



BHAKTI VAIBHAVA

SRIMAD BHAGAVATAM: CANTOS 1-6

STUDENT HANDBOOK

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ASSESSMENT GUIDELINES
CLOSED BOOK & OPEN BOOK EXAM
QUESTION BANKS
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BHAKTI VAIBHAVA

Student Hand Book

Question Bank & Course Guidelines



Bhaktivedanta Vidyapitha Research Center

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COURSE STRUCTURE

In the *Bhakti Vaibhava* course the first six cantos of *Srimad Bhagavatam* are covered in ten modules as follows.

- Module 1 (Canto 1, Chapters 1-9)
- Module 2 (Canto 1, Chapters 10-19)
- Module 3 (Canto 2)
- Module 4 (Canto 3, Chapters 1-14)
- Module 5 (Canto 3, Chapters 15-33)
- Module 6 (Canto 4, Chapters 1-14)
- Module 7 (Canto 4, Chapters 15-31)
- Module 8 (Canto 5)
- Module 9 (Canto 6, Chapters 1-9)
- Module 10 (Canto 6, Chapters 10-19)

	Type of Assessment	Weightage
1	Closed Book Tests	38%
2	Oral Sloka Test	7%
3	Open Book Tests	30%
4	Oral Presentations	25%

The student needs to score a minimum of 65% in each module for each type of assessment, to receive BHAKTIVAIBHAVA Degree. Re-exam facility will be provided if needed.

CLOSED BOOK EXAMS

Format of closed book exams for each module (Total – 100 marks)

Section I: Short Answer Questions (~75 words)

- 6 questions, Each 5 marks

Section II: Short Essay Questions (~200 words)

- 4 questions, Each 10 marks

Section III: Long Essay Questions (~500 words)

- 2 questions, Each 15 marks

The students may quote relevant slokas in their answers if possible, although not mandatory.

Closed Book Exam Question Bank

Module 1 (SB 1.1-9)

Section I

1. Write the 7 characteristics of the Absolute Truth based on 1.1.1.
2. Write the 6 questions of the sages of Naimiṣāraṇya.
3. Write a brief note on the qualities of Kali-yuga people.
4. How does Srila Prabhupada explain “personal realization” in his purport to 1.4.1.
5. Summarize Arjuna’s prayers to Krishna in 1.7.
6. What lessons does Srila Prabhupada give from Bhīṣmadeva’s way of welcoming guests.
7. What are the 2 categories of literature? Explain.
8. What are various occasions when Kṛṣṇa protected the Pāṇḍavas.
9. How did Suta Goswami begin to answer the questions of Naimisaranya sages?

10. What reasons did Krishna give to inspire Arjuna to kill Asvatthama at once?

Section II

1. How did Sūta Gosvāmī answer the sages' Q1 and Q2?
2. What are the defects in Vyāsadeva's work that Nārada Muni identified?
3. WBN on: (i) Kṛṣṇa's bhakta-vatsala and (ii) Devotee's chastity and dependence on Kṛṣṇa.
4. How did the sages glorify the Lord's holy name and His devotees?
5. Write a few points about the process of hearing from Bhaktivedanta purports.
6. How did Bhīṣmadeva pacify and encourage the Pāṇḍavas? Write important comments by SP in the purports.
7. What are the various stages of bhakti yoga presented in 1.2.16-21.
8. On what basis did Draupadi asked Asvatthama to be released?
9. Write your learnings from Narada Muni's past life as the son of a maid servant.

Section III

1. Describe the meditation of Vyasadeva (1.7.4-7) after being inspired by Narada Muni to write Srimad Bhagavatam.
2. Explain how Kṛṣṇa is the fountainhead of all incarnations?
3. Make a flow chart depicting various sections of Kuntī Mahārāṇī's prayers.
4. How did Bhīṣmadeva pacify and encourage the Pāṇḍavas?
5. Give a summary of Bhīṣma's prayers.
6. How is the process of devotional service glorified in 1.5.8-22?
7. Write any eight points of glorification of Bhāgavatam.

Module 2 (SB 1.10-19)

Section I

1. Summarize the talks of the Dvārakā-vāsīs from 1.11.6-10.
2. Write a brief note on “devotees are holy places personified.” (1.13.10)
3. List any 6 bad omens seen by Yudhiṣṭhira. (1.14.11-20)
4. Explain how the knowledge of Bhagavad-gītā is applicable in all circumstances. (1.15.27 P)
5. Describes various aspects of Kṛṣṇa’s beautiful form with analogies and the effect of seeing it.
6. Write a brief note on forbearance of a devotee.
7. Why were the talks of the ladies of Hastināpura more attractive than Vedic hymns? (1.10.20-30)
8. What unwanted qualities destroy the four legs of *dharma*? (1.17.17-27)
9. Write a brief note on forbearance of a devotee.
10. What is the glory of association of devotees?

Section II

1. Write a brief note on the relationship between Kṛṣṇa and His queens based on relevant verses and purports.
2. Summarize the instructions of Vidura to Dhṛtarāṣṭra.
3. List the 10 causes of Arjuna’s dejection.
4. Summarize Arjuna’s feelings of separation from Kṛṣṇa.
5. What are the various possible reasons, mentioned by Dharma, for Dharaṇī’s lamentation?
6. What were the questions of Parīkṣit Mahārāja to the sages assembled on the bank of the Ganges?
7. Write a short note on the characters of Sringi & Samika.

Section III

1. Write the salient features of Nārada's talk to Yudhiṣṭhira Mahārāja to overcome lamentation.
2. How did Parīkṣit inquire to the cow and the bull about the perpetrator? What comments does Srila Prabhupada give on those inquiries?
3. What was Parīkṣit's response on receiving the news of Śrīngi's curse? Elaborate. Why didn't he beg forgiveness from Śamīka?
4. Write a brief note on the character of Parikṣit Mahārāja.

Module 3 (SB 2.1-10)

Section I

1. Why did Sukadeva congratulate Parikṣit?
2. What are the limbs of *aṣṭāṅga-yoga*
3. Write a brief note on the significance of the *virāṭ-rūpa*
4. What are the 6 questions of Nārada Muni to Lord Brahmā?
5. How did Brahmā clarify the doubts of Nārada and establish the Supreme Lord's position?
6. Write the questions of Brahmā to the Lord (2.9.26-30)
7. Write a brief note on how one can and can't understand the Lord.
8. Establish the supremacy of Bhagavan and bhakti. (2.7.47-49)
9. How did Parikṣit glorify *kṛṣṇa-kathā* in 2.8?

Section II

1. Explain 2.1.5-6 based on the purports of Srila Prabhupada.
2. Describe the path of attached and detached *yogīs* with a flowchart.

3. Summarize Śukadeva Gosvāmī's prayers in 2.4.
4. Give the limb-by-limb description of an animalistic person who does not take interest in *hari-kathā*.
5. Tabulate the different aspects of the universal form.
6. Write the differences between *ekapāda-vibhūti* and *tripāda-vibhūti*.
7. Write a brief note on soul's relationship with the material body. (2.9.1-3P)
8. Write a short note on Brahmā's darśana of Vaikuṅṭha.

Section III

1. Explain the glory of *bhakti-yoga* based on 2.2.33-37.
2. Write a brief note of the *Catuh-sloki Bhagavatam*.
3. Define the ten topics of *Srimad Bhagavatam*. What is the need for describing the first 9 topics?

Module 4 (SB 3.1-14)

Section I

1. Why did Vidura give up the palace, which was like a *dhāma*?
2. What lessons does Srila Prabhupada give from the pastime of the annihilation of the Yadus?
3. Write the characteristics of time with relevant Sanskrit words and their meanings.
4. Write a brief note on *maryada-vyatikrama* (3.4.26P)
5. Enumerate the 10 types of creation.
6. WBN on the misconception of the modern theory of starvation (49P). [3.5.39-51]
7. What were Brahmā's requests to the Lord in 3.9.22-25?
8. Why is Lord Varāha called *veda-vitāna-mūrti*?

