Education in Śāstric Studies
Hermeneutics
Course Materials

PARTICIPANT HANDBOOK

ISKCON Hermeneutics Course One
Understanding *Śāstra* and Śrīla Prabhupāda

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Participant Handbook, ISKCON Hermeneutics Course One

Understanding *Śāstra* and Śrīla Prabhupāda

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Contents

Introduction: Please read me first!

Welcome!

Please accept our humble obeisances. All glories to Śrīla Prabhupāda.

Welcome to the Course One! In this *Participant Handbook*, you'll find concise notes on many aspects of ISKCON Hermeneutics, useful not only during the course but afterwards as well.

We would like to warmly thank the many devotees who have kindly contributed towards this course; for more details, please see the Acknowledgments page (**Appendix 1** on page 79).

In this course, we deal with statements and topics from *guru-sādhu-śāstra* that may be difficult to understand, explain, or apply. As Śrīla Prabhupāda writes in his purport to *Bhagavad-gītā* 16.1-3, "In Vedic literature there are some difficult passages." These sorts of statements and topics are often avoided or glossed over in temple *śāstra* classes. Raising questions and doubts about these statements and topics can bring about charges of "disloyalty," "heresy," and "offense." So, we may, naturally, feel reticent and cautious to openly discuss them in a class on hermeneutics. There could be many ways to refer to such statements, such as "controversial" or "confusing." In this course Śrīla Prabhupāda's term "difficult" is used, with the understanding that the statements themselves are only apparently difficult until hermeneutical principles and tools are used to explain them.

This class is a safe environment. We can be safe to discuss and explore these statements and topics as a service to Śrīla Prabhupāda and his society. Not only do we want safety in this course, but also joy and satisfaction. "[My devotees] derive great satisfaction and bliss from always enlightening one another and conversing about Me." (*Bhagavad-gītā* 10.9)

"One who is expert in logic and in understanding the revealed scriptures, and who always has firm conviction and deep faith that is not blind, is to be considered a topmost devotee in devotional service." (*Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* 1.2.17)

Your servants,

Śāstric Advisory Council to ISKCON's Governing Body Commission

Course Aims and Objectives

The following aims and objectives apply to this first course.

Course Aims:

1. To help participants <u>understand hermeneutics</u> by
    a. appreciating its importance
    b. adopting a coherent conceptual framework
2. To familiarize participants with a comprehensive list of <u>hermeneutical Qualities, Principles, and Tools</u> and to apply corresponding skills
3. To help participants appropriately <u>receive and understand *śāstra*</u>, specifically by addressing personal discomfort with some statements
4. To enable participants to adopt and promote <u>respectful modes of śāstric discourse</u>
5. To help participants authentically <u>convey meaning</u> through
    a. careful consideration of context
    b. hermeneutically-informed education and outreach
6. To start to identify and answer key <u>hermeneutical questions</u>

Course Learning Objectives:

By the end of the course, participants will be able to:

1. <u>Define Hermeneutics</u> and its scope, with reference to various disciplines and religious traditions, including ISKCON
2. List, explain and justify:
    a. the purposes of ISKCON hermeneutics
    b. the underpinning Qualities & Principles (and other theory)
3. List several hermeneutical <u>Tools</u>, <u>processes</u> and associated <u>skills</u>; proficiently select and apply some of them
4. With regard to understanding śāstric statements
    a. identify and classify those personally hard to accept, or as foster uncertainty
    b. identify ways to deal with such doubts, ambiguities and apprehensions
    c. analyze and evaluate various responses to uncertainty
5. With regard to the <u>quality of śāstric discourse</u>, explain and evaluate:
    a. various types of discourse, and their causes and consequences
    b. the values and characteristics of those engaged in constructive discourse
    c. apt ways to deal with those engaged in poor discourse
6. Explain effective and authorized ways to <u>convey śāstric truth</u>, especially in:
    a. teaching *śāstra* to devotees
    b. conducting outreach
    c. addressing 'contentious' śāstric statements (e.g. in Śrīla Prabhupāda's books)

7. Lucidly articulate key hermeneutical questions, and begin to suggest viable answers
8. Demonstrate sound argumentation, the apt use of śāstric and academic reference, and *sattvic* <u>conduct and virtues</u>, as expected of a Vaiṣṇava

Further Features of the Course

A. The First Course

This course is an introductory overview. We also hope that more advanced courses will become available.

B. Target Audiences

Formal hermeneutics education is not intended for absolute newcomers[1], but starts with devotees preparing for second initiation, or situated at an equivalent (or higher) level of understanding and commitment. The seven categories of enrollees are:

1. Students and teachers of *śāstra*
2. Mentors and counsellors
3. Outreach and communications staff
4. Editors and translators
5. Authors and writers
6. Managers (policymakers/legislators/judiciary)
7. Scholars and academics

This first course is foundational for all the above student groups.

Note: For those who are relatively new to the study and practice and devotional service, the first three lessons can be used as a stand-alone course.

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[1] The option remains to include elementary components at an earlier stage, as might be linked to, say, a Bhakti Sastri access course.

Lesson 1: What is Hermeneutics?

Before Lesson 1, please submit a 3-6 sentence bio to be circulated to all participants before the class starts.

Before Lesson 1, carefully read the following:

- *Foundation Document* pages 3 and 4
- *Supplementary Material:* pages 14-18: Śrīla Prabhupāda differentiates between explanation, interpretation, and "As it is"
- *Supplementary Material:* pages 18-20: Quotes on the Purpose of Hermeneutics
- One-page Summary
- *Participant Handbook* Lesson 1

Before Lesson 1, please answer as many of the following questions as you can, based on what you read and on your own experience and understanding. Please keep your answers to three lines or less. Answering these will help solidify your basic knowledge as a foundation for the learning experiences in the lesson. Instructors may or may not check the answers of individual participants.

1. What is the meaning or definition of hermeneutics?

2. What is the role of hermeneutics in Vedic culture and texts?

3. Did Śrīla Prabhupāda speak directly or indirectly at any time about the need for hermeneutics?

4. Śrīla Prabhupāda often cautions about 'interpretation'. How do we understand this, and in what ways was Śrīla Prabhupāda using the term?

5. What did Śrīla Prabhupāda mean by "As it is"?

6. What is the need for ISKCON to have a distinct hermeneutical culture?

7. What is the ultimate purpose to be served by understanding such a hermeneutical culture?

8. How will understanding hermeneutics help the ISKCON devotee at various stages in his/her devotional life?

9. Does hermeneutics have its limitations? If yes, in what situations does it become inapplicable?

Aims:

1. To lay firm foundations for the course, especially by fostering a shared, uplifting sense of relevance, purpose and expectation
2. To help participants define and explain 'hermeneutics' (and related terms) and its history, scope and purposes

Learning Objectives:

By the end of the lesson, participants should be able to:

1. Explain the role of prayer and meditation in hermeneutics
2. Define hermeneutics
3. Explain the value of hermeneutics to individuals, the devotee society, and to outreach
4. Reflect upon one's experiences with good and poor attempts at understanding and discussing *śāstra*

Meditation for this lesson:

tatra kīrtayato viprā
viprarṣer bhūri-tejasaḥ
ahaṁ cādhyagamaṁ tatra
niviṣṭas tad-anugrahāt
so 'haṁ vaḥ śrāvayiṣyāmi
yathādhītaṁ yathā-mati

O learned *brāhmaṇas*, when Śukadeva Gosvāmī recited *Bhāgavatam* there [in the presence of Emperor Parīkṣit], I heard him with rapt attention, and thus, by his

mercy, I learned the *Bhāgavatam* from that great and powerful sage. Now I shall try to make you hear the very same thing as I learned it from him and as I have realized it. (spoken by Śrī Sūta Gosvāmī, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.3.44)

śrī-kṛṣṇa-caitanya-dayā karaha vicāra
vicāra karile citte pābe camatkāra

Translation: If you are indeed interested in logic and argument, kindly apply it to the mercy of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. If you do so, you will find it to be strikingly wonderful. (spoken by Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja, *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Ādi* 8.15)

śrī-bādarāyaṇir uvāca
evaṁ te bhagavad-dūtā
yamadūtābhibhāṣitam
upadhāryātha tān rājan
pratyāhur naya-kovidāḥ

Translation: Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: My dear King, the servants of Lord Viṣṇu are always very expert in logic and arguments. After hearing the statements of the Yamadūtas, they replied…" (spoken by Śrīla Śukadeva Gosvāmī, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 6.2.1)

"Theory and Method Underpinned by Values"

> Theory: Principles
> Method: Tools
> Values: Vaiṣṇava Qualities

Important points to understand about hermeneutics:

Properly understood and applied hermeneutics results in good conclusions and good conversations. Such conversations bring joy and satisfaction to the soul beyond being intellectually sound. There is happiness in relishing many angles of vision amongst persons who discuss with respect and in search of truth. Good hermeneutics sometimes yields one "right" answer or explanation of *śāstra*. At other times, it creates the boundaries for what are a variety of correct explanations and what are outside that boundary and thus unacceptable.

