Lord Śrī Krishna, who had Himself arranged the Battle of Kuruksetra. Arjuna worshiped the Lord by fighting with his so-called relatives, and in this way he became a

pure devotee of the Lord. Such accomplishments are possible only when one worships the real Krishna and not some fabricated 'Krishna' invented by foolish men who are without knowledge of the intricacies of the science of Krishna described in the Bhagavad-Gītā and Śrīmad Bhāgavatam.

Q.9. Analyze sambhuta and establish that the attempt of the so-called spiritual leaders is useless effort as far as the welfare of the soul is concerned.

Ans. According to the Vedānta-sūtra, sambhuta is the source of birth and sustenance, as well as the reservoir that remains after annihilation (janmady asya yatah). The Śrīmad Bhāgavatam, the natural commentary on the Vedānta-sūtra by the same author, maintains that the source of all emanations is not like a dead stone but is abhijna, or fully conscious. The primeval Lord, Śrī Krishna, also says in the Bhagavad-Gītā (7.26) that He is fully conscious of past, present and future and that no one, including demigods such as Śiva and Brahma, knows Him fully. Certainly half-educated 'spiritual leaders' who are disturbed by the tides of material existence cannot know Him fully. They try to make some compromise by making the mass of humanity the object of worship, but they do not know that such worship is only a myth because the masses are imperfect. The attempt by these so-called spiritual leaders is something like pouring water on the leaves of a tree instead of the root. The natural process is to pour water on the root, but such disturbed leaders are more attracted to the leaves than the root. Despite their perpetually watering the leaves, however, everything dries up for want of nourishment. Thus all their attempts are useless efforts as far as the welfare of the soul is concerned.

Śrī Īśopaniṣad advises us to pour water on the root, the source of all germination. Worship of the mass of humanity by rendering bodily service, which can never be perfect, is less important than service to the soul. The soul is the root that generates different types of bodies according to the law of karma. To serve human beings by medical aid, social help and educational facilities while at the same time cutting the throats of poor animals in slaughterhouses is no service at all to the soul, the living being.

Q.10. How the real service to the humanity is rendered?

Ans. The real service to the humanity is rendered when one teaches surrender to and worship of the Supreme Lord with full love and energy.

Q.11. How to worship the Supreme Lord in this age of disturbance?

Ans. The simple way to worship the Supreme Lord in this age of disturbance is to hear and chant about His great activities.

Q.12. Why mental speculators refrain from hearing and chanting of the activities of the Lord?

Ans. The mental speculators think that the activities of the Lord are imaginary; therefore, they refrain from hearing and chanting. Rather they invent some word jugglery without any substance to divert the attention of the innocent masses of people. Instead of hearing of the activities of Lord Krishna, such pseudo spiritual masters advertise themselves by inducing their followers to sing about them. In modern times the number of such pretenders has increased considerably and it has become a problem for the pure devotees of the lord to save the masses of people from the unholy propaganda of these pretenders and pseudo incarnations.

Q.13. What is the perfection of sambhava?

Ans. The word sambhava means 'worship of the supreme cause'. When one attains brahminical qualification, he becomes happy and enthusiastic to render devotional service to the Lord. When one hears from Bhagavad-Gītā and Śrīmad Bhāgavatam about Lord Krishna, his mind gradually becomes cleansed of all contaminations and when continues hearing he draws the attention of the Lord who helps the devotee by giving him proper direction. By the Lord's inner direction the devotee becomes cleansed from modes of ignorance and passion and becomes situated in the mode of pure goodness, he then attains the brahminical stage and comes to know the science of God and then automatically the science of God is unveiled before him. He gradually becomes freed from material attachments and his doubtful mind becomes crystal clear by the grace of the Lord. One who attains this state is a liberated soul and can see the Lord in every step of life. This is the perfection of sambhava or worship of the supreme cause, the cause of all causes.

MANTRA 14

Q.1. How is the scientists' gross ignorance of material nature exposed ?

Ans. Although the human civilization has created so many things like spaceships and atomic energy in the name of advancement of knowledge, it has failed to create a situation in which people need not die, take birth again, become old or suffer from disease and whenever an intelligent man raises questions of these miseries before the so-called scientists, the scientists very cleverly replies that material science is progressing and that ultimately it will be possible to render man deathless, ageless and disease-less. Such answers prove the scientist's gross ignorance of material nature.

Q.2. What are the six stages of material existence? Can anyone be beyond these six laws?

Ans. In the material nature everyone is under the stringent laws of matter and must pass through six stages of existence which are birth, growth, maintenance, production of by products, deterioration and finally death. No one in contact with material nature can be beyond these six laws of transformation.

Q.3. Why no one can survive forever in the material world?

Ans. Anyone in the contact with the material nature has to compulsorily pass through the six states of existence which are birth, growth, and maintenance, production of by products, deterioration and death. These laws are so stringent that no one whether demigod, man, animal or plant, can survive forever in the material world. The duration of life varies according to species. Lord Brahma, the chief living being within this material universe, lives for millions and millions of years, while a minute germ lives for some hours only. But no one in the material world can survive eternally. Things are borne or created under certain conditions they stay for some time, and, if they continue to live, they grow, procreate, gradually dwindle and finally vanish.

Q.4. Why the material universe is called Martyaloka – the place of death?

Ans. According to the laws of nature everyone in the material universe who has taken birth must die today or tomorrow even though the life span may be for millions and millions of years like Brahma, everyone is liable to death. This is the reason this entire material universe is called Martyaloka – the place of death.

Q.5. Why the material scientists and politicians are trying to make this place deathless?

Ans. The material scientists and politicians are trying to make this place deathless because they have no information of the deathless spiritual nature. This is due to their ignorance of the Vedic literature, which contains full knowledge confirmed by mature transcendental experience. Unfortunately, modern man is averse to receiving knowledge from the Vedas, Puranas and other scriptures.

Q.6. Explain the different energies of Lord Viṣṇu.

Ans. The Viṣṇu Purana (6.7.61) states – Viṣṇu-saktih para prokta ksetrajnakhya tatha para avidya-marma-samjnanya trtiya saktir isyata – Lord Viṣṇu, the Personality of Godhead, possess different energies, known as para (superior) and apara (inferior). The living entities belong to the superior energy. The material energy, in which we are presently entangled, is the inferior energy, which covers the living entities with ignorance (avidya) and induces them to perform fruitive activities. Yet there is another part of the Lord's superior energy that is different from both this material, inferior energy and the living entities. That superior energy constitutes the eternal, deathless abode of the Lord. This is confirmed in the Bhagavad gītā (8.20) – paras tasmāt tu bhavo 'nyo vyakto 'vyaktat sanatanah yah so sarvesu bhutesu nasyatsu no vinasyati - Yet there is another unmanifest nature, which is eternal and is transcendental to this manifested and unmanifested matter. It is supreme and is never annihilated. When all in this world is annihilated, that part remains as it is.