9. What is the difference between the activities of Śveta Varāha and Rakta Varāha?

Section II

1. Mention some of the Lord's apparently contradictory activities with reference to 3.4.16 and the spirit of understanding them based on Bhaktivedanta purports.
2. What lessons does Srila Prabhupada give from the pastime of the annihilation of the Yadus? [SB 3.3.24-28]
3. Explain the 5 *ājñāna-vṛttis*. Why were they created? Answer based on explanations by Srila Prabhupada.
4. Write salient points from the purports about endeavour, mercy and responsibility in service. [3.9.1-25]
5. What lessons can we learn from Brahmā's getting attracted to Vāk, and Maitreya's hesitation to speak about that incident?
6. Summarize the realization of Vidura and his expression of gratitude towards Maitreya Muni (3.7.17-20)

Section III

1. Enumerate the inquiries of Vidura and answers of Maitreya along with the explanation of analogies in 3.7.
2. Write a brief note on: (i) Dissolution at the end of Brahmā's day, (ii) Duration of the yugas, (iii) Duration of Manus, (iv) Brahmā's lifespan, (v) Coverings of the universe. [3.11.16-42]
3. Who is qualified to hear hari-katha and what is the effect of hearing? Answer based on 3.14.4-5.
4. Write a brief note on the characters of Diti & Kasyapa.

Module 5 (SB 3.15-33)

Section I

1. Write a brief note on 'Sense gratification is like salt.' (3.15.8P)
2. How did 4 Kumāras criticize and curse Jaya and Vijaya?
3. Write a brief note on perfect yogi. (3.23.43P)
4. Summarize Devahūti's lamentation. [3.23.49-57]
5. Write some characteristics of the following: Time, Mahat-tattva, Buddhi, Ahankāra. [3.26.15- 46]
6. Describe the characteristics of pure *bhakti* beyond the modes. [3.29.7-20]

Section II

1. Describe the characteristics of Vaikuṅṭha. Who can and cannot enter Vaikuṅṭha? [3.15.12-25]
2. How did the Lord's appearance transform the heart of the Kumāras? Summarize the Lord's apologetic words to the Kumāras.
3. Write the blasphemous words of Hiraṇyākṣa and their positive meanings given by the ācāryas. What do we learn from the Lord's feeling pain from the demon's abusive words? [3.18.2-8]
4. Give the gist of Kardama Muni's Prayers. [3.21.13-22]
5. Write a brief note on the concept of jīva - prakṛti - puruṣa and their interaction and characteristics. [3.26.3-8]
6. Write a brief note on performers of bhakti in three modes. Explain their separatist mentality.
7. Briefly describe the various miseries of attached householders with comments by Srila Prabhupada.
8. Give a summary of the prayers of Devahūti.

Section III

1. What are the various characteristics of *bhakti*? How is it superior to *jñāna* and *yoga*?
2. Make a tabular form on the effects of meditation on the following limbs of the Lord – lotus feet, calves, eyebrows, and smile.
3. How is Kardama Muni's life a perfect example of householder life?
4. WBN on the character and life of Devahūti (her marriage, service to husband, lamentation, etc.).

Module 6 (SB 4.1-14)

Section I

1. What are the 6 elements of a *manvantara*?
2. Write a brief note on: (i) Brāhmaṇas in Kali-yuga (26P), (ii) Śiva's tolerance (33P). [4.2.20-35]
3. Summarize the instruction of Lord Viṣṇu to Dakṣa and give important comments by Śrīla Prabhupāda.
4. How did mother Sunīti pacify Dhruva?
5. Why did the Lord fulfil the material desires of Dhruva?
6. How to respond to the blasphemy of Vaiṣṇavas?
7. How does one get the ability to offer prayers to the Lord?
8. Write a brief note on the 'vision of a *maha-bhagavata*'. (4.12.11P)
9. Write a brief note on the devotees' concern for the peoples' welfare. (4.14.7P)
10. WBN on Dhruva's austerities and its effects.
11. What is the importance of following the instructions of the *guru*.

Section II

1. How did Dakṣa insult and curse Lord Śiva? How are his blasphemous words an indirect praise to Lord Śiva? [4.2.4-19]
2. What were the various arguments given by Satī to Lord Śiva to convince him to go to Dakṣa's sacrifice? [4.3.5-14]
3. Write the arguments given by Lord Śiva to convince Satī that she shouldn't go for Dakṣa's sacrifice. [4.3.15-25]
4. How did Satī glorify Lord Śiva in front of Dakṣa? Give important comments by Śrīla Prabhupāda.
5. Why is it difficult to understand the Lord through mental speculation? Explain by giving an analogy (4.11.23P).
6. How did Lord Brahmā convince Lord Śiva?
7. How did Nārada Muni test and guide Dhruva?
8. Why did Dhruva lament even after receiving boons from the Lord?
9. How did the sages instruct Vena?
10. Give lessons from the way Pṛthu Mahārāja forbade the bards from glorifying him.

Section III

1. What lessons does Śrīla Prabhupāda give from the character and activities of (i) Śiva, (ii) Dakṣa, (iii) Satī.
2. Give a summary of the prayers of Dhruva Mahārāja. [4.9.6-17]
3. Summarize the instructions of Manu to Dhruva along with salient points from Śrīla Prabhupāda's purports.
4. Write a brief note on the characters of Vena and Anga.

Module 7 (SB 4.15-31)

Section I

1. Give lessons from the way Pṛthu Mahārāja discouraged the bards from glorifying him? [4.15.21-26]
2. What is the effect of prayer? Why should we pray? When does the Lord give the intelligence to pray? (4.16.2P)
3. Why is mother earth called *vasundharā*? (4.18.13P)
4. Write a brief note on: Principle of co-operation between Vaiṣṇavas (4.20.18P)
5. What was the significance of Pṛthu Mahārāja's not asking about the welfare of Kumāras? (4.22.13P)
6. What instructions does Srila Prabhupada give on ideal household life? (4.27.1P)
7. How is Pṛthu Mahārāja an ideal brahmacārī and gr̥hastha? (4.22.62P)
8. Why should a living being be restricted in sense gratification? (4.26.6-7P)
9. Write brief note on the qualities of Lord mentioned in 4.30.42.
10. What principles of guest reception may we learn from the way Pṛthu Mahārāja received 4 Kumāras'?

Section II

1. WBN on the character of Arci. How did the wives of the *devatās* appreciate her?
2. Write a brief note on the relationship between Lord Siva and Kṛṣṇa's devotees as explained in 4.24.28P.
3. What were Nārada's questions to Prācīnabarhi? What was the King's response? What is the problem with over-indulgence in performing sacrifices?
4. Write a brief note on Nārada's description of the soul's natural

activity of bhakti. How does hearing in association help (4.29.34-41)?

5. Write a brief note on transmigration of the soul (4.29.60-69).
6. Give the highlights of Kumaras' teachings to Prithu.
7. How did Prithu express his gratitude to the Kumaras?

Section III

1. Write a summary of Pr̥thu Mahārāja's prayers with important comments from Bhaktivedanta Purports.
2. What lessons does Srila Prabhupada give on Malayadhvaja's spiritual practices? [4.28.33-50]
3. "Devotional service is the goal of all spiritual practices." How did Nārada Muni establish this in 4.31.9-14. Give salient points from 10-11P.
4. Write some important aspects of Prithu's character.
5. What lessons can we learn from the conflict between Indra and Prithu? Share your comments on Lord Brahmā's intervention in this case.

Module 8 (SB 5.1-26)

Section I

1. How did Priyavrata engage in worldly affairs (5.1.23P)? Why didn't he conduct the government as a *brahmacārī* (24P, 29P)?
2. Describe the qualities of King Nābhi.
3. Describe the qualities of Lord Ṛṣabhadeva.
4. Explain the nature of the ignorant and wise men. How does a teacher instruct them? Explain. [5.5.15-18]
5. What was the immediate reaction of Rahūgaṇa on hearing the words of Jaḍa Bharata? Explain based on Srila Prabhupada's points in 5.10.15P

6. How did Jaḍa Bharata glorify the Lord's devotees?
7. Describe any 5 hellish planets.
8. Describe the opulence of bila-svarga.
9. "Why are the living entities put into different material conditions?" How did Śukadeva Gosvāmī answer this question by Parīkṣit Mahārāja?

Section II

1. Why did Bharata Mahārāja perform sacrifices actually meant for *karmīs*? Explain based on the purports of Srila Prabhupada to 5.7.6.
2. Give important lessons for a *sādhaka* from the life of Bharata (5.8.29-30P).
3. Who is always protected by the Lord (5.9.20)? Why did Jaḍa Bharata remain unagitated despite being caught by the dacoits?
4. Write a brief note on the glories of Mother Ganga. Draw her 4 paths.
5. Explain the nature of the mind and how is it the cause of bondage and liberation.
6. Summarize the glories of Bhārata-varṣa.
7. What were the mistakes of Bharat Mahārāja? Give lessons from Srila Prabhupada's purports about (i) Importance of being cautious (5.8.8P), (ii) Mislplaced and real compassion (9-10P), (iii) Material attachment (11-12P, 15P).
8. Describe the glories of Lord Ananta.