The system of ISKCON hermeneutics, as one can see from a careful study of the Supplementary Materials, is firmly grounded in tradition as old as the Vedas themselves. The Qualities, Principles, and Tools that make up the hermeneutic theory and method underpinned by values come directly from *śāstra* and tradition and have been used since the beginning of time. What is presented here is specifically a Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava system that is within the Vedic system. The Vedic system is traditionally called *mīmāṁsā*. However, as some aspects of *mīmāṁsā* are suitable for Vaiṣṇavas and some not, and as some adaptation is involved for ISKCON and the words of Śrīla Prabhupāda in particular, we have not used that traditional term.

In this course we will study various hermeneutical Qualities, Principles and Tools. If we analyze the following example in terms of those hermeneutical Qualities, Principles, and Tools, we can understand that Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja and Śrīla Prabhupāda were using Qualities of "benevolence and generosity" as well as "humility and a service mood." They used Principles of "authentic understanding and exposition of *śāstra* are consistent with *siddhānta*," [Principle 8] and "insight emerges through apt dialogue, and through mediation, resolution, or reconciliation of paradox, apparent contradiction, and multiple views" [Principle 14]. Among the hermeneutical Tools, they used "six criteria to know the main import and conclusion of a work of *śāstra*" [TOOL 20], "we should understand *śāstra* from many angles of vision" [TOOL 26], and "practical intent of the statement" [TOOL 35].

The list of all 24 Principles can be found in the *Foundation Document* on page 6.

The list of all 40 Tools can be found in the *Foundation Document* on pages 8 and 9.

More explanations of each can be found in the *Supplementary Material.*

A simple example of Vaiṣṇava Hermeneutics

Most of us are familiar with this verse in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.3.28:

> *ete cāṁśa-kalāḥ puṁsaḥ*
> *Kṛṣṇas tu bhagavān svayam*

Translation: All of the above-mentioned incarnations are either plenary portions or portions of the plenary portions of the Lord, but Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the original Personality of Godhead.

As Śrīla Prabhupāda writes in his purport to *Bhagavad-gītā 4.8:*

> In the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* of Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja, the following verses (*Madhya* 20.263-264) summarize these principles of incarnation:

> *sṛṣṭi-hetu yei mūrti prapañce avatare*
> *sei īśvara-mūrti 'avatāra' nāma dhare*
> *māyātīta paravyome sabāra avasthāna*
> *viśve avatari' dhare 'avatāra' nāma*

> "The *avatāra*, or incarnation of Godhead, descends from the kingdom of God for material manifestation. And the particular form of the Personality of Godhead who so descends is called an incarnation, or *avatāra*. Such incarnations are situated in the spiritual world, the kingdom of God. When they descend to the material creation, they assume the name *avatāra*."

> There are various kinds of *avatāras*, such as *puruṣāvatāras, guṇāvatāras, līlāvatāras, śakty-āveśa avatāras, manvantara-avatāras and yugāvatāras*—all appearing on schedule all over the universe. But Lord Kṛṣṇa is the primeval Lord, the fountainhead of all *avatāras*.

Yet the same Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja earlier in *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta Ādi* 5.128 -132, used hermeneutical Principles and Tools to accommodate a seemingly opposing view. He wrote:

> They know that there is no difference between the incarnation and the source of all incarnations. Previously Lord Kṛṣṇa was regarded in the light of different principles by different people. Some said that Kṛṣṇa was directly Lord Nara- Nārāyaṇa, and some called Him Lord Vāmanadeva incarnate. Some called Lord Kṛṣṇa an incarnation of Lord Kṣīrodakaśāyī. All these names are true; nothing is impossible. When the Supreme Personality of Godhead Kṛṣṇa appears, He is the shelter of all plenary parts. Thus at that time all His plenary portions join in Him. In whatever form one knows the Lord, one speaks of Him in that way. In this there is no falsity, since everything is possible in Kṛṣṇa.

Śrīla Prabhupāda then gave his own example in his purport to *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Ādi* 5.132 as follows:

> In this connection we may mention an incident that took place between two of our *sannyāsīs* while we were preaching the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra* in Hyderabad. One of them stated that "Hare Rāma" refers to Śrī Balarāma, and the other protested that "Hare Rāma" means Lord Rāma. Ultimately the controversy came to me, and I gave the decision that if someone says that the "Rāma" in "Hare Rāma" is Lord Rāmacandra and someone else says that the "Rāma" in "Hare Rāma" is Śrī Balarāma, both are correct because there is no difference between Śrī Balarāma and Lord Rāma. Here in *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* we find that Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī has stated the same conclusion:

> *yei yei rūpe jāne, sei tāhā kahe*
> *sakala sambhave kṛṣṇe, kichu mithyā nahe*

> If someone calls Lord Rāmacandra by the vibration Hare Rāma, understanding it to mean "O Lord Rāmacandra!" he is quite right. Similarly, if one says that Hare Rāma means "O Śrī Balarāma!" he is also right. Those who are aware of the *viṣṇu-tattva* do not fight over all these details.

Hermeneutics Protects the Tradition and Allows it to Grow

By Rādhikā-ramaṇa dāsa

The practice of hermeneutics protects ISKCON, Śrīla Prabhupāda's teachings and the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava *sampradāya* by setting the boundaries within which the interpretation of *śāstra* can take place. When we study and apply the hermeneutical Principles enunciated by our *ācāryas*, we ensure that we never commit violence to the text by going beyond the range of meaning that is intended by *śāstra* itself. This protects the tradition from philosophical deviations and interpretations driven by personal agenda.

At the same time, the practice of hermeneutics gives us the Tools by which we can appreciate the limitless meanings present within *śāstra*. Hermeneutics gives us the flexibility to apply *śāstra* to new situations and explain it according to time, place, and circumstance. This allows the tradition to grow and flourish into the future and in every part of the world, preventing it from becoming an archaic museum piece.

Thus, hermeneutics gives us the means to encourage diversity and flexibility within our *sampradāya*, while also keeping us loyal and faithful to the Vaiṣṇava siddhānta as taught by *śāstra* since time immemorial. We see this balance at work in the commentaries of the *ācāryas*: they draw out an endless variety of meanings from *śāstra*, while always remaining fixed in the conclusions of our *sampradāya*, never twisting the text for personal agenda.

An analogy can be helpful here: In a game of tennis, it is the net, the court, and the rules of the game that allow the players to be creative, to improve their abilities, and to enjoy the sport. Boundaries facilitate spontaneity. Similarly, the boundaries set by hermeneutics allow us to grow in our understanding of *śāstra*, discover ever-fresh meanings, and apply them to different circumstances. Thus, hermeneutics supports neither rigidity ("only my understanding is correct") nor relativity ("any interpretation is true if it works for you"). Rather, hermeneutics teaches us unity in diversity, as so much desired by Śrīla Prabhupāda.

Exploration 1.1: Hermeneutics: My Personal Experiences

(This Exploration will be done during the class.)

Please answer the first two questions and possibly the third (if you have time). Take 2-3 minutes for each. Include one to three answers for each question, as time allows (aim to provide at least one answer to the first two questions, if not all three). Please write answers neatly, as we will return to them later. As you answer, reflect on your own personal experiences. If you are unclear on any question, please raise the issue with the instructor (personally, rather than with the whole class).

Question 1: **What are your experiences of poor conversation or misunderstanding about *śāstra*?**

This question interrogates types of conversation, especially their quality and impact. These can be related to yourself or others, to devotees or non-devotees.

Question 2: **What difficult philosophical issues concern you? Are there any śāstric statements that you have difficulty accepting?**

Your answers should be related to the interpretation of Śrīla Prabhupāda's books.

Question 3: **What question do you have (if any) about hermeneutical theory?**

For example, "Is it enough to simply state 'We should not change *śāstra*?'"

Lesson 2: A Simple and Basic Way To Apply Hermeneutics

Before Lesson 2, carefully read the following:

- *Foundation Document* pages 11-13
- *Supplementary Material* pages 249-264: The Place of a Concise Statement of *Siddhānta* in Hermeneutics
- One-page Summary
- *Participant Handbook* Lesson 2, especially
  - Concise statement of Gauḍīya *siddhānta* in this *Participant Handbook* page 17
  - *Daśa-mūla-tattva* in this *Participant Handbook* page 18

Essential: Choose **one** of the following to use for practicing a hermeneutical path:

"Armed with yoga, O Bhārata, stand and fight." (*Bhagavad-gītā* 4.42)

OR

"A devotee never takes the part of a particular party; therefore he is carefree." (*Bhagavad-gītā* 12.16, purport)

OR

"…these living entities who appear to be our father, mother, etc., are nothing but Kṛṣṇa" (*Bhagavad-gītā* 9.17 purport)

Before Lesson 2, please answer as many of the following questions as you can, based on what you read and on your own experience and understanding. Answering these will help solidify your basic knowledge as a foundation for the learning experiences in the lesson. Instructors may or may not check the answers of individual participants.

