

Introduction by Suhotra Maharaja

Dandavats and Greetings

Please accept our humble obeisances. All glories to Srila Prabhupada. What follows below is an orientation essay for newcomers to the *Bhakti-sastri* course offered by the *Sri Rupanuga Paramartha Vidyapitha*. We encourage you read it carefully several times. Please know that the *S.R.P.V.* is one of ISKCON's first adult education programs, established in Sridhama Mayapura during the 1980s. A particular aim of our program is to bring forth *svatah-siddha-jnana* from the hearts of those participating in the program—that is, the innate Vedic knowledge and culture dormant within every living entity. [*Svatah-siddha-jnana* is discussed by Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura in *Vaisnava-siddhanta-mala* Ch. 3] Conditions in Kali-yuga being what they are, our only hope for success in this endeavor is to strictly follow the ways and means of Vedic knowledge and culture bequeathed us by Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu and His foremost representative of our time, His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Svami Prabhupada, Founder-*acarya* of ISKCON. Offering our humblest obeisances at his lotus feet, we open this introduction by quoting at length from Srila Prabhupada's classic work, *Renunciation Through Wisdom* (pp. 134-9, 143, and 146-7). Herein, we believe, His Divine Grace presents a practical scheme for the cultivation of Vedic and Vaisnava education.

Devotion Resides in Perfect Knowledge of the Supreme

If the infinitesimal soul merges his individuality, or inherent personality, with the infinite being, then that individuality is rendered worthless. Those who want to commit spiritual suicide by sacrificing their individuality are a breed by themselves. Such self-destroyers are known as pure monists. On the other hand, those who desire to maintain their individuality are dualists, or personalists.

Once the *jīva* manifests his original transcendental nature, he is easily liberated from material conditioning, yet even in such an elevated state he does not lose his individual identity as a spirit soul. In fact, in that pure state he engages in the eternal service of the Supreme Lord and relishes the immortal nectar of sublime bliss.

For eons, all over the world, research on the subject of *kṣetra* and *kṣetra-jñā* has been going on. In India the six philosophical schools have extensively discussed this topic, but this discussion has merely been an exercise in logic and sophistry that has led to many differing opinions among the sages. Hence none of these schools has truly practiced *jñāna-yoga*, the path of perfect knowledge. Only when discussion of *kṣetra* and *kṣetra-jñā* is applied in the Lord's service does the exercise become *jñāna-yoga*.

The process of *jñāna-yoga* has been delineated in the *Vedānta-sūtra*, the philosophical essence of the Vedas. The Supreme Lord, Kṛṣṇa, accepts the authority of the *Vedānta-sūtra* and considers the philosophical presentation proper. Up till the present day, every spiritual line, even in the impersonalist school, has based its philosophical authority on the *Vedānta-sūtra*. And the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is the natural and faultless commentary on the *Vedānta-sūtra*. This is Lord Caitanya's opinion.

Learned circles consider a disciplic line bereft of a commentary on the *Vedānta-sūtra* to be unauthorized and useless. *Śrīpāda Śaṅkarācārya's Vedānta* commentary, entitled *Śārīraka-bhāṣya*, is the main commentary of the impersonal, monistic school. Among the *Vaiṣṇavas*, besides *Śrīpāda Rāmānujācārya's* commentary, *Śrīla Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa's Govinda-bhāṣya* is the main commentary in the line of Lord Caitanya, known as the *Mādhva-Gauḍīya-sampradāya*.

Those who are keen to engage in deep discussions on the esoteric conclusions of the scriptures should certainly delve into the philosophy of the *Vedānta-sūtra*. The point to be emphasized is that a well-versed *Vedānta* philosopher is not a philosopher in the line of *Śaṅkarācārya* but is actually a *Vaiṣṇava* spiritual preceptor, a liberated soul.

