Just what is the Bhagavad-gétä? The purpose of Bhagavad-gétä is to deliver mankind from the nescience of material existence. Every man is in difficulty in so many ways, as Arjuna also was in difficulty in having to fight the Battle of Kurukñetra. Arjuna surrendered unto Çré Kåñëa, and consequently this Bhagavad-gétä was spoken. Not only Arjuna, but every one of us is full of anxieties because of this material existence. Our very existence is in the atmosphere of nonexistence. Actually we are not meant to be threatened by nonexistence. Our existence is eternal. But somehow or other we are put into asat. Asat refers to that which does not exist.

Out of so many human beings who are suffering, there are a few who are actually inquiring about their position, as to what they are, why they are put into this awkward position and so on. Unless one is awakened to this position of questioning his suffering, unless he realizes that he doesn't want suffering but rather wants to make a solution to all sufferings, then one is not to be considered a perfect human being. Humanity begins when this sort of inquiry is awakened in one's mind. In the Brahma-sütra this inquiry is called "brahma-jijïäsä." Every activity of the human being is to be considered a failure unless he inquires about the nature of the Absolute. Therefore those who begin to question why they are suffering or where they came from and where they shall go after death are proper students for understanding Bhagavad-gétä. The sincere student should also have a firm respect for the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Such a student was Arjuna.

The subject of the Bhagavad-gétä entails the comprehension of five basic truths. First of all, the science of God is explained and then the constitutional position of the living entities, jévas. There is éçvara, which means controller, and there are jévas, the living entities which are controlled. If a living entity says that he is not controlled but that he is free, then he is insane. The living being is controlled in every respect, at least in his conditioned life. So in the Bhagavad-gétä the subject matter deals with the éçvara, the supreme controller, and the jévas, the controlled living entities. Prakåti (material nature) and time (the duration of existence of the whole universe or the manifestation of material nature) and karma (activity) are also discussed. The cosmic manifestation is full of different activities. All living entities are engaged in different activities. From Bhagavad-gétä we must learn what God is, what the living entities are, what prakrti is, what the cosmic manifestation is and how it is controlled by time, and what the activities of the living entities are.