1. What are the three parts of a hermeneutical path? (just list the titles)

2. Explain in your own words "truth that is eternal, universal, and trans-contextual."

3. What is meant by "a concise statement of *siddhānta*?"

4. What are the four ways a śāstric statement can be related to *siddhānta*?

Aims:

1. To deepen participants' understanding of various hermeneutical processes, by providing practical experience of using a 'hermeneutical path'

Learning Objectives:

By the end of the lesson, participants should be able to:

1. For one specific example of a hermeneutical path, list and explain:
   a. the three component parts
   b. within the second part, the sub-steps
2. Convincingly apply a hermeneutical path to more authentically understand a statement from *guru-sādhu-śāstra*

Meditation for this lesson:

> *yasya svarūpaṁ kavayo vipaścito*
> *guṇeṣu dāruṣv iva jāta-vedasam*
> *mathnanti mathnā manasā didṛkṣavo*
> *gūḍhaṁ kriyārthair nama īritātmane*

Translation: By manipulating a fire-generating stick, great saints and sages can bring forth the fire lying dormant within wood. In the same way, O Lord, those expert in understanding the Absolute Truth try to see You in everything—even in their own bodies. Yet you remain concealed. You are not to be understood by indirect processes involving mental or physical activities. Because You are self-manifested, only when You see that a person is wholeheartedly engaged in searching for You do You reveal Yourself. Therefore I offer my respectful obeisances unto You. (spoken by Mother Earth, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 5.18.36)

"Theory and Method Underpinned by Values"

Theory: Principles
Method: Tools
Values: Vaiṣṇava Qualities

The term *siddhānta* can mean simply "conclusion." **Here we are using the term *siddhānta* to mean truth that is eternal, universal, and trans-contextual.** As stated in the last verse of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam catuḥ-ślokī* 2.9.36: *Sarvatra sarvadā* "in all space and time, in all circumstances." This is truth that applies to everyone always in the material and spiritual world.

Concise Statement of Gauḍīya *Siddhānta*

according to the teachings of
His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda

Śrīla Prabhupāda gives a summary of Gauḍīya *siddhānta* in his last purport to the *catuḥ-ślokī Bhāgavatam* as these four essential *Bhāgavatam* verses are quoted in the *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Ādi* 1.53–56). Śrīla Prabhupāda's summary encapsulates, as he puts it, "the missionary activities of Lord Caitanya," i.e., it contains in gist the message of Lord Caitanya to the world. It is thus appropriate and significant that Śrīla Prabhupāda placed his summary of Gauḍīya *siddhānta* in his last purport to the *catuḥ-ślokī Bhāgavatam* as quoted in the *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta,* rather than in his purports to the verses as they appear in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* itself (2.9.33–36).

One could use Śrīla Prabhupāda's three paragraph summary of the *catuḥ-ślokī Bhāgavatam* in his purport to *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta Ādi* 1. 56 (see *Supplementary Material* pages 265-266) as the concise statement of *siddhānta* for ISKCON hermeneutics. For easier understanding, one can also analyze ten tenets from those three paragraphs as follows on the next page. In the *Supplementary Materials* pages 267-268, after each tenet there is a quote from the purport to text 56. In footnotes are supporting quotes from the purports to *Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Ādi* 1.53–55. There are also footnotes referencing verses 51–52, which introduce the *catuḥ-ślokī*, to showing its context and importance.

The first seven tenets we have extracted from those paragraphs describe the knowledge of *sambandha,* the relationships among the Supreme Lord, His energies, and the living entities. Tenet number 8 explains *prayojana,* the ultimate goal. Tenet number 9 delineates *abhidheya,* the process by which the living entity can re-establish his forgotten relationship with the Lord[2].

These nine tenets constitute the object of knowledge.

The last tenet explains *pramāṇa,* the means of obtaining proper knowledge.[3]

Thus the ten tenets that follow contain the entire philosophy of the *Vedas,* as taught by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, in the form of *sambandha, abhidheya,* and *prayojana*.

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[2] Usually, abhidheya precedes *prayojana,* but not always, as shown in the *catuḥ-ślokī Bhagavatam.* We follow the order given by Śrīla Prabhupāda in this purport.

[3] Again, usually the description of *pramāṇa,* epistemology, goes first, but in his teaching Śrīla Prabhupāda mostly relied on the self-evident nature of the *Vedas,* and therefore it is not inappropriate to place this tenet, which explains how to realize the first 9 points, last.

Ten Tenets of Gauḍīya *Siddhānta*

1. Lord Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Personality of Godhead

2. He has His external, inferior or material energy (*māyā*)

3. He also has His internal, superior or spiritual energy

4. He has His parts and parcels, the living entities, who are spiritual by nature

5. The living entities in the material world are conditioned by the external energy

6. The living entities in the spiritual world are liberated

7. *Acintya-bhedābheda-tattva:* Simultaneous oneness and difference of the Lord and His energies

8. Love of God is the highest goal of life

9. To achieve love of God, one should practice devotional service

10. This knowledge can only be received by us through the disciplic succession

Daśa-mūla-tattva

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura writes:

The Supreme Lord Gaura Candra has taught ten principles to the *jīvas*:

1. The statements of *āmnāya* are the chief proof. By these statements the following nine topics are taught.

2. Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Absolute Truth.

3. Kṛṣṇa is endowed with all energies.

4. Kṛṣṇa is the ocean of *rasa*.

5. The *jīvas* are all separated parts of the Lord.

6. In bound state, the *jīvas* are under the influence of matter, due to their *taṭasthā* nature.

7. In the liberated state, the *jīvas* are free from the influence of matter, due to their *taṭasthā* nature.

8. The *jīvas* and the material world are both different from and identical to the Lord.

9. Pure devotion is the practice of the *jīvas*.

10. Pure love of Kṛṣṇa is the goal.

The instructor will demonstrate a hermeneutical path using one of these demos:

Instructor Demo of a Hermeneutical Path, Demo #1:

This verse from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 2.9.10. (This verse is not found in any of the appendices.)

pravartate yatra rajas tamas tayoḥ
sattvaṁ ca miśraṁ na ca kāla-vikramaḥ
na yatra māyā kim utāpare harer
anuvratā yatra surāsurārcitāḥ

SYNONYMS

pravartate—prevail; *yatra*—wherein; *rajaḥ tamaḥ*—the modes of passion and ignorance; *tayoḥ*—of both of them; *sattvam*—the mode of goodness; *ca*—and; *miśram*—mixture; *na*—never; *ca*—and; *kāla*—time; *vikramaḥ*—influence; *na*—neither; *yatra*—therein; *māyā*—illusory, external energy; *kim*—what; *uta*—there is; *apare*—others; *hareḥ*—of the Personality of Godhead; *anuvratāḥ*—devotees; *yatra*—wherein; *sura*—by the demigods; *asura*—and the demons; *arcitāḥ*—worshiped.

Translation: In that personal abode of the Lord, the material modes of ignorance and passion do not prevail, nor is there any of their influence in goodness. There is no predominance of the influence of time, so what to speak of the illusory, external energy; it cannot enter that region. Without discrimination, **both the demigods and the demons** worship the Lord as devotees.

Instructor Demo of a Hermeneutical Path, Demo #2

This purport is from *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Antya* 13.112. (This statement is not in any of the appendices.)

From the purport: Raghunātha Bhaṭṭācārya had become a greatly advanced devotee while still unmarried. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu could see this, and therefore He advised him not to begin the process of material sense gratification. Marriage is a concession for people who are unable to control their senses. Raghunātha, however, being an advanced devotee of Kṛṣṇa, naturally had no desire for sense gratification. Therefore Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu advised him not to enter the bondage of marriage. **Generally a person cannot make much advancement in spiritual consciousness if he is married. He becomes attached to his family and is prone to sense gratification. Thus his spiritual advancement is very slow or almost nil.**

Exploration 2.1: Using a Hermeneutical Path

(This Exploration will be done during the class.)

1. Choose one of the following to use with a hermeneutical path:

    "Armed with yoga, O Bhārata, stand and fight." (*Bhagavad-gītā* 4.42)

    OR

    "A devotee never takes the part of a particular party; therefore, he is carefree." (*Bhagavad-gītā* 12.16, purport)

    OR

    "…these living entities who appear to be our father, mother, etc., are nothing but Kṛṣṇa" (*Bhagavad-gītā* 9.17 purport)

2. Refer to the section 'Sample Hermeneutical Path' in *Foundation Document* pages 11-13.

3. Use the Concise Statement of Gauḍīya *Siddhānta* on page 17 of this *Participant Handbook*, or Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's *Daśa-mūla-tattva*, on page 18 of this *Participant Handbook.*

4. Go through a hermeneutical path for your difficult statement.

Lesson 3: How To (and How Not To) Have a Productive Discussion: *Vāda, Jalpa, Vitaṇḍā*

Before Lesson 3, carefully read the following:

- One-page Summary
- Bookmark
- *Foundation Document* page 10
- *Participant Handbook* Lesson 3
- *Supplementary Material*: pages 214-217, TOOL 27: Type of Discussion or Argument: *Vāda* (Best category is *Samvāda*), *Jalpa*, and *Vitaṇḍā*
- Optional: [Appendix 5: Further Questions for Introspection and Discussion](#) page 97

Before Lesson 3, please answer the following question, based on what you read and on your own experience and understanding. Answering it will help solidify your basic knowledge as a foundation for the learning experiences in the lesson. Instructors may or may not check the answers of individual participants.