Section III

1. Summarise the prayers to Lord Rāma.
2. Write a summary of prayers to Nṛsimhadeva. Write a brief note on the compassion of devotees (9P).

3. Draw and mark with details the following: (i) Structure of Jambūdīvīpa and its varṣas, (ii) Ilāvṛta- varṣa and the details surrounding Mt. Sumeru [5.16]
4. Summarize the instructions of Jaḍa Bharata to Mahārāja Rahūgaṇa in 5.11-12
5. Write on any 8 aspects of the allegory of “the forest of material enjoyment” with its respective explanations.
6. Draw the structure of Bhū-maṇḍala and mark the islands, oceans, mountains and their dimensions.
7. Draw a vertical cross-section of the structure of the universe, depicting various planetary systems and the coverings of the universe. Annotate with dimensions (as much as possible).

Module 9 (SB 6.1-9)

Section I

1. Explain the superiority of *bhakti* based on 6.1.15-16. Explain the types of *bhakti*.
2. What are the various effects of chanting the holy name?
3. Compare the power of the Vedic rituals and the power of chanting in counteracting one’s sinful reactions.
4. Describe the dangers of *vaiṣṇava-aparādha* referring to the case of Daksha. (52P)
5. Give the meaning of initiation and the duties of a disciple and spiritual master (6.5.21P).
6. List at least 10 incarnations of the Lord and the respective protection they offer, in the Nārāyaṇa-kavaca.
7. Why did Indra cut the heads of Viśvarūpa and how did he distribute his sinful reactions?
8. Describe Nārada Muni’s compassion and patience.

Section II

1. What were the first and second answers of Śukadeva and why did Parikṣit reject them? Explain how the process of atonement is futile (9P).
2. Summarize the lamentation of Ajāmila and give SP's lessons for *sādhakas* from the purports.
3. Write the Haryaśvas' understanding of the 10 points of Nārada Muni's allegory.
4. What was Indra's argument for making Viśvarūpa the priest of the devatas? Write comments by Srila Prabhupada. [6.7.26-40]
5. Summarize the lamentation of Indra. Write a brief note on, i) one's degradation due to opulence (6.7.12P) and ii) False leaders (6.7.14P)
6. Write a brief note on 'the power of Narayana kavacha'.
7. Write a brief note on: (i) Asking a proper benediction from the Lord (6.9.32P), (ii) The Lord is apāpa-viddham (35P), (iii) The Supreme Lord has no contradiction (36P)

Section III

1. What were the questions of the Viṣṇudūtas? Summarize the reply of the Yamadūtas. [6.1.20-29]
2. How did Yamarāja glorify the process of chanting? Who is entitled for Yamarāja's punishment and who is not?
3. What lessons can we learn from the character of Ajāmila.

Module 10 (SB 6.10-19)

Section I

1. How did Vṛtrāsura inspire Indra on the battlefield?
2. Why was Indra unhappy after killing Vṛtrāsura (6.13.3)?
3. Explain the rarity of a *nārāyaṇa-parāyaṇa* w.r.to 6.14.3-5.
4. Why is the mind called “the centre of all suffering and happiness?” (6.19.25P)
5. Write a brief note on: (i) Humility of a devotee (17P), (ii) Material world is like salt (20P).
6. Explain the offence to the holy name mentioned in 6.13.9P.

Section II

1. What lessons can we learn from the conversation of *devatās* and Dadhīci Muni?
2. Explain the prayers of Vṛtrāsura based on the purports by Srila Prabhupada. [6.11.24-27]
3. Why did Vṛtrāsura chastise the demons and the demigods? Explain based on the purport of 6.11.4
4. Summarize the speech of Citraketu to mother Pārvatī.
5. How did Mother Pārvatī criticise and curse Citrketu? Write a brief note on *vaiṣṇava-aparādha* (6.17.15P).
6. How did Kaśyapa expertly engage Diti in devotional service?

Section III

1. Write an essay on the glorious character of Vṛtrāsura, his dealings with Indra and his mood on the battlefield.
2. What lessons can we learn from the character of Indra?
3. What can we learn from: (i) Citraketu’s comments about Lord Śiva, (ii) Pārvatī’s curse and anger, (iii) Śiva’s talk to Pārvatī, (iv) Citraketu’s apologetic words to Pārvatī.
4. How did Nārada Muni and Aṅgirā explain Citraketu Mahārāja about the temporary nature of the material world?

OPEN BOOK EXAMS

Guidelines

- Open Book Exams test the understanding of the students more than their ability to memorize.
- Practical application, personal application, analysis and shastric understanding are some of the themes on which the open book questions are set.
- Answers need to be relevant to the theme of the question. The answer may even negate the question by presenting relevant arguments. Real life incidents and relevant shastric quotations, analogies, examples and personal reflections may also be included, as necessary.
- The following are some of the aspects observed in the evaluation of the open book essays –
 - Balanced presentation: **PLEASE** formula (Personal/practical application, Lesson, Example, Analogy, Sastric connections and Elaboration – the answer could contain one or more of these aspects)
 - Philosophical accuracy
 - Degree of relevance (of PLEASE) to the question.
 - Eloquence, redundancy, number of words, etc.

The students are expected to write open book essays summing up to a total of 20,000 words on the first six cantos of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. The details of words for individual cantos is given below.

- 12-20 open book questions are given for each test and the students are required to answer any 3 to 6 of them making the total word count of all the essays to the specified number (1500/ 2000/ 2500).

Canto	Exam 1	Exam 2	Total words
1	2000 words (1.1-9)	1500 words (1.10-19)	3500
2	2500 words (2.1-10)	-	2500
3	2500 words (3.1-14)	2000 words (3.15-33)	4500
4	2000 words (4.1-14)	2000 words (4.15-31)	4000
5	2000 words (5.1-26)	-	2000
6	2000 words (6.1-9)	1500 words (6.10-19)	3500
Grand Total			20,000

Module 1 (SB 1.1-9)

1. Gather principles on etiquette followed by the sages of Naimiṣāraṇya in asking questions to Śrīla Sūta Gosvāmī.
2. What principles do we learn from the mood of great souls like the sages of Naimiṣāraṇya, Vyāsadeva, the Pāṇḍavas, Parikṣit Mahārāja, etc., towards the people in general?
3. Śrīla Prabhupāda says:

“Within the past five hundred years, many erudite scholars and ācāryas like Jīva Gosvāmī, Sanātana Gosvāmī, Viśvanātha Cakravartī, Vallabhācārya, and many other distinguished scholars even after the time of Lord Caitanya made elaborate commentaries on the Bhāgavatam. And the serious student would do well to attempt to go through them to better relish the transcendental messages.” (1.1.1 P)

“Personal realization does not mean that one should, out of vanity, attempt to show one’s own learning by trying to surpass the previous ācārya. He must have full confidence in the previous ācārya, and at the same time he must realize the subject matter so nicely that he can present the matter for the particular circumstances in a suitable manner” – (1.4.1 P)

Reflect on how to be fixed in Śrīla Prabhupāda’s purports, still study the commentaries of previous *ācāryas*, and yet, be able to present the *Bhāgavatam* to modern audiences suitably.

4. Draw lessons accompanied by a brief elaboration from Śrīla Vyāsadeva’s conduct as a disciple, and Nārada’s expertize and honesty as a spiritual master. How does this inspire you?
5. Write an essay on the theme “Glorification to Kṛṣṇa is the solution to all problems,” based on the Vyāsadeva-Nārada episode (1.4-6).
6. Present your understanding of the Bhaktivedānta purports on the following: (i) Qualification of a speaker of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, (ii) Qualities of a hearer of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, (iii) Power of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.
7. “But, anyway, we should not give up our reason and discriminatory power just to be gentle. One must have good discriminatory power to judge a thing on its merit.” (1.7.42) Śrīla Prabhupāda writes the above lines in relation to the word *vāma-svabhāvā*, mild and gentle by nature. Is *vāma-svabhāvā* a barrier in dealing with practicalities of life? Comment.
8. Śrīla Prabhupāda writes, “...It depends on the quality of feeling. A helpless man can feelingly utter the holy name of the Lord, whereas a man who utters the same holy name in great material satisfaction cannot be so sincere...” Mention a few things that help you call out with genuine feeling, and few things that reduce your feeling shelter in the Lord’s holy names.
9. Queen Kuntī prays for more and more difficulties so that she could remember Kṛṣṇa.
 - a. Derive principles for personal application for your practice of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, from Queen Kuntī’s attitude.
 - b. Write your thoughts on presenting such a mood of a devotee to a newcomer or a non-practitioner of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

10. *"The subject matter which attracts the dying man becomes the beginning of his next life."* Based on how Bhīṣmadeva left his body, present your views on, "Life – An art of dying."
11. What general principles can we draw from Bhīṣmadeva's episode about (i) Welcoming guests, (ii) Power of time?
12. *"The best way to establish our relation in transcendental sweetness is to approach Kṛṣṇa through His recognized devotees."* (1.9.22P) How can one apply this in one's personal practice of Kṛṣṇa consciousness?