According to the *Vedas* and the sages, the five gross elements are earth, water, fire, air, and ether. Material nature is produced from a combination of false ego (*ahaṅkāra*), the ingredients of the material energy (*mahat-tattva*), and the cause of the *mahat-tattva* (*prakṛti*). There are five knowledge-gathering senses and five working senses. The mind is the internal sense, the sixth knowledge-gathering sense. Form, taste, smell, touch, and sound are the five sense objects.

We have already enumerated these material ingredients in our description of the *Sāṅkhya* philosophy of the atheist Kapila. The *kṣetra*, or "field," is the combination of the twenty-four ingredients mentioned above. When these twenty-four ingredients interact the result is the transformation of material nature, which gives rise to the gross material body composed of five gross elements (*pañca-mahābhūta*), as a result of material desires, hate, enjoyment, lamentation, and so on. The shadow of consciousness in the form of mind and will are transformations of that field. What will soon be discussed is that the *kṣetra-jña* is completely different from the *kṣetra* and its transformations. But to properly understand the knowledge concerning the *kṣetra* and the *kṣetra-jña*, one must first cultivate at least twenty good qualities listed in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (13.8-12):

Humility; pridelessness; nonviolence; tolerance; simplicity; approaching a bona fide spiritual master; cleanliness; steadiness; self-control; renunciation of the objects of sense gratification; absence of false ego; the perception of the evil of birth, death, old age, and disease; detachment; freedom from entanglement with children, wife, home and the rest; even-mindedness amid pleasant and unpleasant events; constant and unalloyed devotion to Me; aspiring to live in a solitary place; detachment from the

general mass of people; accepting the importance of self-realization; and philosophical search for the Absolute Truth—all these I declare to be knowledge, and besides this whatever there may be is ignorance.

Persons bereft of these qualities are not eligible to discuss spiritual topics. The false logicians mistake the above-mentioned qualities, which are meant to lead the conditioned soul to liberation, for mundane qualities acquired as a result of transformations of the mind, such as lust, anger, and hate. But factually, the above-mentioned qualities represent spiritual knowledge. Even if one accepts the false logicians' argument that the qualities Lord Kṛṣṇa enumerates in the *Gītā* as prerequisites for absolute knowledge are mental transformations, still we cannot agree that these transformations are equivalent to such qualities as lust, greed, anger, and illusion, which result from gross ignorance. One kind of mental transformation drags the soul down to depravity, whereas the other redeems the soul from doom. Both disease and medicine are products of material nature, yet one pushes a man toward the jaws of death, while the other saves him from destruction. So one must avoid becoming the laughing-stock of society by accepting the foolish theory of *yata mata, tata path*—"All ways lead to the Truth"—and on this basis professing that the medicine and the disease are one and the same.

There is one quality among the twenty qualities Kṛṣṇa lists that is especially noteworthy, and that is *mayi cānanya-yogena bhaktir avyabhicāriṇī*: "Constant and unalloyed devotion to Me [Kṛṣṇa]." The other qualities are required to cleanse the consciousness. Once the mirror of the mind is purified and the blazing fire of material existence extinguished, constant and unalloyed devotion to Lord Kṛṣṇa begins to appear on the horizon of the heart. The great saintly spiritual master Śrīla Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura has sung, "When will my mind become purified and detached from matter? Oh, when in that purified state will I be able to see the transcendental realm of Vṛndāvana?"

It is interesting to note that once constant and unalloyed devotion to Lord Kṛṣṇa blossoms in the heart of a person, the other nineteen qualities automatically manifest in him. As mentioned in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (5.18.12), *yasyāsti bhaktir bhagavaty akiñcanā sarvair guṇais tatra samāsate surāḥ*:

All the demigods and their exalted qualities, such as religion, knowledge and renunciation, become manifest in the body of one who has developed unalloyed devotion for the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Vāsudeva.