Q.7. Elucidate the manifestation and un-manifestation of the material nature and life span of Lord Brahma.

Ans. All the material planets – upper, lower and intermediate, including the sun, moon, Venus etc. – are scattered throughout the universe. These planets exist only during the lifetime of Brahma. Some lower planets, however, are vanquished after the end of one day of Brahmā and are again created during the next day of Brahma. On the upper planets, time is calculated differently. One of our years is equal to only twenty-four hours, or one day and night on many of the upper planets. The four ages of earth (Satya, Treta, Dvapara and Kali) last only twelve thousand years according to the time scale of the upper planets. Such a length of time multiplied by one thousand constitutes one day of Brahma, and one night of Brahmā is the same. Such days and nights accumulate into months and years, and Brahmā lives for one hundred such years. At the end of Brahmā's life, the complete universal manifestation is vanquished.

Those living beings who reside on higher planets like the sun and the moon, as well as those on Martyaloka, this earth planet, and also those who live on lower planets – all are merged into the waters of devastation during the night of Brahma. During this time no living being or species remain manifest, although spiritually they continue to exist. This unmanifested stage is called avyakta. Again, when the entire universe is vanquished at the end of Brahmā's lifetime, there is another avyakta stage. But beyond these two unmanifested stage is another unmanifested stage, the spiritual atmosphere, or nature. There are a great number of spiritual planets in this atmosphere, and these planets exist eternally, even when all the planets within this material universe are vanquished at the end of Brahmā's life. There are many material universes, each under the jurisdiction of a Brahma, and this cosmic manifestation within the jurisdiction of the various Brahmas is but a display of one fourth of the energy of the Lord (Ekapada-vibhuti). This is the inferior energy. Beyond the jurisdiction of Brahmā is the spiritual nature, which is called tripad-vibhuti, three fourths of the Lord's energy. This is the superior energy, or para-prakriti.

Q.8. What is called as avyakta or unmanifest state?

Ans. When during the night of Brahmā, everything is destroyed the waters of devastation, no living beings or species remain manifest materially, although spiritually they continue to exist. This unmanifested stage is called avyakta. Again when the entire universe is vanquished at the end of Brahmā's lifetime, there is another avyakta state when everything enters into the body of MahāViṣṇu – the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

Q.9. What is tripad-vibhuti?

Ans. Beyond the jurisdiction of Brahmā is the spiritual nature, which is called tripad-vibhuti, three fourths of the Lord's energy. This is the superior energy, or para-prakṛiti.

Q.10. What are the different stages one can elevate to by the process of jñāna, yoga or karma and bhakti yoga?

Ans. By the process of karma one can elevate only up the planets of Svargalokas that includes the sun and the moon. By the process of jñāna and mystic yoga one can elevate to still higher planets such as Mahārloka, Tapaloka and Brahmaloaka. But when one performs bhakti yoga he can enter into the spiritual nature – either the illuminating cosmic atmosphere of the spiritual sky (Brahman) or the Vaikuntha planets, according to their qualification.

Q.11. What is the material disease? What is its effect?

Ans. On the material planets, everyone from Brahmā down to the ant is trying to lord it over material nature, and this is the material disease. As long as this material disease continues, the living entity has to undergo the process of bodily change. Whether one takes the form of a man, demigod or animal, he ultimately has to endure an unmanifested condition during the two devastations – the devastating during the night of Brahmā and the devastation at the end of Brahmā's life.

Q.12. How one can put end to the process of the cycle of repeated birth and death?

Ans. One can put end to the process of the cycle of repeated birth and death by entering to the spiritual planets which is possible only by the process of

devotional service. When one enters the eternal spiritual planets he is able to put an end to the process of repeated birth and death, as well as the concomitant factors of old age and disease. , we must try to enter the spiritual planets, where we can live eternally in the association of the Supreme Lord Krishna.

Q.13. What happens when one tries to dominate or lord over the material nature?

Ans. First of all, by constitution, no one can dominate or lord over the material nature. However, when one, in the conditioned state of life, tries to dominate he is subjected to the laws of material nature and consequently suffers the repeated birth, old age, disease and death.

Q.14. How are general people misled by foolish miss-interpretations of the actual import of Bhagavad-Gītā ?

Ans. The foolish interpreters mislead the general masses of people in diverse ways. They urge people to open hospitals but not to educate themselves to enter into the spiritual kingdom by devotional service. They teach people to take interest only in the temporary relief work, which can never bring real happiness to the living entity. They encourage starting varieties of public and semi-governmental institutions to tackle the devastating power of nature, but they don't know how to pacify insurmountable nature. People are also misguided by temporary attractive things based on sense gratification without knowing that services rendered to sense objects is both misleading and degrading.

Q.15. How the powerful nature can be pacified?

Ans. The powerful nature can be pacified by awakening of God consciousness which is elucidated in Bhagavad-Gītā (7.14) which states that the divine nature that is consisting of the three modes of material nature is very difficult to overcome, but those who surrender to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Śrī Krishna, can easily cross beyond it.

Q.16. What is the principal teaching of mantra 14 of Śrī Īśopaniṣad? Or What is the main theme of Mantra 14 and purport?

Ans. In this mantra, Śrī Īśopaniṣad teaches that one must perfectly know both, sambhuti (the Personality of Godhead) and vinasa (the temporary material manifestation), side by side. By knowing the material manifestation alone, one cannot be saved, for in the course of nature there is devastation at every moment (ahany ahani bhutani gacchantiha yamalam). Nor can one be saved from these devastations by the opening of hospitals. One can be saved only by complete knowledge of the eternal life of bliss and awareness. The whole Vedic scheme is meant to educate men in this art of attaining eternal life.

Q.17 In the purport of this verse, Śrīla Prabhupāda has analyzed the advancement of material knowledge in the light of Vedic information about the cosmic situation and the transcendental overseer, Śrī Krishna. Based on this analysis, draw a conclusion on how to pacify the powerful material nature and attain a problem free life.

Ans. In the purport of this verse Śrīla Prabhupāda has clearly analyzed the knowledge of the Supreme personality of Godhead and the nature of the temporary material manifestation and how the living entity perpetually suffers in material existence by trying to dominate the material nature. By analyzing and quoting from different scriptures, he has established the supremacy of Lord Krishna and how He is the source of both ekapad vibhuti and the tripada vibhuti and also established how no one – right from Brahmā to the smallest ant- can ever be able to avoid the stringent laws of nature. He has also established the incompetence of the different process of God-realization viz. by jñāna, yoga and karma and how only by performance of devotional service one can transcend the stringent laws of material nature by the mercy of Lord Krishna.