Module 2 (SB 1.10-19)

1. The Hastināpura ladies' words are glorified as *"sarva sruti manoharam."* Śrīla Prabhupāda comments, *"Anything sung in praise of the Lord is a sruti mantra."* Write a brief note quoting śāstric references about: (i) Devotional movies, audio albums and books by people not practicing Kṛṣṇa consciousness, (ii) *Kṛṣṇa-kathā* by a neophyte practitioner of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.
2. *"The ladies, who were all absorbed in the thought and actions of the Lord, developed the consciousness of Vedic wisdom by the grace of the Lord. And therefore although such ladies might not have been very learned scholars in Sanskrit or otherwise, still whatever they spoke was more attractive than the Vedic hymns."* (1.10.20P) How can one be fixed in *bhakti* and please the Lord more by simple prayers than by deep study of *śāstra*? Why should one spend so much time studying the scriptures?
3. 1.13.10 describes devotees as the personification of holy places. Compare the purifying potency of a *dhāma* and a devotee, quoting relevant śāstric references.
4. Vidura doesn't reveal the truth about the Yadus to the Pāṇḍavas even when he was asked for it. He reveals the naked truth of life to Dhṛtarāṣṭra even when he did not ask for it. What

do we learn from this behaviour? Discuss how to apply this in our practice of *bhakti*? [OR]

“One should not become an instrument of spreading negativity.” Explain this based on relevant verses from 1.13 and discuss the implications of not following this in the life of a practicing devotee, both individually and institutionally.

5. Yudhiṣṭira Mahārāja was aggrieved for the (i) destruction that happened in the war, (ii) departure of Bhīṣmadeva, (iii) uninformed retirement of his uncles and aunt, (iv) disappearance of Lord Kṛṣṇa. Devotees counseled him in only two of these cases and not the other two. Discuss what could be inferred and learnt from this.
6. If Parīkṣit Mahārāja had killed Kali instead of forgiving him, we wouldn't be suffering the affects of Kali now. If someone raises this argument, how would you comprehensively answer him?
7. Parīkṣit Mahārāja and many other personalities mentioned in Canto 1 were dealt with inappropriately, but tolerated it. 1.18.48 says that a devotee never retaliates. How do we apply this in our practical life? Does it mean that one should allow oneself to be exploited? Elaborate.
8. Śrīla Prabhupāda writes in the purports of 1.13, “*Great souls cheat for a great cause.*” Elaborate on this principle based on some sāstric example.
9. “*The sane man should rather feel obliged to the Lord for such benefactions and must utilize such power for the service of the Lord.*” (1.15.5P). How does one attribute the success of one's activities to the mercy of the *guru* and Vaiṣṇavas? Choose a situation in your life, and attempt to connect different aspects of that situation to your superiors' blessings in a concrete way.
10. After coming back to his palace, Parīkṣit Mahārāja contemplated on his behaviour with Śamīka Ṛṣi. He *expected*

and *desired* calamity upon himself for his insignificant mistake. What inspiration do you derive from his example?

Module 3 (SB Canto 2)

1. Discuss the superiority of *bhakti-yoga* compared with other paths, based on *śāstric* statements.
2. “Constant chanting of the holy name after the ways of great authorities is the doubtless and fearless way of success for all.” Identify the obstacles in your chanting and discuss how the study of this section of *Bhāgavatam* helps you to overcome those obstacles.
3. How are Śukadeva Gosvāmī’s descriptions of materialistic persons apparent in modern society? How would you convey this strong condemnation of materialistic life to a newcomer in the process?
4. Describe the right utility of one’s life based on the contents of 2.1-5, especially 2.1.13 and 2.3.17-24.
5. Collect statements by Śrīla Prabhupāda describing the need for understanding the universal form of the Lord. Bring out practical application points from those statements.
6. Identify principles from Śrīla Śukadeva Gosvāmī’s prayers that you would like to imbibe. Elaborate on how contemplating on his prayers prepares your consciousness to speak *Bhāgavatam*.
7. In 2.3.15P, SP says, “...Mahārāja Parīkṣit was naturally inclined to Lord Kṛṣṇa from his very childhood. He might have imitated either of the above-mentioned activities, and all of them establish his great devotion from his very childhood, a symptom of a mahā-bhāgavata.” Present some practical ways to attract children towards Kṛṣṇa.
8. Contrast Nārada Muni’s questions in 2.5 with the modern inquiries into cosmology. What are the most striking features for you in Nārada’s questions? State your understanding of what he stands to gain by asking them.

9. Identify ideal qualities of a *guru*, disciple, and their relationship from the characters of Parikṣit, Śukadeva, Nārada, Brahmā, and the Lord.
10. Lord Brahmā admits that he cannot understand Kṛṣṇa (SB 2.6.35) and understanding Kṛṣṇa is the way back to Godhead! (BG 4.9). Explain how to reconcile this and justify your endeavours in Kṛṣṇa consciousness to understand Kṛṣṇa. Base your answer on śāstric references and statements by Śrīla Prabhupāda and/or other *ācāryas*.
11. Discuss the importance of preserving and distributing the message of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* with reference to 2.7.51-53. How is this mission relevant to you?
12. How does the *catuḥ-ślokī Bhāgavatam* explain *sambandha*, *abhidheya* and *prayojana*?

Module 4 (SB 3.1-14)

1. “Value of discussions depends on the persons involved in them.” Elaborate on this theme referring to 3.1.4, its purport, and other contexts in the Vidura-Maitreya *samvāda* and the entire *Bhāgavatam*. How are Kṛṣṇa conscious discussions relevant in the modern day?
2. Discuss the “disposition of a devotee in disturbances,” referring to Vidura’s response described in 3.1. Consider a personal experience where you failed to handle a disturbing situation. Share your reflections on how would you deal with such disturbances after learning from Vidura’s example.
3. “Generally, in old age a person is allowed retirement from mundane service. But in the transcendental service of the Lord... service attitude increases more and more with the progress of age.” (3.2.3P). Explain this concept of increase in service attitude irrespective of bodily constraints both with philosophical, scriptural and real-life examples.

4. In SB 3.4.21, Śrīla Prabhupāda writes: “A pure devotee of the Lord of the standard of Uddhava constantly associates with the Lord in the double perception of simultaneous separation and meeting.” From your study of the commentaries by SP and VCT, explain how Uddhava experienced union in separation from the Lord.
5. Explain how to understand the apparent contradictions in the inconceivable pastimes of Lord Kṛṣṇa narrated in 3.3-4.
6. Present your reflections on the Lord’s purpose behind material creation.
7. Does 3.6.36 say that “one becomes unchaste if not engaged in devotional service?” How do you present this to a newcomer or a non-practitioner of *bhakti*?
8. Based on the purport to 3.6.37, explain how the “inactive” activity of hearing is far beyond liberation. Justify this for (i) a practitioner and (ii) a philanthropist.
9. “The living entity is in distress regarding his self-identity. He has no factual background, like a man who dreams that he sees his head cut off.” (3.7.10). How do you make use of this theoretical understanding in tolerating pain in personal life and comforting others in their pain? Do you recommend this concept to be conveyed to a non-devotee? If yes, how do you present your thoughts to him?
10. Does the incident of Parāśara Muni (3.8) reveal that forgiveness is a qualification to receive and speak *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*? Elaborate on this. Also, explore Śrīla Prabhupāda’s purports, for the necessity of obtaining one’s superior’s blessings to properly speak on *Bhāgavatam*. What are the actual consequences of speaking without blessings? Give practical examples.
11. “Nature’s beauty is a perverted reflection of the Lord’s beauty.” (3.8.24P). How do we convey this in an amiable way to the nature lovers?

12. Discuss the importance of prayers for protection from fall-down, referring to Śrīla Prabhupāda's purport on 3.9.24.
13. *"The service of Brahmā is the sample of service in liberation distinguished from the so-called altruistic services full of mistakes and forgetfulness. Liberation is never inaction, but service without human mistakes."* (2.2.1P)

"A pure devotee of the Lord like Brahmā and those in his line of disciplic succession always desire that the Lord be known all over the universe by each and every one of the living entities. That desire of the devotee is always blessed by the Lord." (3.9.39P)

How do these statements inspire you (a follower of the Brahma-Madhva-Gauḍīya *sampradāya*) in the service of spreading Kṛṣṇa consciousness on behalf of the Lord?