By patiently collecting ten, twenty, thirty rupees daily, one will someday have a million rupees. But if one comes upon a million rupees all at once, one does not have to endeavor separately to collect ten, twenty, or thirty rupees and waste valuable time. Similarly, when one develops unalloyed devotion to Lord Kṛṣṇa, all the other above-mentioned qualities automatically adorn that person without extra effort. On the other hand, one who leaves aside unalloyed devotion to Lord Kṛṣṇa and tries to cultivate the other nineteen qualities separately may temporarily receive wealth and honor, but he

will become unqualified for achieving the highest goal. In the same verse of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* mentioned above (5.8.12), Prahlāda Mahārāja says, *harāv abhaktasya kuto mahad-guṇā manorathenāsati dhāvato bahiḥ*:

On the other hand, a person devoid of devotional service and engaged in material activities has no good qualities. Even if he is adept at the practice of mystic yoga or the honest endeavor of maintaining his family and relatives, he must be driven by his own mental speculations and must engage in the service of the lord's external energy. How can there be any good qualities in such a man?

It is futile to make an external show of good qualities like humility and nonviolence while disrespecting the Lord's lotus feet and denouncing the process of devotional service. Such so-called good qualities may be of some material value, but ultimately they are useless and temporary. In fact, the nineteen other qualities combine to make a throne from which unalloyed devotion may rule. These qualities are various limbs of the Absolute Truth, and everything outside this absolute knowledge is nescience.

By cultivating these limbs of knowledge, one attains self-realization. In other words, one is elevated from mundane knowledge of the *kṣetra* to spiritual knowledge of the *kṣetra-jñā*. We have previously established that the word *kṣetra-jñā* implies both the living entity and the Supreme Brahman. Sometimes material nature, or *prakṛti*, is referred to as Brahman, the reason being that Brahman is the cause of the material nature. In one sense a cause and its effect are identical. But Lord Kṛṣṇa is the ultimate source of Brahman. The Lord impregnates Brahman in the form of the material nature with the seed of Brahman known as the *jīva*. As Kṛṣṇa says in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (14.3),

*mama yonir mahad brahma
tasmin garbham dadhāmy aham
sambhavaḥ sarva-bhūtānām
tato bhavati bhārata*

The total material substance, called Brahman, is the source of birth, and it is that Brahman that I impregnate, making possible the births of all living beings, O scion of Bharata.

This verse explains the famous saying *sarvaṁ khalv idaṁ brahma* from the Upaniṣads, meaning "Everything is Brahman." In other words, the Supreme Brahman, Lord Kṛṣṇa, is identical with both the *jīva* and *prakṛti* in that they are all Brahman. Thus in one sense the Vaiṣṇavas are pure monists. Previously we deliberated upon another verse from the *Bhagavad-gītā* (9.10):

*mayādhyakṣeṇa prakṛtiḥ
sūyate sa-carācaram
hetunānena kaunteya
jagad viparivartate*

This material nature, which is one of My energies, is working under my direction, O son of Kuntī, producing all moving and nonmoving beings. Under its rule this manifestation is created and annihilated again and again.

The *Gītā* verse under discussion (14.3) gives a clearer understanding of the other verse (9.10).

Wherever the word *jñāna* appears in the Vedic literature, it should be understood to mean *sambandha-jñāna*, knowledge of the relationship between the Lord and His energies. It does not refer to the impersonalist concept of the Supreme. After a person understands *sambandha-jñāna*, he comes to the stage of *abhidheya-jñāna*, knowledge of how to act in his relationship with the Supreme Lord. This is devotional service, practiced by liberated souls. The mature stage of *abhidheya-jñāna* leads one to love of Godhead, the ultimate goal of all living entities.