List the three types of discussion using the Sanskrit terms, and explain each with a word, phrase or sentence:

Aims:

1. To help participants recognize and adopt the right mode of śāstric-based conversation
   a. Paying attention to attendant virtues e.g. 'respect'
2. To help participants deal positively with individuals (and groups) who inadequately embrace sound hermeneutical conversation

Learning Objectives:

By the end of the lesson, participants should be able to:

1. Further identify and share personal experiences of śāstric conversation, both good and bad
2. With reference to personal experience, hermeneutical theory and śāstric evidence, explain:
   a. The various types and qualities of śāstric discourse
   b. The causes and consequences of good and bad discourse, especially as linked to philosophical controversy
3. Evaluate and explain:
   a. The characteristics of those engaged in constructive discourse
   b. Ways to deal with devotees unprepared to engage in constructive śāstric conversation (i.e. discourse based on sound hermeneutics)

Meditation for this lesson:

> *yac-chaktayo vadatāṁ vādināṁ vai*
> *vivāda-saṁvāda-bhuvo bhavanti*
> *kurvanti caiṣāṁ muhur ātma-mohaṁ*
> *tasmai namo 'nanta-guṇāya bhūmne*

Translation: Let me offer my respectful obeisances unto the all-pervading Supreme Personality of Godhead, who possesses unlimited transcendental qualities. Acting from within the cores of the hearts of all philosophers, who propagate various views, He causes them to forget their own souls while sometimes agreeing and sometimes disagreeing among themselves. Thus He creates within this material world a situation in which they are unable to come to a conclusion. I offer my obeisances unto Him. (spoken by Prajāpati Dakṣa, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 6.4.31)

"Theory and Method Underpinned by Values"

> Theory: Principles
> Method: Tools
> Values: Vaiṣṇava Qualities

> *vādaḥ pravadatām aham*

Translation: Amongst arguers, I am the argument (*vāda*). (*Bhagavad-gītā* 10.32)

> *vādo jalpo vitaṇḍeti*
> *trividhā viduṣām kathā*

Translation: Amongst learned philosophers, discussions can be classified into three types — *vāda*, *jalpa* and *vitaṇḍā*. (*Kathā-lakṣaṇam* of Śrī Madhvācārya)

> *tattva-nirṇayam-uddiśya*
> *kevalaṁ guru-śiṣyayoḥ*
> *kathā 'nyeṣām api satām*
> *vādo vā samiteḥ śubhā*

Translation: Discussions primarily between the spiritual master and disciple that are auspiciously aimed only at establishing the truth are described by the learned as *vāda*. (*Kathā-lakṣaṇam* of Śrī Madhvācārya)

> *khyātyādyarthaṁ spardhayā vā satāṁ jalpa itīryate*

Translation: Discussions driven by the desire to earn prestige or the desire to win a debate are classified by the wise as *jalpa*. (*Kathā-lakṣaṇam* of Śrī Madhvācārya)

> *vādo nāvalambyaḥ*

Translation: Do not take shelter of *vāda* (argument). *(Nārada-bhakti-sūtra 74)*

śuṣka-vāda-vivāde na
kañcit pakṣaṁ samāśrayet

Translation: A devotee should never speak like a mere logician or skeptic or take any side whatsoever in useless arguments. (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 11.18.30)

(Keeping Quiet)
ātmanaḥ mukha-doṣeṇa
badhyante śuka-sārikāḥ
bakās tatra na badhyante
maunaṁ sarvārtha-sādhanam

Translation: Due to the fault of chirping too much, parrots and mynahs are caught easily by the hunters. The cranes however keep quiet and are rarely caught. *Mauna* indeed is a powerful tool that can achieve anything. (*Subhāṣita-ratna-bhāṇḍāgāra*)

(Speaking Sweetly)
priya-vākya-pradānena
sarve tuṣyanti jantavaḥ
tasmāt tad eva vaktavyaṁ
vacane kā daridratā

Translation: By speaking sweet words, all living entities in the world are satisfied. Therefore, speak sweet words. What poverty will you fall in by giving this gift of sweet words to everyone? (*Subhāṣita-ratna-bhāṇḍāgāra*)

Summary:

Vāda (Best category is *Samvāda*)—wanting TRUTH

Jalpa—wanting TO WIN

Vitaṇḍā—wanting TO DEFEAT

Exploration 3.1: Śāstric Discourse: Examples from *Śāstra*

(This Exploration will be done during the class.)

Examples from *śāstra* of *samvāda/vāda* conversations:

Examples from *śāstra* of *jalpa* conversations:

Examples from *śāstra* of *vitaṇḍā* conversations:

Exploration 3.2: Śāstric Discourse: My Personal Experiences

(This Exploration will be done during the class.)

Please answer following four questions as guided by the instructor. Please write answers neatly as we may return to them later.

Question 1:   How do you feel when you hear, participate in, or initiate a *samvāda* or *vāda* conversation?

Question 2:   How do you feel when you hear, participate in, or initiate a *jalpa* conversation?

Question 3:   How do you feel when you hear, participate in, or initiate a *vitaṇḍā* conversation?

Question 4:   Identify three contemporary Vaiṣṇavas who you think handle conversations (especially on the internet) very nicely. Briefly describe what they do nicely.

Exploration 3.3: The Quality of Śāstric Conversation

(This Exploration will be done during the class.)

The Individual Devotee	ISKCON + Its Communities	Broader Society (Outreach)
The results of poor conversation:	The results of poor conversation:	The results of poor conversation:
The results of good conversation:	The results of good conversation	The results of good conversation
The causes of poor conversation:	The causes of poor conversation:	The causes of poor conversation:
The causes of good conversation:	The causes of good conversation:	The causes of good conversation:

Promoting Sound Conversation

Precedent in the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava Tradition

Many examples are given in Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava tradition and literature as to:

1. what constitutes exemplary conversation about *śāstra*

2. the personal characteristics of those so engaged

3. who is qualified to engage types of discourse

For example, regarding point 3. above, profound discussion on meaning, and especially on difficult śāstric passages, is best conducted between peers.

Ineffective Discourse

The following are more specific cases or types of destructive (or otherwise poor) discourse. Although we are concerned here for the quality of the conversation, some items in this list imply that other Tools are not being adequately applied.
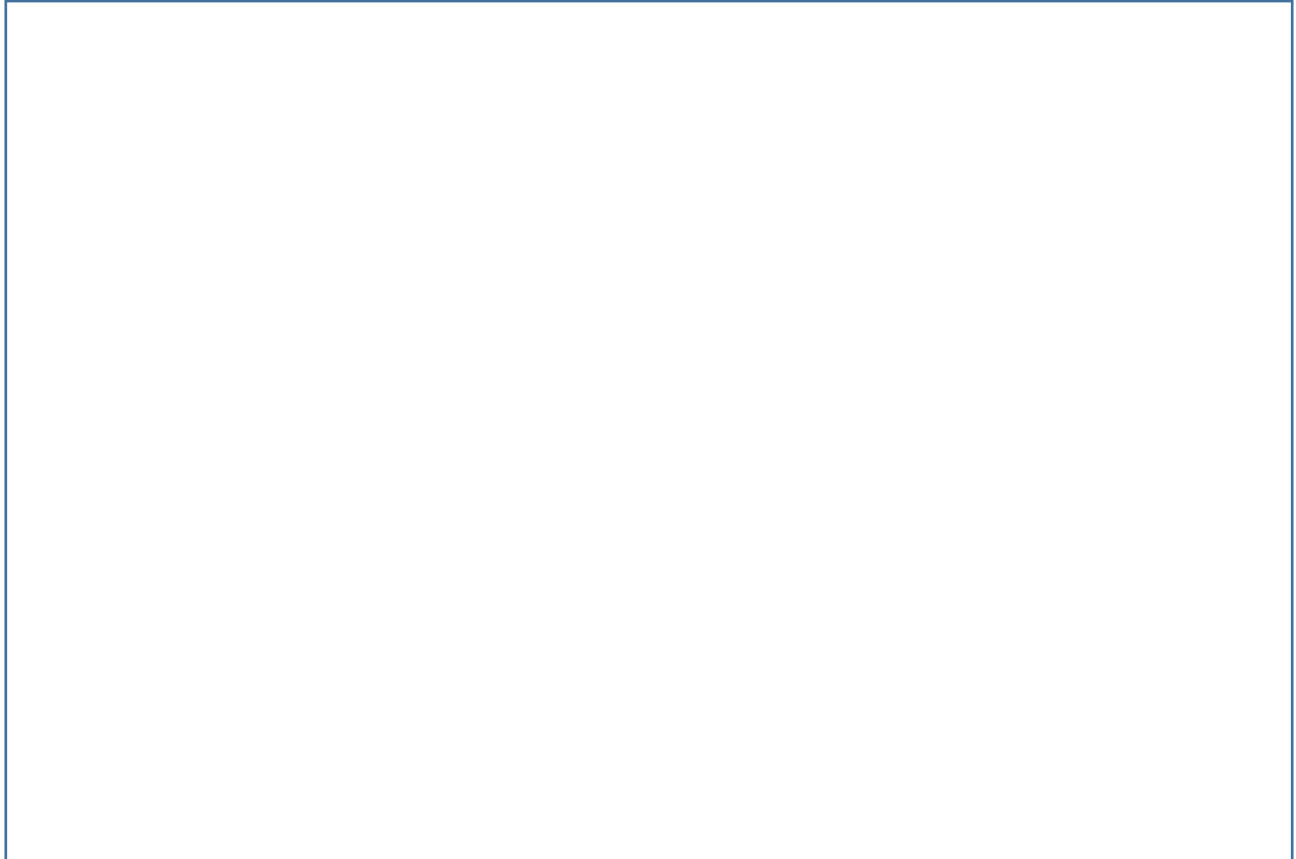
1. Offensive or otherwise discourteous discourse i.e. in which Vaiṣṇava virtues are sacrificed (especially over the Internet)