14. Lord Brahmā continued his service in spite of all obstacles – dissatisfaction in creating the *ajñāna-vṛttis*, disobedience of the Kumāras, disturbance by Śiva's followers, distraction by Vāk and deficiency in the sages' performance (3.12). How does this improve your determination in devotional service?
15. *"Maitreya hesitated to state this anomaly on the part of Brahmā... If Brahmā could be a victim of the sexual urge, then what of others..."* (3.12.28P). Is it correct for a subordinate to correct one's superior? Support your answer with śāstric references.
16. Discuss the importance of "hearing about devotees" referring to 3.13.4. Share some personal experiences on how hearing about other devotees helped you in your practice of *bhakti*.
17. By which qualities was Manu able to please his father and spiritual master? Which of these qualities strikes you the most? How would you like to imbibe them in your life? Why was the Kumāras' disobedience acceptable? Discuss.
18. *"An ordinary man's mistake may ruin his life, but Diti's mistake disturbed the whole universe."* Present your

reflections on our responsibility as devotees of Kṛṣṇa and followers of Śrīla Prabhupāda as we grow “older” in *bhakti*.

19. Why could Kaśyapa not resist Diti’s advances? What could/should he have done in that circumstance? Discuss an example in your personal life when you allowed spontaneous feelings to override reasoning. What is the role of repentance in rectifying the situation?

Module 5 (SB 3.15-33)

1. What were the causes of Jaya and Vijaya’s stopping the four Kumāras? Relate this to our tendency to judge others on externals.
2. Identify lessons on resolving conflicts based on the way Lord Nārāyaṇa brought out the best side of the Kumāras and Jaya-Vijaya.
3. The *ācāryas* interpret the blasphemous words of demons as glorification of the Lord (e.g. Varāhadeva episode). How do you explain this to a new reader of scripture who may question this as a “biased” or “non-as it is” interpretation of the scriptural words? How is it different from the Māyāvādīc misinterpretation of scriptural words?
4. The four Kumāras were transformed from the impersonal conception to the personal. How does this incident help you in preaching?
5. What inspiration and instruction does the description of the kingdom of God give to the struggling *sādhakas* who aspire to go there? Elaborate.
6. “A wrong act committed by a servant leads people in general to blame his master, just as a spot of white leprosy on any part of the body pollutes all of the skin.” (3.16.5P). The Lord took responsibility for his servants’ mistake. Identify principles for personal

- application from this episode, in one's roles as (i) a servant and (ii) a leader.
7. Describe the modern demoniac attitudes toward God with reference to the example of Hiranyākṣa.
 8. Śrīla Prabhupāda relates natural disturbances with the increase of demoniac population. How do you explain this to people in general with evidence?
 9. Kardama did penance for 10,000 years and asked the Lord for a suitable wife. And after impregnating his wife, he was ready to renounce immediately. What do you learn from this behaviour of Kardama Muni?
 10. What principles for personal application may we learn from Devahūti's regretful words of not taking advantage of the saintly association of Kardama Muni?
 11. What should be the behaviour of a disciple towards his spiritual master? Present your learnings from the examples of Devahūti and Manu.
 12. *"The Lord is described by the word viviktādhyātma-darśanaḥ. If anyone can completely perceive another's distress without doubt, it is the Lord Himself."* (3.20.28). Does this help you deal with misunderstandings while serving in the association of devotees? Elaborate.
 13. The Lord is referred to as the quick bestower of all blessings (SB 3.21.7) despite appearing to Kardama Muni only after 10,000 years of austerities. Relate this point to a *sādhaka* to cultivate enthusiasm, determination and patience.
 14. How do the verses describing the form of the Lord in 3.28 prepare your consciousness for taking daily *darśana* of the deities?
 15. *"If we depend on the choice of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, we will receive benedictions in greater opulence than we desire."* (3.21.28). Elaborate in your own words.

16. Worshipping the deities with reverence, but disrespecting the devotees is criticized by Lord Kapila. How, then, do we avoid disrespect in our dealings with co-*sādhakas* whose activities may not be perfect?
17. How do you communicate the facts of materialistic family life, presented by Lord Kapila, to the modern man of Kali-yuga?

Module 6 (SB 4.1-14)

1. Identify the conflicting roles of Satī and derive principles for personal application for a *sādhaka* from her behaviour.
2. Comment on the current situation of the world in relation to Nandi's curses.
3. What analogy does SP give in 4.2 on the redundancy of demigod worship? How will you communicate this to a newcomer?
4. What do we learn from Dakṣa's behaviour about the ill effects of uncontrolled anger in 4.2? What do we learn from Lord Śiva's response?
5. Select a verse from Lord Brahmā's conversation with Lord Śiva and explain how it could be (mis)used to prove that Lord Śiva is the Supreme. Explain the consequences of such use.
6. How will you apply the principle of forgiveness explained in 4.6 in your personal life as a *sādhaka*?
7. Comment on Nārada's and Sunīti's expertize in directing Dhruva's energy and passion towards Kṛṣṇa. What principles can we derive from this example in inspiring new people to take to *bhakti*?
8. Dhruva Mahārāja rejected Nārada's initial instructions and accepted the next set of instructions. Analyze the difference between them and comment.

9. Dhruva Mahārāja went back home, back to Godhead in spite of performing devotional service with material motives. Explain the possible usage of this example in preaching to newcomers.
10. Although speechless at the first *darśana* of the Lord, Dhruva was empowered by the Lord to offer prayers. What inspiration may one derive from this to speak on *Bhāgavatam*?
11. Support SP's statements in implementing Nārada Muni's instructions to Dhruva, in the west. How may we apply them in our preaching?
12. "I am crippled in many ways, if one of my disciples becomes as strong as Dhruva Mahārāja, then he will be able to carry me with him to Vaikuṅṭhaloka." Present your thoughts and learnings on reading this statement by Śrīla Prabhupāda.
13. Dhruva Mahārāja remembered mother Sunīti before boarding the Vaikuṅṭha airplane. Explain this principle of *gratitude* in your own words, quoting other śāstric examples.
14. Does Vena's episode show the superiority of *brāhmaṇas* over *kṣatriyas*? Explain. Comment on the current world situation of the *brāhmaṇas* and administrators.

Module 7 (SB 4.15-31)

1. Derive supporting statements from the conversation between mother earth and Pṛthu Mahārāja and explain the need for farm communities.
2. You have been asked by a publishing company to write a foreword for a book entitled, "10 Steps to Perfect Leadership." Derive ancient principles from the character and activities of Pṛthu Mahārāja's and show their relevance to the modern audience.
3. Give reference for the glory of hearing from a pure devotee from Pṛthu Mahārāja's prayers. How does Śrīla Prabhupāda's purports in this episode help you contemplate on your –

- a. Personal experience of getting connected to ISKCON through hearing from a devotee and/or reading SP's books.
 - b. Current experience (at Bhaktivedānta Vidyāpīṭha) of regular study and hearing.
4. If great souls are satisfied by their own acts and if trying to repay them makes one a joker, what inspires you to serve devotees?
 5. What general principles can a *sādhaka* derive from Pṛthu Mahārāja's unwillingness to accept praise?
 6. *"There is a great need to propagate the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement in the world so that even though people sometimes become angry and malicious toward one another, because of their being Kṛṣṇa conscious such rivalry, competition and envy can be adjusted without difficulty."* (4.20.18P). What could be the possible causes of difficulty in Vaiṣṇava relationships, and what sacrifices may be required in order to maintain these relationships?
 7. *"Every man's duty is to receive orders from Lord Kṛṣṇa or from His bona fide representative and take these orders as his life and soul, without personal considerations."* What is the mature and immature usage of this statement for a practicing *sādhaka*? Elaborate.
 8. *"Kṛṣṇa gives more credit to His devotees than He takes for Himself."* Mention at least five examples of this. How does it inspire you to be more selfless? What in your opinion could be the possible pitfalls in artificially or immaturely adopting this kind of behaviour?
 9. How does Śrīla Prabhupāda explain the word *"madireksana"*? How does this explanation inspire you to refer to Rudra-gīta?
 10. From the episode of Nārada enlightening Prācīnabarhi through the allegorical story, how do you understand that the Supreme Lord is eager for reunion with the conditioned souls? What

lessons does this episode give about one's duty as a conditioned soul?