In the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (10.87.30), one of the four Kumāras, Sanandana, recites to an assembly of sages in Janaloka the prayers the personified Vedas previously recited to the Supreme Lord. One of the prayers is as follows:

*aparimitā dhruvās tanu-bhr̥to yadi sarva-gatās
tarhi na śāsyateti niyamo dhruva netarathā
ajani ca yan-mayaṁ tad avimucya niyantr bhavet
samam anujānatāṁ yad amataṁ mata-duṣṭatayā*

If the countless living entities were all-pervading and possessed forms that never changed, You could not possibly be their absolute ruler, O immutable one. But since they are Your localized expansions and their forms are subject to change, You do control them. Indeed, that which supplies the ingredients for the generation of something is necessarily its controller because a product never exists apart from its ingredient cause. It is simply illusion for someone to think that he knows the Supreme Lord, who is equally present in each of His expansions, since whatever knowledge one gains by material means must be imperfect.

The last word in knowledge is certainly not self-realization or Brahman realization. There is more to realize—namely, that the *jīva* is the eternal servant of Lord Kṛṣṇa. This realization is the awakening of supramental consciousness, and the activities a *jīva* performs in such consciousness are the beginning of his eternal life. When the *jīva* performs all his activities under the direction of the Lord's internal, spiritual energy, he enjoys eternal transcendental bliss, which is a billion times greater than the happiness of Brahman realization. The difference in transcendental joy between the two is like the difference between the vast ocean and the water collected in a calf's hoofprint.

An Examination of the Above

These excerpts from *Renunciation Through Wisdom* (or *Vairagya-vidya* in the original Bengali) serve as Srila Prabhupada's own introduction to the Vedic process of knowledge. The portions of his book quoted above are sub-headed **Devotion Resides in Perfect Knowledge of the Supreme**. That is as per the English-language BBT edition. We believe these eight words sum up the aim of our *Bhakti-sastri* course. From beneath the flag he planted in the form of this sub-heading, His Divine Grace issued forth a most remarkable scheme of education. It deserves our careful attention.

Srila Prabhupada begins by dismissing a class of aspiring spiritualists whose goal is to merge into God, the infinite being. "Pure monists," Srila Prabhupada terms them, and less charitably, "self-destroyers" and seekers of "spiritual suicide." They are "a breed by themselves" who deem individuality "worthless."

His Divine Grace turns to transcendentalists he calls dualists or personalists. They manifest their eternal transcendental nature without losing their individual identity as spirit souls. In the state of pure identity they engage in the eternal service of the Supreme Lord and as a result relish "the immortal nectar of divine bliss."

It must be noted that Srila Prabhupada leaves no doubt that the path of perfect knowledge of the self known as *jnana-yoga* is followed by the personalists, not by the so-called monists. The doctrinal basis of the *jnana* path is an ancient text named *Vedanta-sutra*. As the philosophical essence of the Vedas, even the monists respect it as authoritative. Indeed Sri Krsna Himself accepts the authority of *Vedanta*; moreover, the opinion of His incarnation in this age, Lord Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, is that *Srimad-Bhagavatam* is the natural commentary on *Vedanta-sutra*.

Jnana-yoga begins with research into the subject of *ksetra* and *ksetra-jna*. The first, *ksetra*, is "the field" of twenty-four material ingredients that combine to form the gross material body. Natural transformations of that field cloud the knowing potency of the soul, who has somehow or other come to be situated in the field. This cloud of *maya* (illusion) casts a shadow of consciousness in the form of the mind. Within the mind appear material desires, hate, enjoyment, lamentation, and so. This "mental consciousness" is no less than the living entity's material existence. The fact remains, however, that even as he clings to illusion, determined to be the *ksetra* instead of its knower, the living entity remains always what he really is—pure spirit soul. By proper application of *jnana-yoga* as directed by *Vedanta*, even such a confused soul may recover the correct perception of himself as *ksetra-jna*. As such, he is serenely transcendental to the actions and reactions of matter.