Śrīla Prabhupāda has very clearly mentioned in the purport of this mantra that the powerful nature can be pacified only by awakening of God consciousness which is elucidated in Bhagavad-Gītā (7.14) which states that the divine nature that is consisting of the three modes of material nature is very difficult to overcome, but those who surrender to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Śrī Krishna, can easily cross beyond it.

MANTRA 15

Q.1. How brahmajyoti is explained?

Ans. In Bhagavad-Gītā (14.27), the Lord explains His personal rays (brahmajyoti), the dazzling effulgence of His personal form as brahmano hi pratisthaham amrtasyavyayasya ca sasvatasya ca dharmasya sukhasyaikantikasya ca - I am the basis of the impersonal Brahman, which is immortal, imperishable and eternal and is the constitutional position of ultimate happiness .

Q.2. Describe the different aspects of the Absolute Truth and the source of Brahman and Paramatma?

Ans. Brahman, Paramatma and Bhagavan are three aspects of the same Absolute Truth. Brahman is the aspect most easily perceived by the beginner; Paramatma, the Supersoul is realized by those who have further progressed; and Bhagavan realization is the ultimate realization of the Absolute Truth. This is confirmed in Bhagavad-Gītā (7.7) where Lord Krishna says that He is the ultimate concept of the Absolute Truth mattah parataram nanyat – there is no truth superior to me. Therefore, Krishna is the source of brahmajyoti as well as the all-pervading Paramatma.

Q.3. How does the Supreme Lord pervade the entire universe?

Ans. The Supreme Lord, Śrī Krishna pervade the entire universe with a single fragment of Himself ekamsena sthito jagat. The Supreme Lord pervades the entire universe by His Paramatma feature – a plenary expansion and maintains the complete material cosmic creation.

Q.4. Explain the science of God realization in the light of mantra 15 and establish devotional service to Lord Śrī Krishna as the highest process of God-realization.

Ans. The Absolute Truth, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Śrī Krishna is realized in His three different aspects viz. (i) Brahman – the supremely effulgent glaring of His personal rays known as brahmajyoti (ii) the all-

pervading localized aspect who is present in all the atoms and within everything in the cosmic creation known as Paramatma, with this plenary expansion the Lord maintains the complete material cosmic creation and (iii) the ultimate realization of the Absolute Truth is the Bhagavan aspect of the Supreme Lord who is the source of Brahmā – brahmano hi pratisthaham and Paramatma – ekamsena sthito jagat. The Bhagavan realization is the full realization of the Absolute Truth.

Brahman is the aspect most easily perceived by the beginner; Paramatma, the Supersoul is realized by those who have further progressed; and Bhagavan realization is the ultimate realization of the Absolute Truth. This is confirmed in Bhagavad-Gītā (7.7) where Lord Krishna says that He is the ultimate concept of the Absolute Truth mattah parataram nanyat – there is no truth superior to me. Therefore, Krishna is the source of brahmajyoti as well as the all-pervading Paramatma.

The Personality of Godhead, Śrī Krishna is always filled with transcendental bliss (ānanda-mayo 'bhyāsāt) and who is situated in His personal abode known as Goloka Vrindavana enjoying his variegated pastimes with His eternal associates and companions.

The system of God realization is a great science. If one wants to see the Absolute Truth in full, one has to penetrate beyond the twenty-four material elements and the glaring effulgence as well. By the materialistic sankhya-yoga one can only realize and meditate on the twenty-four factors of the material creation, for they have very little information of the puruṣa, the Lord. And the impersonal transcendentalists are simply bewildered by the glaring effulgence of the brahmajyoti. One can realize the Supreme Lord in full as Bhagavan when He removes the dazzling covering of the His glaring effulgence.

One who has no knowledge of the potencies of the Supreme Truth will realize the impersonal Brahman. Similarly, when one realizes the material potencies of the Lord but has little or no information of the spiritual potencies, he attains Paramatma realization. Thus both Brahman and Paramatma realization of the Absolute Truth are partial realizations. However, when one realizes the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Śrī Krishna in full potency after the removal of the hirmaya-patra one realizes vāsudevaḥ sarvam iti. Lord Śrī Krishna, who is

known as Vasudeva, is everything – Brahman, Paramatma and Bhagavan. He is the root and Brahman and Paramatma are His branches.

Q.5. Why the Lord's fame as butter thief is not reproachable?

Ans. The Lord's fame as butter thief is not reproachable for by stealing butter the Lord gave pleasure to His pure devotees. Everything the Lord did in Vrindavana was for the pleasure of His associates there.

Q.6. Why the Lord revealed His pastimes of Vrindavana?

Ans. The Supreme Lord revealed His pastimes of Vrindavana to attract the dry speculators and the acrobats of the so-called hatha-yoga system who wish to find the Absolute Truth.

Q.7. What are the different relationships in which the Lord is engaged in transcendental loving activities?

Ans. The Lord is always engaged in transcendental loving activities with His spiritual associates in the various relationships viz (i) śānta (neutrality) (ii) Dāsyā (servitorship) (iii) sakhya (friendship) (iv) vatsalya (parental affection) and Mādhurya (conjugal love).

Q.8. When Lord Krishna never leaves Vrindavana than how does He manage affairs of the creation?

Ans. This is answered in Bhagavad-Gītā (13.14-18) wherein it is mentioned that —The Lord pervades the entire material creation by His plenary part known as the Paramatma or Supersoul. Although the Lord personally has nothing to do with material creation, maintenance and destruction, He causes all these things to be done by His plenary expansion, the Paramatma.

Q.9. How one can perceive the real face of the Supreme Lord?

Ans. The Lord is completely covered by hiraṇmaya-pātra – the dazzling covering of His own and unless He removes this covering no one can perceive the real face of the Personality of Godhead. This way factual realization of the Absolute Truth can never be achieved. This is the reason, Śrī Īśopaniṣad is praying to Lord for removal of the dazzling effulgence.

Q.10. Explain the three aspects of the Viṣṇu tattvas.

Ans. The Paramatma feature of the Personality of Godhead is one of the three plenary expansions or Viṣṇu tattvas, collectively known as the puruṣa-avatars. One of these Viṣṇu-tattvas who is within the universe is known as Kṣīrodakaśāyī Viṣṇu. He is the Viṣṇu among the three principal deities – Brahma, Viṣṇu and Śiva – and He is the all-pervading Paramatma in each and every individual living entity. The second Viṣṇu-tattva within the universe is Garbhodakaśāyī Viṣṇu, the collective Supersoul within all living entities. Beyond these two is Kāraṇodakaśāyī Viṣṇu, who lies in the Causal Ocean. He is the creator of all universes.

Q.11. What does the yoga system teaches about the Viṣṇu-tattvas?

Ans. The yoga system teaches the serious student to meet the Viṣṇu tattvas after going beyond the twenty-four material elements of the cosmic creation.

Q.12. What does the empiric philosophy help one to realize?