2. Confusing principle with details

3. Conversation performed with a mood other than service and genuine curiosity

4. Dialogue that has no purpose or benefit

5. Discourse that is irrelevant to one's stage of advancement

6. Use of poor logic and argumentation, embracing a whole raft of fallacious arguments (including cases in which the conclusion is correct but becomes discredited by the palpably poor exercise of reason)

7. Failing to acknowledge that one's tacit opinion or perception is often not entirely aligned to śāstric truth (when one is not yet entirely pure)

8. Discourse that neglects:

    a. to provide adequate śāstric support

    b. to speak according to one own realization

    c. to take account of the level of understanding on the listener

9. Discourse that unduly condemns others rather than providing viable alternatives

10. Over-reliance on slogans, clichés and platitudes, as may sometime be poorly understood or falsely attributed (e.g. to Śrīla Prabhupāda when he said nothing of the sort)

Broad Ways to Counter Poor Śāstric Discourse

The following are a few ways to avoid unhealthy śāstric conversation and, on the positive side to promote more constructive conversation:

1. Identify the broad type of conversation (be aware!)

2. If it is clearly destructive (e.g. offensive or a waste of time), then <u>avoid it</u>!

3. Politely ask for śāstric evidence

4. Where appropriate, give instructions on sound hermeneutics

You may extend this list and make your own notes:

Personal Characteristics

Effective hermeneutics is dependent on insight into the subject and the skillful application of corresponding methods and Tools. However, for it to be fruitful, it requires character and nurturing attendant Qualities.

Lesson 4: The Foundation: Principles of Hermeneutics and Qualities To Apply Them

Before Lesson 4, carefully read the following:

- *Foundation Document* pages 5 and 6
- Choose at least three Principles to read more about in the *Supplementary Material* (Explanation of all 24 Principles pages 21-94)
- Choose at least three Qualities to read more about in the *Supplementary Material* (Explanation of all 6 Qualities pages 95-108)

Essential: Look over the list of difficult statements in Appendix 2 on page 81 of this *Participant Handbook* and think about what statements you might want to use in the lesson. Choose one specific statement from the following (or your own).

- Statements for Hermeneutical Practice (Beginner/Intermediate) in Appendix 2 on page 81 of this *Participant Handbook*
- Statements for Hermeneutical Practice (Advanced) in Appendix 3 on page 83 of this *Participant Handbook*

Before Lesson 4, please answer as many of the following questions as you can, based on what you read and on your own experience and understanding. Answering these will help solidify your basic knowledge as a foundation for the learning experiences in the lesson. Instructors may or may not check the answers of individual participants.

1. List from memory three Qualities essential for Vaiṣṇava hermeneutics:

2. List from memory, as far as possible, three Principles of Vaiṣṇava hermeneutics:

3. What is the value of hermeneutics to an individual devotee? (See page 4 of *Foundation Document*)

Aims:

1. To enhance participants' appreciation of the importance of hermeneutics, especially by reflecting on underlying principles & values (personal qualities)
2. To familiarize participants with some of the Principles, the concept of using Principles and the role of the 'Six Core Qualities' in understanding *śāstra*

Learning Objectives:

By the end of the lesson, participants should be able to:

1. List, explain and evaluate some of the *Qualities & Principles* underpinning effective ISKCON hermeneutics, supporting them with reference to
    a. śāstric truth, and precedent within the Vaiṣṇava tradition
    b. their own experiences (individual and shared)
2. Begin to evaluate the role of hermeneutics in sustaining the long-term well-being of
    a. individual devotees (with reference to 'fulfilment')
    b. ISKCON as a whole (with reference to 'unity')
    c. the Society's outreach initiatives (with reference to 'relevance')

Meditation for part 1 of this lesson: Qualities:

> *chaya bega domi', chaya doṣa śodhi',*
> *chaya guṇa deho' dāse*
> *chaya sat-saṅga, deho' he āmāre,*
> *boshechi saṅgera āśe*

Translation: Teach me to control my six passions; rectify my six faults, bestow upon me the six qualities, and offer unto me the six kinds of holy association. (*Ohe! Vaiṣṇava Ṭhākura by* Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura)

"Theory and Method Underpinned by Values"

Theory: Principles
Method: Tools
Values: Vaiṣṇava Qualities

Six Core Qualities

As devotees study, understand and discuss śāstric texts, they are expected to model six key Qualities[4]. These are to be considered not in isolation but in tandem with Principles. Although some hermeneutic practices draw selectively on these six Qualities (i.e. on some but not others), it is important that no hermeneutical practice is inconsistent with any one of them. In other words, lack of alignment with a single Quality may undermine the credibility of the corresponding practice. This chart is also in the *Foundation Document* page 5.

Quality	Supporting Values/Conduct
1. Humility and Service Mood	Avoidance of pointless debate or egotistically trying to win an argument; reflection on personal motives; fulfillment and contentment; exemplary conduct.
2. Fidelity to Text and Tradition	Trust in textual authority; respect for the author; acceptance of sacred authority; freedom from offense; loyalty and gratitude to gurus and tradition.
3. Discerning Search for Truth	Ardent curiosity; logical; linguistically analytical; discriminating; thoughtful; interrogates own understanding.
4. Honest and Authentic Conversation	Respect; patience; willingness to listen; comfort with uncertainty/ambiguity; links *śāstra* to life experience; takes responsibility for and articulates own opinions.
5. Openness to Change & Transformation	Introspective; reflective and reflexive; personally detached; intuitive; sensitive to Lord's guidance; consciously applies *śāstra* in own life; love of virtue.
6. Benevolence and Generosity	Assuming of good intention; kind and merciful; charitable; welcomes alternative opinions; happy with plurality and discourse; sincere in outreach.

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[4] These may also be called 'values', 'virtues' or 'character traits'.

Exploration 4.1: Qualities

(This Exploration will be done during the class.)

1. Choose a specific Quality (either one of the main six or one of the sub-qualities). How does the lack of it lead to misunderstandings, splits, divisions, and so forth? (Refer to the previous page in this *Participant Handbook* or *Foundation Document* page 5 for the full list of Qualities)

2. What experiences do you have with the presence of one of these specific Qualities leading to harmony within the devotee community in regard to understanding *śāstra*?

3. When you try to understand *śāstra*, which of these Qualities (you can choose the "main" Quality or a "sub quality") do you find helpful in your personal life?

4. What Qualities would you find most helpful to cultivate in your study of *guru-sādhu-śāstra*?

(This Exploration continues on the next page.)

5. What plan could you make to cultivate these Qualities? You may find it helpful to use the "**Well-formed Plan**" system

Well-formed Plan system: Note that the first two are essential. Only work on the last three after the first two have been established. (The following is an explanation of the process. After the explanation is space for answers.)

A. **Stated in Positives.** "What do I want?" or "What do I want instead of what you have now?" It is helpful if I get an internal picture, and maybe also an internal feeling, of what that outcome would be.
B. **Within the person's control.** "What's within the sphere of my control?" We can only work toward a change that we can initiate and maintain. We should be able to initiate and maintain this change through our own behavior, thoughts, and feelings (thinking, feeling, and willing).
C. **Specific as to time and place.** "With whom do I want this?" "When do I want it?" "When do I not want it?" "In what situation do I want it?"
D. **Specific as to behavior, thoughts, and feelings.** "What would I be doing...thinking...feeling when I get my outcome?" "Would my attention be focused internally or externally, or on what aspect of the situation?"
E. **Harmony with the person's life and other goals.** "What is the price of achieving the outcome?" "How will getting it affect my life?" "Will it cost me anything in my lifestyle or relationships?" "What is stopping me from having already done this?" "What might be the consequences or ramifications?"

Plan to develop a specific Quality that would help in understanding the words of *guru-sādhu-śāstra*:

A. What specific Quality do I want to develop?

B. Is developing that Quality under my control?   **Yes / no**

C. Are there specific circumstances of study and discussion where this Quality would especially help me? If so, what are they?

(This Exploration continues on the next page.)

D. Are there specific circumstances of study and discussion where this Quality would not be appropriate or might cause a problem? If so, what are they?