Six well-known philosophical schools (*Sankhya*, *Yoga*, *Vaisesika*, *Nyaya*, *Karma-Mimamsa* and the *Advaita-Vedanta* or *Mayavadi* followers of Sankaracarya) supposedly pursue the path of *jnana-yoga*. But Srila Prabhupada rejects them as merely engaging in

logic and sophistry that has led to many differing opinions among the sages. Hence none of these schools has truly practiced *jñāna-yoga*, the path of perfect knowledge. Only when discussion of *kṣetra* and *kṣetra-jña* is applied in the Lord's service does the exercise become *jñāna-yoga*.

From real *jñana-yoga*—the Vedantic discussion of *ksetra* and *ksetra-jna* in terms of service to Krsna—real fruits of *jñana* grow. In other words, the student nurtures twenty good qualities listed by Lord Krsna in *Bhagavad-gītā* (13.8-12) as the symptoms of knowledge. Besides these, the Lord leaves no doubt, there is only ignorance.

The mistake of the false logicians (advocates of the afore-mentioned six schools) is that they confuse these blessed twenty qualities with ordinary ones (lust, anger, hate) that appear from the material transformation of the mind within the *ksetra*, the field of mundane identity and sense gratification. Even if one insists the twenty good qualities attained by genuine *sat-sanga* are products only of the shadow-consciousness (the material mind), Srila Prabhupada replies with a brilliant example: “Both disease and medicine are products of material nature, yet one pushes a man toward the jaws of death, while the other saves him from destruction.” Of the twenty, one is particularly auspicious: *mayi cānanya-yogena bhaktir avyabhicāriṇī*: “Constant and unalloyed devotion to Me [Kṛṣṇa].” If by good association at least this single quality can be cultivated, the other nineteen are sure to follow.

By his great kindness, Srila Prabhupada gives us clear warning that an attempt to cultivate the other nineteen qualities—for example, humility and nonviolence—while at the same time spoiling “constant and unalloyed devotion to Kṛṣṇa” by disrespecting the Lord's lotus feet and denouncing the process of devotional service, may temporarily result in wealth and honor. In other words, for a time it may appear to inexperienced persons that such a student is progressing in *yoga*. In truth he is committing the gravest of errors. By his neglect of *mayi cānanya-yogena bhaktir avyabhicāriṇī*, the student is simply busying himself with the loss of the highest goal of the process.

How is it possible for a student on the path of knowledge to “disrespect the Lord's lotus feet and unalloyed devotion to Krsna”? An oft-quoted verse (*kirata-hunandhra-pulinda-pulkasa—Bhag. 2.4.18*) proclaims that the residence of the supreme power of Lord Visnu to immediately purify the lowest, most sinful classes of mankind is in His pure devotees. It is for this reason that the foremost of the demigods, Mahadeva Lord Siva—personally celebrated for his great kindness to the fallen—declares to Durga-devi in *Padma-Purana* that while the *Vedas* mention demigod worship, they intend to raise humanity to the topmost worship of Lord Visnu. Even higher than *visnu-aradhanam*, Siva adds, is *tadiyanam samarcanam*—the rendering of service to Vaisnavas who are *tadiya* (“related to the Lord”). In his purport to *Bhag. 7.5.23-24*, Srila Prabhupada declares, “Bathing in the Ganges and serving a pure Vaisnava are also known as *tadiya-upasanam*. This is also *pada-sevanam*.” The equation of *tadiya-upasanam* and *pada-sevanam* are only logical, as both the holy

Ganges and the pure Vaisnava are *visnu-padaya*, sheltered at the lotus feet of Lord Visnu. In short, an offense to *visnupada* is no different from an offense to *tadiya* and vice-versa. Either offense moves the Lord to withhold His supreme power that can raise the most fallen souls to the purified positions of devotional service in practice and pure love of God,.

Now we arrive at something most fundamental to our comprehension of *sastric* knowledge taught in the line of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu. Twice Srila Prabhupada draws our attention to three stages of progress in Vedic education..