Ans. The culture of empiric philosophy helps one realize the impersonal brahmajyoti, which is the glaring effulgence of the transcendental body of Lord Śrī Krishna. The brahmajyoti is Krishna's effulgence is also confirmed in the Bhagavad-Gītā (14.27) – as well as in the Brahma-Saṁhitā (5.40) – yasya prabha-prabhavato jagad-anda-koti....

Q.13. Briefly explain brahmajyoti as described in the purport of mantra 15.

Ans. The brahmajyoti as explained in the purport of mantra 15 is glaring effulgence emanating from the body of Lord Śrī Krishna. This glaring effulgence has covered the Lord because of which no one can see the face of the Lord. The Īśopaniṣad mantra is a prayer to the Lord to remove the veil of the glaring effulgence so that one can see the face of the Lord. Brahmajyoti realization is the Brahman realization of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Śrī Krishna. Brahman realization is considered preliminary understanding of the Lord. Brahmajyoti, as mentioned in Bhagavad-Gītā (14.27) and Brahma-Saṁhitā (5.40) is the prabha or effulgence of the Lord that pervades the entire cosmos – yasya-prabha-prabhavato jagad-anda koti the pratistha or source of the brahmajyoti is the Lord Krishna Himself.

All the planets in the entire spiritual and material creation are situated in the brahmajyoti. This brahmajyoti is but the personal rays of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Govinda, Krishna. The brahmajyoti effulgence is described in detail in several mantras of the Mundaka Upaniṣad (2.2.10-12).

hirnmāyā pare kose virajam brahma niskalam

tac chubhram jyotisam jyotis tad yad atma vido viduh

na tatra suryo bhati no chandra-tarakam nema vidyuto bhanti kuto _yam agnih

tam eva bhantam anu bhati sarvam tasya bhasa sarvam idam vibhati

brahmaivedam amrtam purastad brahma pascad brahma daksinatas cottarena

adhas cordhvam ca prasrtam brahmai vedam visvam idam varistham

—In the spiritual realm, beyond the material covering, is the unlimited Brahman effulgence, which is free from material contamination. That effulgent white light is understood by transcendentalists to be the light of the all lights. In that realm there is no need to sunshine, moonshine, fire or electricity for illumination. Indeed, whatever illumination appears in the material world is only a reflection of that supreme illumination. That Brahman is in front and in back, in the north, south, east and west, and also overhead and below. In other words, that supreme Brahman effulgence spreads throughout both the material and spiritual skies.

Q.14. What is the meaning of the perfect knowledge and how it can be gained?

Ans. The perfect knowledge means knowing Krishna to be the root of the Brahman effulgence and also knowing Him as fountainhead of all incarnations. This knowledge can be gained from such scriptures as Śrīmad Bhāgavatam, which perfectly elaborates the science of Krishna.

Q.16 How does ISO mantra 15 relate to BG 15.15?

Q.17 Essay: Krishna is enjoying His pastimes in Vrndavana eternally. How does He relate with this World?

Q.18 Give the English meaning of the term hiranmayena-patrena.

MANTRA 16

Q.1. Explain the analogy of the sun and the sun rays with respect to the Supreme Lord and the living entities.

Ans. The sun and its rays are one and the same qualitatively. Similarly, the Lord and the living entities are one the same in quality. The sun is one, but the molecules of the sun's rays are innumerable. Similarly the Supreme Lord is one but His energies and expansions are unlimited. The sun's rays constitute part of the sun, and the sun and its rays conjointly constitute the complete sun. Within the sun itself resides the sun-god, and similarly within the supreme spiritual planet, Goloka Vrindavana, from which the brahmajyoti effulgence is emanating, the Lord enjoys His eternal pastimes, as verified in the *Brahmā Samhita* (5.29). The brahmajyoti is described as the rays emanating from the supreme spiritual planet, Goloka Vrindavana, just as the sun's rays emanate from the sun globe.

Q.2. When one can have information about the land of the Lord?

Ans. When one surpasses the glare of the brahmajyoti, one can receive information about the land of the Lord (Goloka Vrindavana).

Q.3. Why the Impersonalists philosophers cannot realize the land of the Lord as also the form of the Lord?

Ans. The Impersonalists philosophers, blinded as they are by the dazzling brahmajyoti, can realize neither the factual abode of the Lord nor His transcendental form. Limited by their poor fund of knowledge, such impersonalists' thinkers cannot understand the all blissful transcendental form of Lord Krishna.

Q.4. Why Śrī Īśopaniṣad beseeches the Lord to remove the effulgence of His transcendental rays (brahmajyoti)?

Ans. The dazzling brahmajyoti effulgence glaring out of the Lord is actually blinding the beholder to see the all attractive, beautiful, transcendental form of the Lord. It is because of this, in this prayer, Śrī Īśopaniṣad petitions the Lord

to remove the effulgent rays of the brahmajyoti so that the pure devotee can see His all-blissful transcendental form.

Q.5. What is the progression auspiciousness on realization of different aspects of the Lord?

Ans. When one realizes the impersonal brahmajyoti, one experiences the auspicious aspect of the Supreme, and by realizing the Paramatma or all-pervading feature of the supreme, one experiences an even more auspicious enlightenment. But by meeting the Personality of Godhead Himself face to face, the devotee experiences the most auspicious features of the Supreme.

Q.6. Why the Supreme Truth cannot be impersonal?

Ans. The Supreme Truth is addressed as the primeval philosopher and maintainer and well-wisher of the universe, He cannot be impersonal. By meeting the Personality of Godhead the devotees experience the most auspicious features of the Supreme whereas when they realize impersonal brahmajyoti they experience auspicious aspects of the Supreme and when they realize the Paramatma feature they experience more auspicious enlightenment. It is also the verdict of Śrī Īsopaniṣad.

Q.7. What is the significance of the word pusann?

Ans. The word pusann- ‘maintainer’ is especially significant, for although the Lord maintains all beings, He specifically maintains His devotees.

Q.8. Establish that Lord Śrī Krishna is the ultimate maintainer?

Ans. The transcendental word bhagavan refers to Lord Krishna. One of the meaning of the first syllable (bha) from the word bhagavan means ‘one who fully maintains’. The Lord the ultimate maintainer is in the sense that everything required for the maintenance of everything in this cosmic world is provided by the Supreme Lord. Since the Lord Śrī Krishna is the source of everything, He is the supreme maintainer. The word pusan used in this prayer especially significant, for although the Lord maintains all beings, He specifically maintains His devotees. The Lord provides facilities to all jiva those who desire to lord over and imitate the Supreme Lord. He creates this facility of material nature and allows the souls enter in to it with the option to fully utilize their

propensity to lord it over nature. He also personally helps the living entities in the form of Paramatma by stirring everything into actions and reactions. The Lord is ultimate maintainer in the sense that He maintains even the blasphemers and those who deride his personal feature and His existence.