E. If I were to develop this Quality, how would it specifically manifest in my thoughts?

F. If I were to develop this Quality, how would it specifically manifest in my desires and emotions/feelings?

G. If I were to develop this Quality, how would it specifically manifest in my observable behavior?

H. What are the "costs" of developing this Quality in my study and discussion of the words of *guru-sādhu-śāstra*?

Meditation for part 2 of this lesson: Principles:

hari he!
paratattva vicakṣaṇa, vyāsa-ādi muni-gaṇa,
śāstra vicāriẏā bāra bāra |
prabhu, tava nitẏa-rūpa, guṇa-śīla anurūpa,
tomāra caritra sudhā-sāra

Translation: Oh my Lord! All the great sages headed by Śrīla Vyāsadeva are most experienced regarding the transcendental truth. This is because they discuss and deliberate on the revealed scriptures again and again. Thereby they manifest these sacred books which reveal Your eternal personal form abounding in all virtuous qualities, and Your divine activities which are the essence of ambrosial nectar. (*Gītā-mālā* of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, Chapter 1, Song 3)

"Theory and Method Underpinned by Values"

> Theory: Principles
> Method: Tools
> Values: Vaiṣṇava Qualities

Detailed Principles

The 24 Principles are listed in *Foundation Document* on page 6, and further explained in the *Supplementary Material* on pages 21-94.

In the Supplementary Material one can read evidence showing that these Principles are from the ancient Vedic system of understanding the words of *guru-sādhu-śāstra*. Some of these ancient Principles have been adapted for ISKCON in particular.

Note that in the hermeneutics path that we used in Lesson 2, the second part (in relation to *siddhānta*) involves Principles 7, 8 and 9. These Principles are discussed in detail in the Supplementary Material on pages 54 to 57.

Overarching Principle

In addition to the detailed Principles, for ISKCON hermeneutics, it's important to be familiar with the Overarching Principle: "Understanding tradition through Śrīla Prabhupāda, accepting Śrīla Prabhupāda as the representative and conveyer of the essence of the tradition and *paramparā*, in the most appropriate way for our understanding and application." (*Foundation Document* page 6) This means that we understand both our tradition through the lens of Śrīla Prabhupāda and, at the same time, understand Śrīla Prabhupāda from within the tradition and in relation to the tradition. Taking only one view or the other (something that sometimes happens in ISKCON) either distorts our relationship with Śrīla Prabhupāda or distorts how he views himself and presents himself as serving within a tradition and representing that tradition. In some cases, hermeneutically, we would keep taking one position and then the other, going in a spiral until we reach a balanced understanding.

Śrīla Prabhupāda and the Vaiṣṇava Tradition: A Hermeneutical Circle

By Rādhikā-ramaṇa dāsa

The overarching principle of ISKCON Hermeneutics is that we understand the Vaiṣṇava tradition (the previous *ācāryas* and the *śāstra*) through Śrīla Prabhupāda and we understand Śrīla Prabhupāda through the Vaiṣṇava tradition. At first, this principle can sound like a contradiction, but in fact, it is an excellent example of a 'hermeneutical circle'—a *process* by which we gain deeper understanding of *guru, sādhu*, and *śāstra*. Let us look at the circle more closely.

As members of ISKCON, the basis of our understanding of Kṛṣṇa consciousness comes from Śrīla Prabhupāda, and we always begin with his words, both written and spoken. Śrīla Prabhupāda's teaching are the foundation and parameters by which we understand the Vaiṣṇava tradition. As we read his books deeply, we come see how faithfully and articulately Śrīla Prabhupāda conveyed the teachings of *śāstra* and the previous *ācāryas*. Thus, we are drawn to study the Vaiṣṇava tradition more closely, and by such study, we appreciate Śrīla Prabhupāda's books in a deeper way, recognizing in them things that we may have overlooked earlier. In this way, our faith in Śrīla Prabhupāda's is strengthened even further, and as we dive deeper into his books, they point us to even more facets of our Vaiṣṇava *sampradāya*, leading us to better understand and appreciate the previous *ācāryas*.

In this way, the cycle continues endlessly in a devotee's life. Śrīla Prabhupāda and the Vaiṣṇava tradition work together, deepening the devotee's relationship with Kṛṣṇa. At no point does one diminish the value of the other, nor do we ever leave one behind in favor of the other, as this would distort our understanding of Śrīla Prabhupāda and how he presents himself in relation to the tradition. As we practice hermeneutics, we should take one view and then the other, moving in a spiral, always holding both elements together in our minds and hearts (*sādhu-śāstra-guru-vākya, cittete kariyā aikya*).

Exploration 4.2: Principles

(This Exploration will be done during the class.)

Sample answer for Question 1:

Principle 19: "The highest truth aims at the welfare of all."

Difficult topics that Principle would help resolve:

- The definition of illicit sex
- The role of charity in the life of devotees and in the ISKCON society
- How children in the movement should be educated

Sample answer for Question 2 (with rationale explained):

Difficult statement: Devotees do not have any need for the details of Kṛṣṇa's opulences in the world

Principles that would help to resolve or bring clarity to that statement:

- **Principle 1:** Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the object, purpose and ultimate goal of all śāstric knowledge. (This principle is relevant because the purpose of the statements in *śāstra* about Kṛṣṇa's opulences in the world is to bring us to love for Kṛṣṇa.)
- **Principle 16:** The meaning of *śāstra* is directly revealed to one with full faith in guru, *śāstra*, and Kṛṣṇa. (This Principle is relevant because the meanings and applications of the places in *śāstra* where the details of Kṛṣṇa's opulences in the world are explained need to be revealed, as stated in those same parts of *śāstra*.)
- **Principle 17:** By purifying the senses, *bhakti* removes the conditioning that clouds and distorts perception. (This principle is relevant because when our senses are purified and *bhakti* has removed our conditioning, we will perceive Kṛṣṇa in the world according to *śāstra*)

Question 1: Choose three Principles (*Foundation Document* page 6) and match to difficult topics they could help solve from the list of Topics for Hermeneutical Practice (All Levels) in Appendix 4 on page 95 of this *Participant Handbook*.

a.   The first Principle I chose:

1 to 3 difficult **topics** which that Principle would help to resolve:

b. The second Principle I chose:

[ ]

1 to 3 difficult **topics** which that Principle would help to resolve:

[ ]

c. The third Principle I chose:

[ ]

1 to 3 difficult **topics** which that Principle would help to resolve:

[ ]

Question 2: Choose one difficult statement from the Statements for Hermeneutical Practice (Beginner and Intermediate) in Appendix 2 on page 81 of this *Participant Handbook* **OR** from Statements for Hermeneutical Practice (Advanced) in Appendix 3 on page 83 of this *Participant Handbook*.

Difficult statement:

[ ]

Identify two or three Principles (*Foundation Document* page 6) that would help bring clarity or resolution to the difficulties implied by that statement:

[ ]

Lesson 5: Putting the Principles and Qualities into Action: Hermeneutical Tools

Before Lesson 5, carefully read the following:

- *Foundation Document* pages 7-9
- *Supplementary Material* page 251-253 "In what ways does fidelity to *siddhānta* differ from a creedal approach?"
- *Supplementary Material* pages 204-206 TOOL 24 "*Anubandha-catuṣṭaya*: Four Traditional Context Questions"
- *Supplementary Material* pages 236-244 TOOL 37 "Understand a Statement as a Specific Part of an Argument"
- *Participant Handbook* Lesson 5

Essential: Look over the list of difficult **statements** in Appendix 2 and the list of difficult **topics** in Appendix 4, and think about what statement or topic you might want to use in the lesson. **Choose one statement and one topic in advance of this class.**

- Statements for Hermeneutical Practice (Beginner/Intermediate) in Appendix 2 on page 81 of this *Participant Handbook*. (Strongly advise NOT to use the Advanced Statements in Appendix 3 for this exercise.)
- Topics for Hermeneutical Practice (All Levels) in Appendix 4 on page 95 of this *Participant Handbook*

Before Lesson 5, please answer as many of the following questions as you can, based on what you read and on your own experience and understanding. Answering these will help solidify your basic knowledge as a foundation for the learning experiences in the lesson. Instructors may or may not check the answers of individual participants.

1. Find TOOL 24 in the third part of a hermeneutical path.   I found it: **yes/no**

2. List some hermeneutical Tools I already use:

3. List some hermeneutical Tools that I might want to know more about (*Foundation Document* pages 8-9):

4. Write the name of hermeneutic TOOL 37 (we'll be using Version 3 in this lesson)

5. Write the name of hermeneutic TOOL 24:

Aims:

1. To familiarize participants with a comprehensive list of hermeneutical <u>Tools</u>
   a. as reinforces and extends previous learning
   b. by beginning to apply and evaluate select Tools

Learning Objectives:

By the end of the lesson, participants should be able to:

1. Define what we mean by 'Tool', with mention of related terms (e.g. 'method'/'process')
2. Apply and evaluate some of these Tools in response to concrete needs

Note: In this course, we are focusing particularly on a few hermeneutical Tools. In this lesson, it will be TOOL 37 (Version 3) and TOOL 24. The samples in this lesson are also related to TOOL 5. In "a hermeneutical path" we integrate a lot of hermeneutical Tools, and especially use TOOL 19, referencing *siddhānta*. It is not possible in this course to gain deep familiarity with all 40 of the hermeneutical Tools. However, the use of a hermeneutical path, and familiarity with TOOL 37 and TOOL 24 should provide a good beginning to apply these ancient Vedic Tools to our understanding of *guru-sādhu-śāstra*.