(A) Wherever the word *jñāna* appears in the Vedic literature, it should be understood to mean *sambandha-jñāna*, knowledge of the relationship between the Lord and His energies. It does not refer to the impersonalist concept of the Supreme. After a person understands *sambandha-jñāna*, he comes to the stage of *abhidheya-jñāna*, knowledge of how to act in his relationship with the Supreme Lord. This is devotional service, practiced by liberated souls. The mature stage of *abhidheya-jñāna* leads one to love of Godhead, the ultimate goal of all living entities.

(B) The last word in knowledge is certainly not self-realization or Brahman realization. There is more to realize—namely, that the *jīva* is the eternal servant of Lord Kṛṣṇa. This realization is the awakening of supramental consciousness, and the activities a *jīva* performs in such consciousness are the beginning of his eternal life. When the *jīva* performs all his activities under the direction of the Lord's internal, spiritual energy, he enjoys eternal transcendental bliss, which is a billion times greater than the happiness of Brahman realization. The difference in transcendental joy between the two is like the difference between the vast ocean and the water collected in a calf's hoofprint.

The Three Great Riches of Life

It is clear from the above quotations that there are three levels of Vedic knowledge. Repeatedly in *Sri Caitanya-caritamṛta* they are named *sambandha*, *abidheya* and *prayojana* by no less than Mahaprabhu Himself. From what Vedic source does this three-fold analysis of *sastra* originate? The answer is Sri Kṛṣṇa, who is Himself the origin of the Vedas. This is confirmed by *C.c. Madhya 22.103* and the purport:

*martyo yada tyakta-samasta-karma
niveditatma vicikirsito me
tadamrtatvam pratipadyamano
mayatma-bhuyaya ca kalpate vai*

The living entity who is subjected to birth and death attains immortality when he gives up all material activities, dedicates his life to the execution of My order, and acts according to My directions. In this way he becomes fit to enjoy the spiritual bliss derived from exchanging loving mellows with Me.

PURPORT

This is a quotation from *Srimad-Bhagavatam* (11.29.34). Krsna was advising His most confidential servant, Uddhava, about *sambandha*, *abhidheya* and *prayojana*. These concern one's relationship with the Supreme Personality of Godhead and the activities of that relationship, as well as the perfection of life. The Lord also described the characteristics of confidential devotees.

Some 4500 years later at Varanasi, Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu instructed Sanatana Gosvami after the latter's successful escape from his enforced service to Nawab Hussein Shah in Bengal. In the following memorable verse (*C.c. Madhya* 20.143) the Lord stated plainly what Sri Krsna hinted to Uddhava in the enigmatic language of confidentiality.

*veda-sastre kahe sambandha, abhidheya, prayojana
krsna, krsna-bhakti, prema,--tina maha-dhana*

In Vedic literatures, Krsna is the central point of attraction (*sambandha*), and His service is our activity (*abidheya*). To attain the platform of love of Krsna is life's ultimate goal (*prayojana*). Therefore Krsna, Krsna's service and love of Krsna are the three great riches of life.

At the *Bhakti-sastri* level, is *Renunciation Through Wisdom* too Challenging a Guide to *Gita* Philosophy?

If one persuades oneself that the comprehension of Vedic knowledge in terms of *sambandha*, *abidheya* and *prayojana* as presented by Srila Prabhupada in *Renunciation Through Wisdom* properly belongs to a highly rarified sphere of *sastric* education—to wit, “more advanced than the *Bhakti-sastri* level”—one must face the fact, on the evidence presented in this introduction, that one is deluding oneself. The quotations cited above from His Divine Grace were written by Srila Prabhupada for general readers, albeit in the Bengali language. It is indeed arguable that an average Bengali during the late 1940s through the '50s (when the series of essays making up the book were originally published) would have had a greater degree of homegrown familiarity with the person of Sri Caitanya and His *sankirtana* movement than the average New Yorker or Londoner.