Q.9. When the devotee realizes the Absolute Truth in full?

Ans. After surpassing the impersonal brahmajyoti and seeing the personal aspect of the Lord and His most auspicious eternal form, the devotee realizes the Absolute Truth in full.

Q.10. Elucidate Śrīla Jiva Goswami's statement about realization of the Personality feature of the Absolute Truth.

Ans. In his Bhāgavata-sandarbha, Śrīla Jiva Goswami states: "The complete conception of the Absolute Truth is realized in the Personality of Godhead because He is almighty and possess full transcendental potencies. The full potency of the Absolute Truth is not realized in the brahmajyoti; therefore Brahman realization is only partial realization of the Personality of Godhead.

O learned sages, the first syllable of the word bhagavan (bha) has two meanings: the first is 'one who fully maintains', and the second is 'guardian'. The second syllable (ga) means 'guide', 'leader' or 'creator'. The syllable 'van' indicates that every being lives in Him and that He also lives in every being. In other words, the transcendental sound bhagavan represents infinite knowledge, potency, energy, opulence, strength and influence – all without a tinge of material inebriety."

Q.11. Why the complete conception of the Absolute Truth is realized in Personality feature?

Ans. The complete conception of the Absolute Truth is realized in the Personality feature or Bhagavan feature of the Godhead because He is almighty and possesses full transcendental potencies.

Q.12. Why Brahman realization is partial realization of the Absolute Truth?

Ans. The full potency of the Absolute Truth is not realized in the brahmajyoti; therefore Brahman realization is only partial realization of the Personality of Godhead.

Q.13. What does the sound/word ‘bhagavan’ represent?

Ans. The transcendental sound bhagavan represents infinite knowledge, potency, energy, opulence, strength and influence – all without a tinge of material inebriety. The first syllable of the word bhagavan (bha) has two meanings: the first is ‘one who fully maintains’, and the second is ‘guardian’. The second syllable (ga) means ‘guide’, ‘leader’ or ‘creator’. The syllable (van) indicates that every being lives in Him and that He also lives in every being.

Q.14. Explain why the jiva should never be misidentified with Bhagavan?

Ans. There is a gulf of difference between jiva and Bhagavan. Bhagavan is the maintainer, guardian, guide, creator, leader and possessor of infinite knowledge, potencies, energies, opulence, strength and influence – all without any material inebriety whereas jiva is infinitesimal, insignificant, cannot act with the help of Paramatma, have no opulence – always with begging bowl, no influence, no strength and no knowledge of the self, also under conditioned stage, always under influence of either material energy or spiritual energy. Jiva is created and the Bhagavan is creator. Jiva has no independent existence whereas Lord is the shelter of everything that exists and supremely independent. When one has the full knowledge of the Absolute Truth can never misidentify the jiva with Bhagavan. It is only in the ignorance that one thinks of jiva to be bhagavan.

Q.15. How the Lord help His devotees to understand Him?

Ans. The Lord fully maintains His unalloyed devotees and He guides them progressively on the path toward devotional perfection. As a leader of His devotees, He ultimately awards the desired results of devotional services by giving Himself to them. The devotees of the Lord see the Lord eye to eye by His causeless mercy; thus the Lord helps His devotees reach the super-most spiritual planet, Goloka Vrindavana. Being the creator, He can bestow all necessary qualifications upon His devotees so that they can ultimately reach Him. The Lord always helps His pure devotees by imparting necessary knowledge within their hearts and thus out of His special favor He dissipates all the darkness of ignorance.

Q.16. Why the Lord is called cause of all causes?

There is nothing that caused the Lord. He is the original and primeval cause. Therefore He is called the cause of all causes.

Q.17. How the Lord maintains the features of His material manifestation?

Ans. The Lord maintains the features of His material manifestation by His purusa expansions that are called Viṣṇu-tattavas. By such expansions, He creates, maintains and annihilates the cosmic manifestation. There are three Viṣṇu expansions of the Lord. One of these Viṣṇu-tattvas who is within the universe is known as Kṣirodakasayi Viṣṇu. He is the Viṣṇu among the three principal deities – Brahma, Viṣṇu and Śiva – and He is the all-pervading Paramatma in each and every individual living entity. The second Viṣṇu-tattava within the universe is Garbhodakasayi Viṣṇu, the collective Supersoul within all living entities. Beyond these two is Karanodakasayi Viṣṇu, who lies in the Causal Ocean. He is the creator of all the universes.

Q.18. How does the Lord facilitate to fulfill the desires of the living entities wanting to be independent lords imitating the Supreme Lord?

Ans. The living entities are also differentiated expansions of the Lord's Self, and because some of them desire to be lords and imitate the Supreme Lord, He allows them to enter into the cosmic creation with the option to fully utilize their propensity to lord it over nature. Because of the presence of His parts and parcels, the living entities, the entire phenomenal world is stirred into action and reaction. Thus the living entities are given the full facilities to lord it over material nature.

Q.19. What is the difference between the atma and Paramatma?

Ans. There is a gulf of difference between the living entity (atma) and the controlling Lord (Paramatma), the soul and Supersoul. Paramatma is the controller, and the atma is the controlled; therefore they are in different categories. Paramatma is integrated expansion of the Supreme Lord whereas atma is differentiated expansion. Paramatma stirs the entire phenomenal world into actions and reactions whereas atma tries to lord it over without any success. Paramatma is Viṣṇu-tattava whereas atma is jiva-tattva. Paramatma is

constant companion of the atma but atma forgets the existence of Paramatma in the pursuit of sense gratification with bitter and sweet fruits.

Q.20. Who cannot appreciate the activities of perfect devotees?

Ans. Those who are not as perfect as the pure devotees viz. those who have realized only Brahman or Paramatma features of the Lord, cannot appreciate the activities of the perfect devotees.

Q.21 What is the Sanskrit word for the Lord in His function as the maintainer?

MANTRA 17

Q.1. What does mantra 17 verify about the living entity?

Ans. The fact that the living entity exists after the annihilation of the material body is verified in mantra 17 of Śrī Īśopaniṣad. The temporary material body is certainly a foreign dress. Bhagavad-Gītā (2.20) clearly says that after the destruction of the material body the living entity is not annihilated, nor does he lose his identity. The identity of the living entity is never impersonal or formless; on the contrary, it is the material dress that is formless and that takes a shape according to the form of the indestructible person. No living entity is originally formless, as is wrongly thought by those with a poor fund of knowledge. This is what is confirmed in this mantra.

Q.2. Describe about the workmanship of material nature as described in mantra 17.

Ans. In the material world, material nature displays wonderful workmanship by creating varieties of bodies for the living beings according to their propensities for sense gratification. The living entity who wants to taste stool is given a material body that is quite suitable for eating stool – that of a hog. Similarly, one who wants to eat the flesh and blood of other animals may be given a tiger's body equipped with suitable teeth and claws. But human beings is not meant for eating flesh, nor does he have any desire to taste stool, even in the most aboriginal state. Human teeth are so made that they can chew and cut fruit and vegetables, although there are two canine teeth so that primitive humans can eat flesh if they so desire.