11. What is the real benediction of Lord Śiva? How do you communicate it to a staunch worshiper of Lord Śiva?
12. As a young practitioner of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, who has no experience of Jarā's association, but having studied of her nature, how do you communicate the importance of practicing Kṛṣṇa consciousness to your old grandfather?
13. 4.30.8 informs us that the Lord is pleased with friendly relations among the devotees, and SP defines "real unity" in the purport. How does this inspire you to "co-operate" with the devotees?

Module 8 – Canto 5

1. "Obstacles can't obstruct absorption." Refer to the purport of 5.1.5 (Priyavrata's episode) and discuss how the apparent impediments to devotional service created by the Lord's will – (i) will not make one lose one's advancement, (ii) will even increase one's vigor to practice devotional service. Back up your answer with other sāstric examples.
2. *"When a devotee achieves what he wants to accomplish, it is not by his own mystic power but by the grace of the master of mystic power, Lord Kṛṣṇa: by His grace, a devotee can accomplish wonderful things unimaginable even to the most powerful scientist."* (5.1.30P). What could be the possible ways in which a newcomer reacts upon hearing this statement? Discuss and give explanations wherever needed.
3. Discuss, with sāstric examples, the inconceivable nature of the acts performed by the Supreme Lord (5.4) and His devotees (5.1.30-35).
4. How does one reconcile, with one's logic and intelligence, the descriptions given in the Vedic literatures such as "Priyavrata

- Mahārāja ruled for eleven *arbuda* years” and his “three sons became the Manus of the 3rd, 4th and 5th *manvantara* periods”?
5. Discuss the ultimate purpose of performing the Vedic sacrifices referring to the episodes of King Nābhi (5.3) and Bharata Mahārāja (5.7).
 6. Mention any five points about the “nature of the mind” from various sections in Canto 5, and elaborate on them. Discuss how the mind is the cause of falling down in one’s practice of *bhakti*. How do saintly people deal with the mind? Quote other śāstric references and examples.
 7. Draw general principles from Bharata Mahārāja’s fall-down and discuss the relevance of those principles in your own practice of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.
 8. Draw general principles from the incident of goddess Kālī killing her worshipers to save a Vaiṣṇava. How will you communicate this to people in general? Cite similar śāstric examples.
 9. Quote your favourite set of instructions by Jaḍa Bharata to King Rahūgaṇa and derive principles for personal application for a *sādhaka*.
 10. Discuss what lessons the modern administrators may learn from King Gaya’s character.
 11. Is Rahūgaṇa’s chastisement of Jaḍa-Bharat really a serious offense, as he did not know who Jaḍa-Bharat was, and only spoke harsh words in the heat of the moment? If so, what precautions could one take to avoid committing offenses unknowingly or circumstantially? If not, explain.
 12. Referring to the glories of mother Gaṅgā, present your thoughts about the pollution of mother Ganges, the importance of preserving the Ganges River and the steps to be taken in this regard. How do you explain the spiritual nature of mother Gaṅgā to the devotees and the general public?

13. Draw general principles for preaching and personal application from the glories of Bhārata-varṣa (5.17-19). How will you communicate the glory of human birth in India to a non-practitioner of Kṛṣṇa consciousness?
14. What is the significance of hearing/studying the universal structure from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*? Why do you think this is inquired into and explained in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*?
15. Give parallels between the forest of material enjoyment (allegorical story) and the modern day situation (5.13-14).
16. Write your realizations on how the study of cosmology has increased your faith in the power and glory of Lord Kṛṣṇa.
17. How do you communicate to the modern day people about the existence of different planets filled with different varieties of living entities within our universe? (5.16-26)
18. How do we understand the descriptions of the different punishments given in different hellish planets and how do we communicate these details to modern day people?

Module 9 – Canto 6.1-9

1. Parīkṣit was compassionate to conditioned souls despite having only a few more days to live. To what extent may a *sādhaka* imbibe this spirit? Discuss.
2. Present your understanding of the futility of the processes of *karma* and *jñāna* compared to *bhakti*. Give other śāstric references.
3. Ajāmīla saw an uncommon sight and got affected. In Kali-yuga such sights have become commonplace. What, then, in your understanding, could be the protection for the practitioners who spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness?
4. “Ajāmīla performed many sinful activities. By allowing him to get away without experiencing a reaction for the pain he caused his young wife, elderly parents, people from whom he stole,

etc., a great injustice is done.” How would you reply if someone argues like this?

5. Identify principles for personal application for a *sādhaka* from Ajāmila’s repentance and determination. Discuss the significance of “a second chance” in the life of a *sādhaka*. Give personal examples, if any.
6. *“We would simply have performed saṅkīrtana, but then the inhabitants of Vṛndāvana would not have taken the installation ceremony seriously.”* (6.3.26P). Give examples of various arrangements that we need to make, as a movement, to help connect and attract people to Kṛṣṇa consciousness.
7. *“Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī says that although saṅkīrtana is sufficient for the perfection of life, the arcana, or worship of the Deity in the temple, must continue in order that the devotees may stay clean and pure. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura therefore recommended that one follow both processes simultaneously.”* (6.3.26P). Explore the role of Deity worship in the life of a *sādhaka*.
8. (i) The potency of the holy name can nullify sinful reactions. (ii) Chanting the holy name for nullifying one’s sinful reactions is an offense. (iii) Committing sins with an expectation that the holy name will nullify one’s reactions is an offense. What questions could these statements create in one’s mind? How would you try to reconcile them based on your current understanding?
9. Present the mood of a bona fide spiritual authority based on Yamarāja’s talk with the Yamadūtas.
10. Relate the example of Ajāmila to the major theme of Canto 6, *“poṣaṇa.”*
11. What inspiration did you derive from Nārada Muni’s preaching spirit with patience and tolerance? Write an article, referring to Śrī Nārada Muni’s allegory to Dakṣa’s sons for a teenage audience.

12. How do you balance efficiency and etiquette? Give relevant examples.
13. Requirements for two different bona fide services of the Lord could contradict one another. Do you agree with this? If so, elaborate, quoting relevant examples. If not, explain why.
14. Explain the importance of acting appropriately at the right time, with relevant examples.
15. Draw general principles from the examples of Indra offending Bṛhaspati, and the demons worshipping Śukrācārya.
16. Indra regrets his mistakes, but again commits mistakes. This tendency is often seen in struggling *sādhakas* too. Is such regret useless or beneficial? Discuss.
17. Identify preaching application points from the prayers of the demigods with material motives.

Module 10 – Canto 6.10-19

1. Identify principles behind a devotee using his body “properly” in Kṛṣṇa’s service, referring to Dadhīci’s example.
2. How does Vṛtrāsura’s character signify faith in the Lord’s will? Elaborate.
3. Compare the characters of Indra and Vṛtrāsura on the battlefield.
4. Draw general principles from Vṛtrāsura’s instructions to Indra.
5. What principles do you identify from Indra’s unhappiness after achieving his goal of killing Vṛtrāsura?
6. Contrast the consciousness of the *devatās* and Vṛtrāsura when confronted with difficulty. How can we cultivate the values of pure *bhakti* despite encountering difficulties from outside and inside?
7. Comment on the following statement from Citraketu’s pastime:

“Both material attachment and material despair cause deep bewilderment for the living entity.” Elaborate based on different characters involved in this pastime.

8. Explain the rarity of a devotee, referring to 6.14.5. Write your feelings on your current status as a practicing devotee in the association of devotees.
9. Citraketu, although having all opulences, was distressed due to lack of a son. What message(s) did you take from this?
10. Discuss on the theme of “Intervention of a *sādhū* in one’s life,” with the example of Citraketu and your personal life.
11. “*Harṣa-śoka*” means “the cause of both happiness and distress!” What message does this name give us about the nature of this material world?
12. The co-wives of Kṛtadyuti became envious. Is someone else responsible for this? If not, how does one safeguard himself from the influence of ill feelings? If yes, how should one be careful not to behave in ways that instigate ill feelings in others?
13. What care should one take while giving suggestions/corrections to others? Elaborate with relevant examples.
14. Explain the disposition of a devotee in reversals with the example of Citraketu. How would you apply them in your personal life?
15. Extract lessons on dealings between superiors and subordinates from various episodes of Canto 6. What are the consequences of breaching etiquette?
16. Comment on Kaśyapa’s expertize as a *guru* in purifying Diti of her envy. How do you apply this example in helping others who might seek your help in fulfilling their selfish desires?
17. Compare Kaśyapa’s dealings with Diti in 3.14 and 6.18 and bring out practical lessons.