But it is just as arguable that this homegrown familiarity would be robbed of its vitality by the weeds of deeply-rooted prejudice, ingrown misconceptions, and the blase' presumption of “knowing already all these things.” It is obvious to anyone with eyes in their heads that this unfortunate state of affairs motivated Srila Prabhupada to focus, and focus again, on the basic themes of *Gita* philosophy. In *Renunciation Through Wisdom* His Divine Grace most certainly did not indulge in the sort of “exercise in logic and sophistry” that he specifically condemns in Paragraph Three, cited above. A glance at the book's Contents page, and a leaf through the pages of the main text, speak loudly for this conclusion. Srila Prabhupada taught his readership that *The Material Nature is Full of Miseries*. He urged them to learn about *The Formula for Peace*. He desired they accept that *Lord Krsna Alone is the Supreme Godhead*.

As far as the technicalities of *Bhagavat* philosophy go, *Renunciation Through Wisdom* demands no more of the reader than the softbound books of Prabhupada's English-language essays on *Bhagavad-gita* did that the BBT released years later—e.g. *The Topmost Yoga System, Beyond Birth and Death*, and *On the Way to Kṛṣṇa*. On page ix of his introduction, His Holiness Bhakti Caru Swami asserts with no reservations:

In *Renunciation Through Wisdom*, Srila Prabhupada has simplified the teachings of the *Bhagavad-gita* for our understanding.

**From *mayi cānanya-yogena bhaktir avyabhicāriṇī*,
the Three Great Riches are to be Mined**

In ISKCON, *Bhagavad-gita As It Is* is the principal scripture studied at the *Bhakti-sāstri* level. Following the lead of Bhakti Caru Maharaja, we believe that *Renunciation Through Wisdom* embarks upon a number of daring though perfectly authorized and wholly consistent leaps across the structural logic of Sri Kṛṣṇa's original text. The connections brought to light reveal the Three Great Riches of *śāstra* most valued by Lord Caitanya. Furthermore they are confirmed by Srila Prabhupada himself.

As we have seen above, out of the often-quoted twenty items of knowledge listed by Srila Prabhupada from *Bg* 13.8-12, one is identified as direct (*mukhya*) and nineteen as indirect (*gauna*). Now, in his translation of *Bhagavad-gita As It Is* 13.8-12, His Divine Grace links a *gauna* item with the *mukhya* one (*nityam ca sama-cittatvam istanistopapattisu/mayi cananya-yogena bhaktir avyabhivarini*) to form an English phrase, "even-mindedness amid pleasant and unpleasant events and unalloyed devotion to Me." Why did he do this? And why did he not simply concentrate upon the single direct item of unalloyed devotion to Kṛṣṇa and cut down the rest of the rather long purport on the nineteen supportive items?

The answer can be illustrated from a *Srimad-Bhagavatam* lecture he gave in Paris on 15 June, 1974.

Nirvṛtta vidhi-nisedah... Vidhi and nisedha. They are two things. We say, "You chant Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra," and prohibit, "No illicit sex," negative and positive. So *vidhi* means "do's" and *nisedha*, "do not's." So this is the beginning of life. Don't try to become *paramahamsa, munayah*, from the very beginning. Then you'll fall flat. That is not required.

In the verses from Chapter 13 under examination, reigning in the mind amidst pleasant and unpleasant events" is the *nisedha* or restraining rule, and unalloyed devotion to Me is the *vidhi* (positive) rule. Srila Prabhupada makes this clear in his purport:

If one can mold his family life...to develop Krsna consciousness, following these four principles, then there is no need to change from family life to renounced life. But if it is not congenial, not favorable for spiritual advancement, then family life should be abandoned. One must sacrifice everything to realize or serve Krsna, just as Arjuna did. ...In all cases one should be detached from the happiness and distress of family life, because in this world one can never be fully happy or fully miserable. ...if we are really in the spiritual position these things will not agitate us. To reach that stage, we have to practice unbreakable devotional service. Devotional service to Krsna without deviation means engaging oneself in the nine processes of devotional service—chanting, hearing, worshiping, offering respect, etc.—as described in the last verse of the Ninth Chapter. This process is to be followed.