Meditation for this lesson:

> *'dharmādi' viṣaye yaiche e 'cāri' vicāra*
> *sādhana-bhakti-ei cāri vicārera pāra*

Translation: As far as religious principles are concerned, there is a consideration of the person, the country, the time and the circumstance. In devotional service, however, there are no such considerations. Devotional service is transcendental to all such considerations. (spoken by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu in *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya* 25.121)

> *tatropānanda-nāmāha*
> *gopo jñāna-vayo-'dhikaḥ*
> *deśa-kālārtha-tattva-jñaḥ*
> *priya-kṛd rāma-Kṛṣṇayoḥ*

Translation: At this meeting of all the inhabitants of Gokula, a cowherd man named Upananda, who was the most mature in age and knowledge and was very experienced according to time, circumstances and country, made this suggestion for the benefit of Rāma and Kṛṣṇa. (spoken by Śrīla Śukadeva Gosvāmī, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 10.11.22)

tarko 'pratiṣṭhaḥ śrutayo vibhinnā
nāsāv ṛṣir yasya mataṁ na bhinnam
dharmasya tattvaṁ nihitaṁ guhāyāṁ
mahājano yena gataḥ sa panthāḥ

Translation: Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu continued, "Dry arguments are inconclusive. A great personality whose opinion does not differ from others is not considered a great sage. Simply by studying the Vedas, which are variegated, one cannot come to the right path by which religious principles are understood. The solid truth of religious principles is hidden in the heart of an unadulterated, self-realized person. Consequently, as the *śāstras* confirm, one should accept whatever progressive path the *mahājanas* advocate." (spoken by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya* 17.186)

"Theory and Method Underpinned by Values"

> Theory: Principles
> Method: Tools
> Values: Vaiṣṇava Qualities

In a hermeneutical path we used TOOL 19 for the second part, "in relation to *siddhānta*" and in the entirety of the third part. Hermeneutical Tools are what enable the Qualities and Principles to be applied. In the Supplementary Materials are the evidences and explanations showing how the Tools are the ancient Vedic system of understanding the words of *guru-sādhu-śāstra*. Some of these ancient Tools have been adapted for ISKCON specifically.

An example of a difficult statement and hermeneutical Tools that could be used to explain it:

Room Conversation -- January 7, 1977, Bombay (Note: this is not in the appendices)

This should be strictly outlawed—no more *sannyāsīs*. And those *sannyāsīs* who have fallen, you get them married, live like a... No more this showbottle, cheating. It is very ludicrous. Even there is a promise that "We shall not fall down again," that is also not believable. What is the use? Better go and speak philosophy in your *gṛhastha* dress, not this dress, but you have nice coat, pants, gentleman. Who says no? I never said. Rather I shall be glad to see that up-to-date gentleman with *tilaka* and *śikhā* are speaking. That is very, how you say, prestigious everywhere. Why this false dress? What is the wrong to become *gṛhastha*? I was *gṛhastha*, *pakkā* caliber *gṛhastha*. My Guru Mahārāja was *brahmacārī*. Just see his character. Caitanya Mahāprabhu was *gṛhastha*, but when He took *sannyāsa*: "Oh, I am now..." For sober person. That is wanted. That is ideal. He married twice. Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura married twice. Caitanya Mahāprabhu married twice. What is the wrong there? One has to become pure devotee, that's all. Other things, of course, are circumstantially favorable, either a *gṛhastha, brahmacārī* or *vānaprastha* or *sannyāsa*. *Kibā vipra kibā śūdra nyāsī kene naya, yei Kṛṣṇa-tattva-vettā sei 'guru' haya* [*Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya* 8.128]. You must know the science of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. That makes you *guru*, not this dress.

In order to understand what Śrīla Prabhupāda is saying here, we could use the following Qualities: Reflection on personal motives, Assuming good intentions, and Happy with plurality and discourse. (*Foundation Document* page 5). In addition to Principles 7, 8 and 9 regarding *siddhānta*, we could also use the following Principles:

Principle 11: Consideration of context, including historical circumstance, is essential to gaining śāstric insight

Principle 14: Insight emerges through apt dialogue, and through mediation, resolution, or reconciliation of paradox, apparent contradiction and multiple views

Principle 19: The highest truth aims at the welfare of all

In order to apply those Qualities and Principles, we could use the following Tools (*Foundation Document* pages 8-9):

TOOL 13: Look for a Statement of Equal Force or Meaning
TOOL 14: Chronologically later Statements are Often Stronger
TOOL 21: Some of Śrīla Prabhupāda's Statements Have Universal Application, Whereas Others are Applicable in a Particular Context.
TOOL 34: Consider the Mood of the Statement when Understanding the Intention of the Statement
TOOL 36: Consider how Śrīla Prabhupāda Applied his Statements in his Mission

Hermeneutical systems include a "toolbox" for interpreting text. Within ISKCON, the corresponding Tools are not mere techniques. Rather, they are designed to be used alongside the regular practices of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, which purify the mind, senses, and intelligence, and prepare the practitioner to receive Kṛṣṇa's mercy and guidance.

In *Foundation Document* pages 8-9, we list 40 hermeneutical Tools. Certain Tools naturally support particular hermeneutic Principles. However, we may observe that a single Tool may support a number of Principles and certainly should not be inconsistent with any one of them. In the *Supplementary Material* (pages 109-248) are evidences, explanations, and a description of how to use each of these Tools.

It is possible to categorize the Tools in various ways, such as:

1. Discerning between positive and negative types of śāstric conversation
2. Distinguishing various levels of śāstric authority
3. Identifying different genres or types of śāstric text/passage/statement
4. Analysis of the relationship of part to whole and vice-versa.
5. Evaluation using Caitanya Vaiṣṇava *siddhānta* and its 'unchanging truths'.
6. Consideration of context (time, place and person).
7. Evaluation of the multiple and changing meanings of a word, phrase or passage.
8. Respecting and discerning the original intent of the author.
9. Expressing truth in words suitable to the intended reader or listener

For a detailed explanation of each Tool, refer to the *Supplementary Material* pages 109-248.

Difficult Topics: Hermeneutical TOOL 37 (Version 3)

TOOL 37 (*Supplementary Material* page 236) is helpful to use with a difficult **topic.**

viśayaḥ saṁśayaś caiva
pūrva-pakṣas tathottaram
nirṇayaś ceti siddhāntaṁ
śāstre 'dhikaraṇaṁ smṛtam

Translation: First comes the *viśaya* (topic of discussion), followed by *saṁśaya* (doubt), *pūrva-pakṣa* (hearing one side); *uttara-pakṣa* (hearing the other side); deciding in favor of a side (*nirṇayaḥ*) and finally *siddhānta* (conclusive statement). (*Bhāṭṭa-cintāmaṇi* of Śrī Gāgā Bhaṭṭa)

Two Samples using TOOL 37:

Sample Topic "A": Remuneration for the Priests

This sample is to show you how to use the process. It is not indicative of the only conclusion that can be drawn by following this process.

1. ***viṣaya*** – topic: Devotional service should be performed without any motive other than pleasing the Lord

3. ***saṁśaya*** – doubt: Should devotees who work full-time for ISKCON, especially doing activities such as Deity worship, lecturing, sacrifices, and cooking, be financially compensated?

4. ***pūrvapakṣa*** – one viewpoint: Devotees who serve full-time have no time to earn a livelihood elsewhere and should be compensated like remuneration should be given to priests at a yajna

5. ***uttara-pakṣa*** – another viewpoint: Compensating devotees, especially with money, can lead to a mentally of being a professional priest and may hamper the whole spirit of devotee both in the community and for the individual

6. ***nirṇayaḥ*** – deciding in favor of a side: Any sacrifice without remuneration to the priests is in the mode of ignorance and therefore some sort of charity must be offered

7. ***siddhānta*** – conclusion: The mentality of those doing full-time service is that they will serve whether or not or how they are given in charity. The mentality of the leaders and the community is to amply give in charity to those who are dedicated full-time to devotional service and to Śrīla Prabhupāda's mission

Sample Topic "B": *Ahiṁsā* Milk

This sample is to show you how to use the process. It is not indicative of the only conclusion that can be drawn by following this process.

1. ***viṣaya*** – topic: Kṛṣṇa is known as Gopāla and Govinda and should be offered cows' milk and various dairy products

8. ***saṁśaya*** – doubt: If we offer Kṛṣṇa milk from commercial dairies that harm and kill cows, how can our support of those dairies be pleasing to Kṛṣṇa?