Q.3. Elucidate how the living entity changes bodies in the cycle of evolution?

Ans. The living entity keeps changing their different bodies as per their desire for sense gratification. In the cycle of evolution, the living entity changes bodies one after another. When the world was full of water, the living entity took an aquatic form. Then he passed to vegetable life, from vegetable life to warm life, from warm life to bird life, from bird life to animal life and from animal life to the human form. The highest developed form is this human form when it is possessed of a full sense of spiritual knowledge. The living entity

takes on different bodies according to his pious and vicious activities. The desire for lordship is material disease of the living being, for under the spell of sense enjoyment he transmigrates through the various bodies manifested in the material world. One who is completely under the rule of material nature remembers the heinous activities he performed during the existence of his material body, and consequently he gets another material body after death.

Q.4. What is parameter to gauge the highest development of the spiritual sense?

Ans. In the process of evolution when the living entity attains the form of a human being he can develop full sense of spiritual knowledge. The highest development of one's spiritual sense is described in this mantra according to which one should give up the material body, which will be turned to ashes, and allow the air of life to merge into the eternal reservoir of air. If one develops this sort of sense, it is the highest development of one's spiritual sense.

Q.5. What is the process by which the perfect yogis can attain the desired planet?

Ans. The living being's activities are performed within the body through the movements of different kinds of air, known in summary as prana-vayu. The yogis generally study how to control the air within the body. The soul is supposed to rise from one circle of air to another until it rises to the brahma-randhra, the highest circle. From that point the perfected yogis can transfer him to any planet he likes. The process is to give up one material body and then enter into another.

Q.6. When the highest perfection of changing different, different bodies occur?

Ans. The highest perfection of changing different, different bodies occurs only when the living entity is able to give-up the material body altogether, as suggested in mantra 17 of Īśopaniṣad, and enters into the spiritual atmosphere, where he can develop a completely different type of body – a spiritual body, which never has to meet death or change.

Q.7. How the desires of the living entities are represented?

Ans. The desires of the living entities are represented in the various species of life, from germ to the most perfected material bodies, those of Brahmā and the demigods. All material bodies are composed of different, different composition of matter in different shapes. Material nature forces the living entity to change his body due to his different desires for sense gratification.

Q.8. How the intelligent person sees oneness?

Ans. The intelligent person sees oneness in the spiritual identity not in the variety of the bodies composed of material elements. The spiritual spark, which is the parts and parcel of the Supreme Lord, is the same whether he is in a body of a hog or in the body of a demigod.

Q.9. Which form of the material bodies is highly developed with full consciousness and what are its activities?

Ans. The human form of the material bodies is the highly developed and has full consciousness. According to the Bhagavad-Gītā (7.19), the most perfect man surrenders unto the Lord after many, many lifetimes of culturing knowledge and performs devotional services at the lotus feet of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Śrī Krishna.

Q.10. When does the culture of knowledge reach perfection? What happens when it doesn't?

Ans. The culture of knowledge reaches perfection only when the knower comes to the point of surrendering unto the Supreme Lord, Vasudeva. Otherwise, even after attaining knowledge of one's spiritual identity, if one does not come to the point of knowing that the living entities are eternal parts and parcels of the whole and can never become the whole, one has to fall down again into the material atmosphere. Indeed, one must fall down even if he has become one with the brahmajyoti. Becoming one with brahmajyoti does not represent mature knowledge. Only by surrendering unto the Lord completely and developing one's sense of spiritual service does one reach the highest perfectional stage.

Q.11. When the living entities are placed in the material world?

Ans. The brahmajyoti, emanating from the transcendental body of the Lord is full of spiritual sparks that are individual entities with the full sense of existence. Sometimes these living entities want to enjoy their senses so they are placed in the material world to become false lords under the dictation of the senses.

Q.12. Describe the petition of the devotee, as illustrated in this mantra, which he puts before the Lord at the time of death.

Ans. In this mantra, the living entity prays to enter the spiritual kingdom of God after relinquishing his material body and material air. The devotee prays to the Lord to remember his activities and the sacrifices he has performed before his material body is turned into ashes. He makes these prayers at the time of death, with full consciousness of his past deeds and of the ultimate goal. Even at the time of death, a devotee does not remember his services to the Lord; the Lord does not forget him. This prayer is given to remind the Lord of the devotee's sacrifices. But, even without such reminders the Lord does not forget the service rendered by His pure devotee. Because the Lord has promised that even if one commits the most abominable action, but if he is engaged in devotional service he is to be considered saintly because he is properly situated in his determination of performance of bhakti and he quickly becomes righteous and attains lasting peace. He also says those who take shelter of Him, may be they of lower birth (papa yonayah), women (striya), vaisya (merchants) or sudras (workers) can attain the supreme destination.

Q.13. Elucidate Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Thākura's explanation of Bhagavad-Gītā (9.30-34) as described in the purport of mantra 17 of Śrī Īsopaniṣad.

Ans. Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Thākura explains these verses in this way: "One should regard a devotee of Kṛṣṇa to be on the right path of the saints, even though such a devotee may seem to be su-duracara, 'a person of loose character.' One should try to understand the real purport of the word su-duracara. A conditioned soul has to act for double functions--namely for the maintenance of the body and again for self-realization. Social status, mental development, cleanliness, austerity, nourishment and the struggle for existence are all for the maintenance of the body. The self-realization part of one's activities is

executed in one's occupation as a devotee of the Lord, and one performs actions in that connection also. One must perform these two different functions along parallel lines, because a conditioned soul cannot give up the maintenance of his body. The proportion of activities for maintenance of the body decreases, however, in proportion to the increase in devotional service. As long as the proportion of devotional service does not come to the right point, there is a chance for an occasional exhibition of worldliness. But it should be noted that such worldliness cannot continue for long because, by the grace of the Lord, such imperfections will come to an end very shortly. Therefore the path of devotional service is the only right path. If one is on the right path, even an occasional occurrence of worldliness does not hamper one in the advancement of self-realization."

Q.14. What facilities are denied to the impersonalists?

Ans. The facilities of devotional service are denied the impersonalists because they are attached to the brahmajyoti feature of the Lord. They cannot penetrate the brahmajyoti because they do not believe in the personality of Godhead. Their business is mostly word jugglery and mental speculation. Consequently they pursue a fruitless labor as confirmed in Bhagavad-Gītā (12.5).

Q.15. What helps the devotee to remain in constant touch with the Supreme Lord?