In the above quotation we have before us three verses. More precisely we have the second half of 13.10 (*nityam ca sama-cittanam/istanistopapattisu*), the first half of 13.11 (*mayi cananya-yogena/bhaktir avyabhicarini*) and the whole of 9.36 (*man-mana bhava mad-bhakti/mad-yaji mam namaskuru/mam evaisyasi yuktvaivam/atmanam mat-parayanah.*) The first is a rule that, under favorable circumstances, connects a devotee's *grhasta* life to Krsna. But if circumstances are not favorable, the same rule disconnects the devotee from *grhasta* life to protect his connection to Krsna. In either case, 13.10b is a *sambandha*-class verse. Its subject is keeping connection (*sambandha*) with the Lord in view of time, place and circumstances. *Bhagavad-gita* 13.11a is an *abidheya*-class verse. It teaches we have a duty to serve Krsna under any and all circumstances. According to Lord Caitanya, *abidheya*, the process of exclusive worship of Lord Krsna, constitutes the centermost teachings of *sruti*, *smrti* and the *Puranas*. The conclusion of the Lord is that the life force of a devotee should be fixed only upon *abidheya*. *Sambandha* and *prayojana* are sustained by constant devotional service.

*srutir mata prsta disati bhavad-aradhana-vidhim
yatha matur vani smrtir api tatha vakti bhagini
puranadya ye va sahaja-nivahas te tad-anuga
atah satyam jnatam murahara bhavan eva saranam*

When the mother Vedas [*sruti*] is questioned as to whom to worship, she says “You are the only Lord and worshipable object.” Similarly, the corollaries of the *sruti-sastras*, the *smrti-sastras*, give the same instructions, just like sisters. The *Puranas*, which are like brothers, follow in the footsteps of their mother: “O enemy of the demon Mura, the conclusion is that You are the only shelter. Now I have understood this in truth.” (*C.c. Madhya* 22.6)

*krsna-bhakti—abidheya, sarva-sastra kaya
ataeva muni-gana bariyache niscaya*

A human being's activities should be centered only on devotional service to Lord Krsna. That is the verdict of all Vedic literatures and all saintly people have firmly confirmed this. (*C.c. Madya* 22.5)

Now, regarding the third verse under discussion (*Bg* 9.34—mentioned on page 653 of the BBT edition of the *Gita* in connection with 13.11a, *mayi cananya-yogena/bhaktir avyabhicarini*), both *Bhagavad-gita as it is* and *Renunciation Through*

Wisdom leave no doubt that it is an *abidheya/prayojana* verse. This is evident, first of all, from what Krsna plainly says to Arjuna in this conclusion to Chapter Nine:

Engage your mind always in thinking of Me, become My devotee, offer obeisances to Me and worship Me. Being completely absorbed in Me, surely you will come to Me.

In the *Bhagavad-gita As It Is* purport to this verse, Srila Prabhupada elaborates upon the power of devotional service (i.e. *abidheya*) under the guidance of a pure devotee to enable even a dog-eater “to attain the highest perfection of life”...”much greater than the *jnanis* and *yogis*” (*prayojana*). The same verse appears on page 116 of *Renunciation Through Wisdom*. Here Srila Prabhupada’s comment is briefer than his *Gita* purport, but the message is the same—it is a *sandhi* (crossover) from *abidheya* to *prayojana*.

O people of the world! Please try to translate the *Gita*’s message into action and channel your thoughts toward Lord Krsna’s lotus feet. Serve Him with your mind and body. If you dovetail all your energy in the Lord’s service, then not only will you feel intense exhilaration in this lifetime, but you will be immersed in eternal bliss in the spiritual world, perpetually serving Him.

What are the Vedas?