ORAL PRESENTATIONS

- Students are required to give four presentations (45-60 minutes each) on the first 6 cantos:
 - Presentation 1 on Cantos 1 and 2 (After Module 1-3)
 - Presentation 2 on Canto 3 (After Module 4-5)
 - Presentation 3 on Canto 4 (After Module 6-7)
 - Presentation 4 on Cantos 5 and 6 (After Module 8-10)
- Students are required to present their understanding in the form of a PowerPoint presentation - 1 Topic for each presentation.
- Topics may be chosen from the list of topics given below or the student may come up with one's own topic.
- 60% of the presentation should be based on the main text and the Bhaktivedānta purports of the respective Canto(s).

Guidelines For Presentation

Content – PLEAS

- At least 60% of the presentation should be based on the main text and the Bhaktivedānta purports of the respective SB canto(s).
- The presentation may have some or all of the following "Contents" –
 - P – Principles for personal or preaching application
 - L – Lessons
 - E – Examples
 - A – Analogies
 - S – Śāstric connections

Presentation – Effective utilization of PLEAS

- The presentations may be prepared based on the references given below the topics, but it need not be restricted to those references. The student may include his personal reflections and understanding.
- Evaluative analysis of the topic by taking things to extreme cases is appreciated.
- Presentation slides
 - Avoid too much text on the slides.
 - Use a minimum number of slides to present the topic effectively in 25 minutes.
 - Use simplified titles, tables, flowcharts and *relevant* pictures.
 - Submit the PPT files before the presentations session.
- 10-15 minutes for Q & A and comments by the jury panel.

Understanding – of the topic by the student

- Choose a topic on which you have a reasonably good understanding.
- Questions of the jury panel are to be answered to the point. No tangential replies or topic diversions.

Evaluation Procedure

The presentations are evaluated based on the following aspects (CPU)

- **Content – 30%**
 - The ability and effectiveness in utilizing the contents (PLEAS)
- **Presentation – 30%**
 - Connecting Śrīla Prabhupāda’s statements effectively
 - Quoting “relevant” verses, explaining with appropriate

- contextual analogies and examples.
- Natural flow: no sudden jumps in making statements
- Relevance of the quoted PLEAS to the topic.
- Slides, confidence, body language, grammar, etc.
- **Understanding** of the subject – 40%
 - Understanding of the philosophical aspects of the topic.
 - Understanding of the context of the pastime/event.
 - Clarity of thought, Ability to answer questions.

Presentation Topics – Cantos 1 & 2

1. **SB 1.1.1 – Explanation of the “janmādyasya” verse**
2. **Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, Amala Purana**
(Glories of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*)
3. **Questions and Answers in Cantos 1 & 2**
4. **Glories of Parīkṣit Mahārāja**
5. **Separation from the Lord**
(With examples of Nārada, Yudhistira, Arjuna, Bhumi...)
6. **Paramparā of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam**
7. **Dissatisfaction in devotional service**
8. **Spiritual Master - Disciple Etiquette**
(Vyāsa - Nārada, Sūta – Naimiśāranya sages, Nārada - Brahmā, Brahmā - Lord)
9. **Recognizing the Lord’s will**
(Arjuna (in 1.7), Pāṇḍavas’ retirement, Parīkṣit preparing to depart)
10. **Dependence on the Lord** (Arjuna’s lamentation, Parīkṣit’s taking shelter, Śukadeva’s instructions, etc.)
11. **Four Legs of Dharma – Purpose and Significance**

12. **Purpose of Saintly person's travelings**
(With examples of Vidura, Śukadeva Gosvāmī, Nārada...)
13. **The Time Factor** (Bhīṣma's prayers...)
14. **Tolerance of a Vaiṣṇava**
(With examples of Draupadi, Vyāsadeva, Parīkṣit, Dharma...)
15. **Stages in the path of Devotional Service** (1.5.23-37, 1.2.16-22,
With the example of Nārada muni's life as son of maidservant)
16. **The Lord glorifies His devotees**
(With examples of Parīkṣit, Bhishma, Pandavas...)
17. **Success Story of a Sādhaka** (Life of Nārada Muni)
18. **Receptivity to Good Instructions** (With examples of
Dhṛtrāṣṭra, Aśvatthāma, Parīkṣit, Vyāsadeva, Sages, Nārada...)
19. **The Lord's Incarnations**
(From SB 1.3 and 2.7)
20. **Seeing the invisible hand of the Lord**
(Life of Parīkṣit Mahārāja – Saved in the womb but cursed to die)
21. **Tvām akincana gocaram...**
22. **Administration of Yudhiṣṭhira, Parīkṣit**
23. **Mood/ Qualifications of Speaker and Hearer of Bhāgavatam**
(Sages, Suta, Suka, Parīkṣit...)
24. **Glories of 'Sravanam'**
(From various verses/sections in the first 2 cantos)
25. **Superiority of Bhakti-yoga**
(From SB 1.5-6, SB 2.1-3, etc.)
26. **The Process of Creation**
27. **Materialistic Life**
(From the criticism of materialistic men by Vidura, Śukadeva Gosvāmī, Sages, and Śrīla Prabhupāda, etc.)
28. **Catuḥ-ślokī**

(*Sambandha, abhidheya and prayojana in the catuḥ-ślokī*)

29. **Ten Topics of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam**
30. **Why to know about the Universal Form/ Creation?**
31. **Spirit of an authorised representative of the Lord / Bhāgavatam speaker**
(From the mood of Sūta Gosvāmī, Prayers of Śukadeva Gosvāmī, Brahmā-Nārada *saṁvāda* and other sections)
32. **The Lord as the material, instrumental and effective cause of the universe (Canto 2)**
33. **Principles of Administration and Leadership** (With examples of Parīkṣit, Yudhistira and Brahmāji...)
34. **Natural Living**
35. **Hearing about Devotees**

Presentation Topics – Canto 3

1. **Role of Spiritual Master/ spiritual authority**
(With examples of Brahmā, Kardama...)
2. **Mood of a disciple/ subordinate**
(With examples of Brahmā, Vidura, Kardama, Manu, Devahūti...)
3. **With position comes Responsibility**
(Learning from the glorious deeds or mistakes of characters of canto 3 – Lord Nārāyaṇa, Brahmā, Manu, Kardama, Kaśyapa, Diti...)
4. **Contradictory activities of Kṛṣṇa (3.3-4)**
5. **Separation between the Lord and devotee**
(With the examples of Uddhava, Vidura, Jaya-Vijaya, Devahūti...)
6. **Teachings of Lord Kapila, A summary**

7. **Lessons from the Life and Character of Kardama Muni**
8. **Lessons from Vidura's life and character**
9. **Lessons from the character and activities of Brahmājī**
10. **Lessons from the character of Devahūti**
11. **Sorrow of a Conditioned soul**
(From Teachings of Maitreya and Lord Kapila...)
12. **Glories of Uddhava (3.1-4)**
13. **The Universal Form (3.6)**
14. **Sarga**
15. **Visarga**
16. **Association of Devotees**
17. **Beauty of the Supreme Lord**
(Referring to various sections of Canto 3 where Lord's beauty is described)
18. **Lessons from the Prayers of Lord Brahmā (3.9)**
19. **Divisions of Creation (3.10)**
20. **Activities of Varahadeva**
21. **Tolerating the Impulses of Envy and Lust (3.14)**
22. **Kingdom of God (3.15)**
23. **Ideal family life (with the example of Kardama Muni)**
24. **Conflict Resolution**
(Lessons from "four Kumaras cursing Jaya-Vijaya" episode, 3.15-16)
25. **Devahūti's transformation (3.25)**
26. **The path of Ādhyātmika-yoga (3.25)**
27. **Sāṅkhya (3.26-27)**
28. **Aṣṭāṅga-yoga: Practice to perfection (3.28)**
29. **Time**
30. **False Ego**

31. **Glories of Devotional service** (3.29)
32. **Types of Bhakti** (3.29)
33. **Suffering of a child in womb/ Embryology** (3.31)
34. **Fruitive activities** (3.31, 3.32)
35. **The Life a materialistic person** (TLK)
36. **Puruṣāvātāras**

Presentation Topics – Canto 4

1. **Cultivating tolerance and Controlling Anger**
(Personal application for Sādhakas – Based on examples of Lord Śiva and Prajāpati Dakṣa)
2. **Result of disobedience to the authority**
(With examples of Satī, Dhruva, Vena)
3. **Lessons from Dhruva’s lamentation**
(Personal application points on approaching the Lord with material desires)
4. **Basic nature of a devotee can be dovetailed in Bhakti**
(Based on Dhruva’s determination (i) to achieve the highest position in the world, (ii) to kill the Yakṣas. Based on the advice Dhruva received from Nārada and Manu in the above cases, respectively)
5. **Superior’s support in crisis**
(Based on how Sunīti’s instructions, Nārada’s guidance, Manu’s good advice helped Dhruva Mahārāja; How Viṣṇu and Brahmā’s instructions helped Pṛthu; Nārada’s instructions to Pracīnabarhi.)
6. **Potency of devotional service in purifying one’s motivations**
(With reference to Dhruva’s going BTG in spite of his practice with material motives.)