Ans. The nine principles of devotional service taken together or one by one helps a devotee remain constantly in touch with Supreme Lord. These principles of devotional service to the Lord consists essentially of nine transcendental activities: (1) hearing about the Lord, (2) glorifying the Lord, (3) remembering the Lord, (4) serving the lotus feet of the Lord, (5) worshiping the Lord, (6) offering prayers to the Lord, (7) serving the Lord, (8) enjoying friendly association with the Lord, and (9) surrendering everything unto the Lord.

Q.16. Who were the devotees who were able to achieve the highest perfection by adopting either one or all the principles of devotional service?

Ans. By adopting only one or all the nine principles of devotional service the following renowned devotees of the Lord were able to achieve the highest

perfection: (1) By hearing of the Lord, Mahāraja Parīkṣit, the hero of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, attained the desired result. (2) Just by glorifying the Lord, Śukadeva Gosvami, the speaker of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, attained his perfection. (3) By praying to the Lord, Akrura attained the desired result. (4) By remembering the Lord, Prahlada Mahāraja attained the desired result. (5) By worshiping the Lord, Pṛthu Mahāraja attained perfection. (6) By serving the lotus feet of the Lord, the goddess of fortune, Lakshmī, attained perfection. (7) By rendering personal service to the Lord, Hanuman attained the desired result. (8) Through his friendship with the Lord, Arjuna attained the desired result. (9) By surrendering everything he had to the Lord, Mahāraja Bali attained the desired result. By adopting all the nine principles of devotional service Mahāraja Ambarisa attained the highest perfection of devotional service.

Q.17. Explain how the essence of mantra 17 was discussed by Mahāraja Parīkṣit and Śrīla Śukadeva Gosvāmī.

Ans. In Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam this particular mantra is explained in the questions and answers between Mahāraja Parīkṣit and Śrīla Śukadeva Gosvāmī at the very beginning of their meeting. Mahāraja Parikṣit's main question was: "What is the duty of every man, specifically at the time of death?" Śukadeva Gosvami answered:

tasmad bharata sarvatma bhagavan isvaro harih srotavyah kirtitavyas ca
smartavyas cecchatabhayam

"Everyone who desires to be free from all anxieties should always hear about, glorify and remember the Personality of Godhead, who is the supreme director of everything, the extinguisher of all difficulties, and the Supersoul of all living entities." (Bhag. 2.1.5)

Q.18. What are general activities of the modern day human society and how they have dismissed the Supreme Personality of Godhead?

Ans. The modern-day so-called human society is generally engaged at night in sleeping and having sex and during the daytime in earning as much money as possible or else in shopping for family maintenance. People have very little time to talk about the Personality of Godhead or to inquire about Him. They

have dismissed God's existence in so many ways, primarily by declaring Him to be impersonal, that is, without sense perception.

Q.19. What is the unanimous declaration of all the Vedic literature about the Supreme Being?

Ans. All the Vedic literature - whether the Upaniṣads, Vedānta-sūtra, Bhagavad-Gītā or Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam-it is clearly declared that, the Lord is a sentient being and is supreme over all other living entities. His glorious activities are identical with Himself. One should therefore not indulge in hearing and speaking of the rubbish activities of worldly politicians and so-called big men in society but should mold their life in such a way that one can engage in godly activities without wasting a second. Śrī Īśopaniṣad directs us toward such godly activities.

Q.20. What is meaning of sacrifice?

Ans. Sacrifice means denying the interest of the senses. One has to learn this art by employing the senses in the service of the Lord during one's lifetime. One can utilize the results of such practice at the time of death.

Q.21 How are the Lord and the soul different according to the final few verses of Śrī Īśopaniṣad?

Q.22. How does the Lord assist His devotees in coming to Him?

Mantra 18

Q.1. How the devotee can progress on the path of complete self-realization?

Ans. By surrendering to the Lord and praying for His causeless mercy, the devotee can progress on the path of complete self-realization.

Q.2. Why the Lord is addressed here as fire?

Ans. The Lord is addressed as fire because He can burn anything into ashes, including the sins of the surrendered soul.

Q.3. Why karma-kāṇḍa is considered lowest on the path of self-realization?

Ans. Fruitive activities or the karma-kāṇḍa is the lowest stage in the endeavor of self-realization because as soon as such activities even slightly deviated from the regulative principles of the Vedas, they are transformed into vikarma, or acts against the interest of the actor. Such vikarma is enacted by the illusioned living entity simply for sense gratification and thus such activities become hindrances on the path of self-realization.

Q.4. What does brahminical culture include?

Ans. The brahminical culture includes truthfulness, sense control, forbearance, simplicity, full knowledge and full faith in God. It is not that one simply becomes proud of his high parentage. Being born the son of a brahmana gives one a good chance to become a brahmana like son of a big man affords a chance to become a big man. So becoming brahmana is not birthright for one has to attain the brahminical qualification for himself. As soon as one becomes proud of his birth as the son of a brahmana and neglects to acquire the qualifications of a real brahmana, he at once becomes degraded and falls from the path of self-realization. Thus his life's mission as a human being is defeated.

Q.5. Is birthright a qualification for knowing Krishna?

Ans. Every soul has the right to know Krishna. However, birthright is not a qualification for knowing Krishna. Higher births afford higher chance for self-realization and God-realization, but if these chances are misused due to illusion, one loses the good opportunity of human life afforded by the almighty

Lord. The general procedure to know Lord Krishna is to surrender unto Him through the via media of the spiritual master and executive devotional service following all the regulative principles then one becomes eligible to know Krishna. When the devotee surrenders to Krishna, the Lord at once takes charge of such a surrendered soul and frees him from all the reactions to his sinful acts and then one can know Krishna as He is.

Q.6. Compare the process of karma, jñāna and bhakti in light of this verse

Ans. There are many sinful reactions involved in karma-kāṇḍa activities, whereas in jñāna-kāṇḍa, the path of philosophical development, the number of such sinful activities is smaller. But in devotional service to the Lord, the path of bhakti, there is practically no chance of incurring sinful reactions.

Q.7. Explain how one becomes more elevated than a brahmana by devotional service?

Ans. After transmigrating through the 8.4 million species of life when one attains the human form of life, he gets a good chance for self-realization and God-realization by the culture of brahminical qualification which includes truthfulness, sense control, forbearance, simplicity, full knowledge and full faith in God. However, it is not by birthright that one becomes brahmana automatically; one has to cultivate brahminical qualification to qualify as brahmana. However, the devotee of the Lord may have been born in any family is far superior than a brahmana who is not a devotee. The devotees of the Lord simply by the process of devotional service attains all good qualifications of the Lord Himself, what to speak of those of a brahmana. A devotee automatically attains all the qualifications of an expert brahmana authorized to perform sacrifices, even though the devotee may not have taken his birth in a brahmana family. Such is the omnipotence of the Lord. He can make a man born in a brahmana family as degraded as a lowborn dog-eater, and He can also make a lowborn dog-eater superior to a qualified brahmana simply on the strength of devotional service.