7. Gratitude

(Dhruva Mahārāja towards Suniti and Nārada muni, Pṛthu Mahārāja towards 4 Kumaras, Pracetas towards Lord Śiva)

8. Applying rules according to time and place

(In the context of Śrīla Prabhupāda's application of Nārada's instructions in ISKCON in the West.)

9. Prayers need empowerment from the Lord

(With examples of (i) Prayers to Lord Narayana in Dakṣa's sacrificial arena (ii) Dhruva's prayers)

10. Importance of Honest repentance

(With examples of Dakṣa, Dhruva, Uttanapada, Indra, Pracinarbarhi)

11. Sincerity attracts Grace

(With reference to (i) Nārada guiding Dhruva, Pracinarbarhi and Pracetas; (ii) 4 Kumaras instructing Pṛthu; (iii) Lord Śiva instructing the Pracetas)

12. Qualities of a servant-leader

13. Principles of pure bhakti

14. Principles of mixed bhakti (4.21-22)

15. Practice and perfection of Vānaprastha life (4.23)

16. Vedic Guest reception

(With examples of Pṛthu Mahārāja's receiving 4 Kumaras)

17. Most common desires of great devotees

(Parallels between prayers of Dhruva Mahārāja, Pṛthu Mahārāja and Pracetas – seeking devotee association and opportunity to hear.)

18. Results of Hearing about activities and prayers of devotees

(about Lord Śiva, Dhruva Mahārāja, Pṛthu Mahārāja & the Pracetas)

19. Features of materialistic intelligence

20. **The kindness of Supersoul**
(Role of Avijnata in Puranjan allegory (old brahmana in Malayadhvaja episode))
21. **Bad King Vs Good King**
(With examples of Vena, Pṛthu, Pracinabarhi)
22. **Hearing is the key**
(With reference to examples from Canto 4: How devotees heard from other devotees, how the process of hearing is glorified by different personalities.)
23. **Varṇāśrama Dharma**
(With reference to the role of Brahmanas in Vedic society and Pṛthu Mahārāja's episode)
24. **The Character of Pṛthu Mahārāja**
(Lessons & personal application points from his activities; Qualities described in Canto 4.)
25. **Forgiveness**
(Pṛthu forgiving Indra, Śiva – Dakṣa, Dhruva forgiving Suruci)
26. **Vedic Sacrifices and Animal Killing**
(Need and Relevance with reference to Canto 4 topics, especially Puranjan episode)
27. **Dangers of Vaiṣṇavāparādha**
(Lessons from the mistakes committed by Dakṣa, Suruci, Indra, Vena, etc.)
28. **Nārada's innovative preaching**
(Puranjana section)
29. **Uncontrolled punishment, and its control by subordination**
(Examples from Dhruva Mahārāja, and the Pracetas)
30. **Dealings with opposite gender**
(Lord Śiva's dealings with Sati, Uttanapada with his wives,

Dangers as discussed in Puranjan's allegory, Lessons & personal application points).

Presentation Topics - Canto 5-6

- 1. Approaching the Lord with Material Desires**
(Nābhi, Devatas, Diti)
- 2. Path of Paramahamsas**
(Rṣabhadeva, Jaḍa Bharata)
- 3. Dangers of 'Willful neglect' of Sadhana & Misplaced Compassion**
(Lessons for a Sadhaka from Bharata Mahārāja's episode)
- 4. Devotee's focus on the purpose of Life**
(With examples of Jada Bharata and Vṛtrāsura; Their Surrender to the will of Lord)
- 5. Right utility of Human life**
(From the teachings of Lord Rishabhadeva & Jada Bharata-Rahugana conversation)
- 6. Nature of Mind**
(From Rishabhadeva's episode and the conversation between Jada Bharata & Rahugana)
- 7. Prayers of Śrīmad Bhāgavatam**
(With examples of Prayers of the residents of Jambudvipa, Prayers of demigods for protection, Prayers of Citraketu etc)
- 8. Sthāna in 5th Canto and its Importance**
- 9. Forest of Material Enjoyment in relation to modern life**
- 10. Ideal Kings from the 5th Canto**
(Priyavrata, Nabhi, Gaya, Rṣabhadeva, Bharata, etc.)

11. Power of Holy name

(With reference to Ajāmila's episode & various other chapters)

12. Dangers of Vaishnavaparadha

(With examples of Indra, Dakṣa & Citraketu, Rahugana, Dacoits)

13. Obedience to Devotee's will

(Even if against one's desire; With examples of Priyavrata, Indra, Citraketu)

14. Nārada muni's missionary spirit

(Delivering Dakṣa's sons and Citraketu)

15. Devotees' surrender to the will of Lord

(With examples of Dadhīci and Citraketu/ Vṛtrāsura etc)

16. Tolerance of a Vaishnava

(With examples of Nārada Muni, Citraketu, Lord Śiva etc)

17. Sincere Repentance

(With examples of Ajāmila, Indra, Citraketu)

18. Desires of Devotee

(Nārada's desires to deliver Dakṣa's sons)

19. Lord's reciprocation to devotees of different natures

(Different kinds of reciprocation of the Lord towards Citraketu, Indra, Dakṣa, Nārada muni and Ajāmila)

20. Poṣaṇa – The Theme of Canto 6

(Explain how the contents of Canto 6 are pertaining to the subject matter of 6th Canto – *poṣaṇa*)

21. Devotee is beyond Bodily conception

(With examples of Jaḍa Bharata, Vṛtrāsura etc)

22. The glorious character of Vṛtrāsura

(Lessons from his behavior, talks and prayers on the battlefield)

23. Lessons from Indra's mistakes

(Offending Bṛhaspati, Killing Viśvarūpa and Vṛtrāsura,

Attempting to kill Diti's child in womb)

24. Longing for the Lord in heart

(Jaḍa Bharat, Ṛṣabhadeva, Vṛtrāsura)

25. Instructions to Citraketu

(Angira, Narada, Lord, etc)

26. Glories of Birth in Bharata Vrasa

(From prayers of residents of Jambūdṽpa, Ṛṣabhadeva section etc)

27. Eagerness for Renunciation

(With examples of Svayambhuva Manu, Priyavrata, Ṛṣabhadeva, Bharata, Ajamila etc)

28. Temporary nature of material relationships

(From Citraketu's episode, Jada Bharata – Rahūgaṇa conversation, etc.)

29. Dangers of association with opposite sex

(Nature of women as described by Kasyapa; With examples of Priyavrata, Ajamila, Kasyapa etc)

30. Preacher's Intelligence

(Nārada Muni in the case of Dakṣa's sons, Angira in the case of Citraketu, Jaḍa Bharata to Rahūgaṇa...)

31. Purifying effect of devotional service despite motive

(Ajamila, Diti, Nabhi)

32. Mood of a bona fide authority

(With examples of Lord Brahmā (5.1), Visnudutas, Yamaraja (6.3), Kaśyapa (6.18))

Note: The thematic compilations section in Bhāgavata Subodhinī can help in preparing for some of the oral presentations.

ORAL SLOKA TESTS

- The students are required to recite at least 70 slokas from memory and speak their meaning.
- A selected list of 75 slokas are given in the form of condensed Bhagavata Ratnamala book, the PDF of which is uploaded on <https://online.brcmumbai.com/>
- Audio recordings of Bhagavata Ratnamala are available at <https://gaurangadarshandas.com/media/sloka-recitations/> for those who need them for reference.
- Assessment marking is done, as follows:
 - Shloka recitation - Good (2 marks), Average (1 mark), Bad (0 mark)
 - Translation (approximate) - Good (2 marks), Average (1 mark), Bad (0 mark)

STUDY MATERIALS

Study Materials

- Srimad Bhagavatam Cantos 1 to 6 by HDG A.C Bhaktivedanta Swami Srila Prabhupada

Additional References

- Sarartha Darshini by Srila Vishvanatha Chakravarthy Thakur, English Translation by HH Bhanu Swami Maharaj
- Bhagavata Subodhini (Study Guide) Canto 1-2, Canto 3, Canto 4 and Canto 5-6, by HG Gauranga Darshan Das
- Bhagavata Ratnamala (Sloka Book) Canto 1-6, Compiled by HG Gauranga Darshan Das

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<https://online.brcmumbai.com/>