Q.8. By what two ways does the Lord guide the devotee?

Ans. The omnipotent Lord is situated within the hearts of everyone. He gives direction to his sincere devotees by which they can attain the right path. The

Lord personally takes charge of fully surrendered souls and gives directions on the path of devotional service. Such directions are given to the sincere devotees in two ways: one is by way of the saints, scriptures and spiritual master and the other is by way of the Lord Himself, who resides within the heart of everyone. Thus the devotee fully enlightened with Vedic knowledge, is protected in all respects.

Q.9. How does Krishna protect His devotee until he completes the entire process of devotional service and attains complete perfection?

Ans. The omnipotent Lord is situated within the heart of everyone. He can give directions to His sincere devotees by which they can attain the right path. Such directions are especially offered to the devotee, even if he desires something else. As far as others are concerned, God gives sanction to the doer only at the risk of the doer. But in the case of a devotee, the Lord directs him in such a way that he never acts wrongly. The Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.5.42) says:

sva-pada-mulam bhajatah priyasya tyaktanya-bhavasya harih paresah vikarma
yac cotpatitam kathancid dhunoti sarvam hr̥di sannivistah

"The Lord is so kind to the devotee who is fully surrendered to His lotus feet that even though the devotee sometimes falls into the entanglement of vikarma-acts against the Vedic directions-the Lord at once rectifies such mistakes from within his heart. This is because the devotees are very dear to the Lord."

In this mantra of Śrī Īśopaniṣad, the devotee prays to the Lord to rectify him from within his heart. To err is human. A conditioned soul is very often apt to commit mistakes, and the only remedial measure to take against such unintentional sins is to give oneself up to the lotus feet of the Lord so that He may guide one to avoid such pitfalls. The Lord takes charge of fully surrendered souls; thus all problems are solved simply by surrendering oneself unto the Lord and acting in terms of His directions. Such directions are given to the sincere devotee in two ways: one is by way of the saints, scriptures and spiritual master, and the other is by way of the Lord Himself, who resides within the heart of everyone. Thus the devotee, fully enlightened with Vedic knowledge, is protected in all respects. The Lord gives assurance to His devotees (Bg.6.41-42) that even the yoga-bhrashtas, souls fallen from the path

of self-realization, will be given a chance to rectify themselves by taking birth either in the families of devotees or in the family of aristocrat which affords higher chance for self-realization and God-realization. Thus the Lord never gives up on His devotees rather guides the devotee birth after birth until the devotee reaches the stage of perfection. The Lord says “even if someone says only once that —I am yours I protect him in all respect.”

Q.11. Why the Vedic knowledge cannot be understood by mundane educational procedure?

Ans. The Vedic knowledge is transcendental therefore it cannot be understood by mundane educational procedure.

Q.12. How then one can understand the Vedic knowledge?

Ans. The Vedic mantras can be understood only by the grace of the Lord and the spiritual master (yasya deve para bhaktir yatha deve tatha gurau)

Q.13. How is there no chance for a devotee to fall again into the mire of material illusion?

Ans. If one takes shelter of a bona fide spiritual master, it is to be understood that he has obtained the grace of the Lord. The Lord appears as the spiritual master for the devotee. Thus the spiritual master, the Vedic injunctions and the Lord Himself from within – all guide the devotee in full strength. In this way there is no chance for a devotee to fall again into the mire of material illusion. The devotee, thus protected from all around is sure to reach the ultimate destination of perfection. The entire process is hinted at in this mantra, and Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (1.2.17-20) explains it further:

Hearing and chanting the glories of the Lord is itself an act of piety. The Lord wants everyone to hear and chant His glories because He is the well-wisher of all living entities. By hearing and chanting the glories of the Lord, one becomes cleansed of all undesirable things, and then one's devotion becomes fixed upon the Lord. At this stage the devotee acquires the brahminical qualifications, and the effects of the lower modes of nature (passion and ignorance) completely vanish. The devotee becomes fully enlightened by virtue of his devotional service, and thus he comes to know the path of the Lord and the way to attain Him. As all doubts diminish, he becomes a pure devotee

Śrī Īsopaniṣad - Analogies & Examples

Mahātmā Gāndhī & Kennedy: one of the four defects is to make mistakes

Own hands in a dark room: you cannot see them, the senses are imperfect

Cow dung: Vedic principles sometimes appear contradictory

Indian social norms (Asking —Is this a Vedic injunction?): Vedic injunctions cannot be neglected

Śruti is like a mother: only the mother can say who the father is

Radio programme: perfect knowledge, śabda

Hand severed from the body: we are parts and parcels of the complete whole

The milk-giving cow only eats grass and grain: milk is part of the quota given to humans by Kṛṣṇa

A house made of earth, wood, etc.: the builder is not the proprietor; bringing ingredients together does not transfer ownership

Stolen bread: both capitalists and communists fail to see that everything belongs to Kṛṣṇa

A tree lives for hundreds of years, bellows breathe, etc. Therefore live in the spirit of Īśāvāsya, not uselessly

The human body is a boat: to cross over the ocean of material existence, sastra and acaryas are the expert boatmen, facilities of the body are the favorable breezes

Heat and light emanate from a fire: (Viṣṇu Purana) a fire in one place distributes heat and light. Similarly, Kṛṣṇa is fixed in Goloka Vrindavana but has His energies

Prahlada Mahārāja: knew the God was everywhere, even in the pillar

Sparks in the fire: living entities are qualitatively one with the Lord, yet not equal quantitatively; amount of heat and light in the sparks not equal to fire

Heat, light, and fire: no meaning to fire without heat and light; they are different, but in synthesis the same; no difference between the energy and the energetic; everything is the energy of the Lord

Salt in a drop of sea water: the quantity of salt in a drop is never equal to that within the complete ocean

Family & nation: the interest is one, but the members are individuals

Father creates and maintains children: Kṛṣṇa wants pleasure from His children; obedience gives oneness and pleasure

A cobra decorated with a jewel: dangerous, represents Godless education

Decoration of a dead body: modern civilization devoid of spiritual education

An ass: modern man is being converted into, by —advancement of knowledge

Hiranyakasipu: even the greatest materialists fail, unable to stop death

Fever: – materialism should not be increased– Temperature cannot be wiped out altogether, there is a normal condition = balanced programme of spiritual and material knowledge

Coconut covered by a husk: the universe is covered by the material elements, thus is dark and airtight and needs the sun and moon

A ticket to Calcutta doesn't take you to Bombay: different destinations according to mode of worship

Watering a tree: water the root not the leaves. Similarly, philanthropic activities don't water the root, the soul

The sun & its rays: compared to the Lord and the jivas, i.e. same in quality sun rays are innumerable sun has varieties of energy, ultimate source is the sun-god.

Śrī Īsopaniṣad – Key Terms

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