9. ***pūrvapakṣa*** - one viewpoint: Using milk from commercial dairies supports sinful activities and removes the impetus for us to protect our own cows so we should not offer such milk

10. ***uttara-pakṣa*** –another viewpoint: It's better to offer commercial milk than to offer no milk at all. The cows are benefitted, Kṛṣṇa gets milk, and devotees get a balanced diet

11. ***nirṇayaḥ*** – deciding in favor of a side: Śrīla Prabhupāda offered Kṛṣṇa milk from commercial dairies and said that milk is essential both for offering to Kṛṣṇa and for devotees' health

12. ***siddhānta***– conclusion: All official ISKCON centers should have plans to phase out milk products from commercial dairies and switch to milk from *ahiṁsā* dairies, whether run by devotees or non-devotees. In doing so, there can be levels of *ahiṁsā* milk that are phased in

Difficult Statements: Hermeneutical TOOL 24

TOOL 24 (*Supplementary Material* page 204) is helpful to use with a difficult **statement:**

1. **Who** is it for and what are the qualifications of the intended audience? (*adhikāra*)

13. **What** is it about? (*abhidheya* or *viṣaya*)

14. **Why?** (what is it for?) (*prayojana* or *phala*)

15. **How** does it go about teaching what it teaches? (*sambandha*, i.e. what is the relationship between the subject of the text and the text itself)

Two Samples using TOOL 24: Four Traditional Context Questions

Sample Statement "A": Worship Work Itself

This sample is to show you how to use the process. It is not indicative of the only conclusion that can be drawn by following this process.

Translation: Because it is karma that causes the conditioned living entity to accept and then give up different high-and low-grade material bodies, this karma is his enemy, friend and neutral witness, his spiritual master and controlling lord. Therefore one should seriously worship work itself. A person should remain in the position corresponding to his nature and should perform his own duty. Indeed, that by which we may live nicely is really our worshipable deity. (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 10.24.17 – 18)

1. **Who** is it for and what are the qualifications of the intended audience? (*adhikāra*)

It is for Nanda and the other cowherd men. They are certainly qualified to receive the highest knowledge of *prema bhakti*. On the other hand, their relationship with Kṛṣṇa in *yogamāyā* gives them another type of *adhikāra* where they have a sort of simplicity.

2. **What** is it about? (*abhidheya* or *viṣaya*)

It is about stopping the worship of Indra.

3. **Why?** (what is it for?) (*prayojana* or *phala*)

The fruit is to stop demigod worship and have the residents of Vṛndāvana worship Vṛndāvana, and specifically Govardhana, by seeing the *dhāma* as Kṛṣṇa Himself.

4. **How** does it go about teaching what it teaches? (*sambandha*, i.e. what is the relationship between the subject of the text and the text itself)

It goes about teaching in a very unusual way by denigrating the highest philosophy and instead apparently teaching something atheistic. It is not direct teaching but indirect and hidden. The relationship between the overall text—the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*—and these specific verses is also unusual as the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* throws out all cheating religion but these texts at face value are propounding atheism. The texts do, however, lead to the highest purpose of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* as they bring the residents of Vṛndāvana directly to the worship of Kṛṣṇa and of Govardhana Hill. So, they are in accord with the purpose of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* while seeming to contradict it.

<u>Sample Statement "B": Untrustworthy Women</u>

This sample is to show you how to use the process. It is not indicative of the only conclusion that can be drawn by following this process.

Translation: The Supreme Personality of Godhead, in the form of Mohinī, told the demons: O sons of Kaśyapa Muni, I am only a prostitute. How is it that you have so much faith in Me? A learned person never puts his faith in a woman. O demons, as monkeys, jackals and dogs are unsteady in their sexual relationships and want newer and newer friends every day, women who live independently seek new friends daily. Friendship with such a woman is never permanent. This is the opinion of learned scholars. (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 8.9.9-10)

1. **Who** is it for and what are the qualifications of the intended audience? (*adhikāra*)

It is for the demons whose qualifications are lust, envy, pride, arrogance, and deceit.

2. **What** is it about? (*abhidheya* or *viṣaya*)

It is about the untrustworthiness of unchaste women and about the distribution of the nectar from the milk ocean.

3. **Why**? (what is it for?) (*prayojana* or *phala*)

It is to bewilder the demons so they will, paradoxically, trust her more, in fact, completely.

4. **How** does it go about teaching what it teaches? (*sambandha*, i.e. what is the relationship between the subject of the text and the text itself)

Mohinī did intend to cheat the demons and she is revealing in truthfulness that she will do so. However, it is presented so that the demons will think it is sarcastic and trust her even more than they would have otherwise. It is teaching about the psychology of demoniac beings, rather than teaching about the nature of women.

Note that both of the above sample analyses are also related to TOOL 5: Some Statements in *Śāstra* are Intentionally Delusive or Obscure, While Others are Direct, found in *Supplementary Material* pages 126-128.

Exploration 5.1: Using Our Hermeneutical Tools

(This Exploration will be done during the class.)

Choose *either* a difficult topic (**Choice #1**) *or* a difficult statement (**Choice #2**).

Choice #1 -- TOOL 37: Choose a difficult **topic** from (You could also choose your own topic.) Then use TOOL 37:

> Write the **topic** in the box for #1. Then think of a very specific related doubt that is a subset of that topic. For example, for the topic, "How to deal with mental illness," a doubt could be one of the following: Should devotees with mental illness take psychotropic medicines? Should devotees with mental illness be treated only with practices of Kṛṣṇa consciousness? Then write both one viewpoint and another viewpoint. (If you are able in the time available for this exercise to quote any śāstric references for each of your viewpoints, that is excellent. If this were "real" hermeneutics, one would be quoting śāstric references, but for this exercise, there may not be time.)

Then, pick one of the sides. Finally, draw a conclusion. See the

1. ***viṣaya*** – topic:	
2. ***saṁśaya*** – doubt:	
3. ***pūrvapakṣa*** – one viewpoint:	
4. ***uttara-pakṣa*** – another viewpoint:	
5. ***nirṇayaḥ*** –deciding in favor of a side:	
6. ***siddhānta*** – conclusion:	

Now, look through the list of Qualities and Principles in *Foundation Document* pages 5 and 6, and list necessary or helpful ones that underlie the proper use of TOOL 37 for this topic.

OR

Choice #2 -- TOOL 24: Choose a difficult **statement** from <u>Appendix 2</u> on page 81.

Then, use TOOL 24 in this table:

<u>Who</u> is it for and what are the qualifications of the intended audience? (*adhikāra*)	
<u>What</u> is it about? (*abhidheya* or *viṣaya*)	
<u>Why?</u> (what is it for?) (*prayojana* or *phala*)	
<u>How</u> does it go about teaching what it teaches? (*sambandha*, i.e. what is the relationship between the subject of the text and the text itself)	

Now, look through the list of Qualities and Principles in *Foundation Document* pages 5 and 6, and list necessary or helpful ones that underlie the proper use of TOOL 24 for this statement.

Lesson 6: Doubts and Uncertainty Among Devotees

Before Lesson 6, carefully read the following:

- *Participant Handbook* Lesson 6
- *Supplementary Material* pages 68-73: Principle 14, "Insight emerges through apt dialogue, and through mediation, resolution, or reconciliation of paradox, apparent contradiction, and multiple views."

Essential: Look over the list of difficult statements in Appendix 2 and Appendix 3, and think about what statements you might want to use in the lesson. **Choose one statement in advance of this class.**

- Statements for Hermeneutical Practice (Beginner/Intermediate) in Appendix 2 on page 81
- Statements for Hermeneutical Practice (Advanced) in Appendix 3 on page 83

Before Lesson 6, please answer as many of the following questions as you can, based on what you read and on your own experience and understanding. Answering these will help solidify your basic knowledge as a foundation for the learning experiences in the lesson. Instructors may or may not check the answers of individual participants.

1. How does Principle 14, "Insight emerges through apt dialogue, and through mediation, resolution, or reconciliation of paradox, apparent contradiction, and multiple views" help with difficult statements or topics when there is no easy answer or seemingly multiple, conflicting views?

2. What is the value of hermeneutics to the devotee society?
   (*Foundation Document* page 4)

Aims:

1. To help participants faithfully and thoughtfully <u>understand *śāstra*</u>, especially by dealing with uncertainty, as linked to
   a. difficult śāstric statements, that is, those that may raise some doubts about the authenticity of śāstric authority, or which make us feel uneasy in some way
   b. perceived ambiguity or inconsistency
2. Specifically, to help participants develop patience and comfort with constructive uncertainty

Learning Objectives:

By the end of the lesson, participants should be able to:

1. Further identify and classify śāstric statements that may promote uncertainty, and especially which
   a. they *personally* have difficulty accepting
   b. may appear ambiguous or inconsistent
2. Identify ways to deal with such doubts or apprehensions, with reference to our emerging hermeneutical framework, especially our
   a. Qualities & Principles
   b. Tools
3. Evaluate and explain various responses to uncertainty, with reference to
   a. types of uncertainty (e.g. desirable or undesirable)
   b. individual psychological disposition (and personal experience)
   c. our Qualities & Principles

Meditation for this lesson:

> *etan me saṁśayaṁ Kṛṣṇa*
> *chettum arhasy aśeṣataḥ*
> *tvad-anyaḥ saṁśayasyāsya*
> *chettā na hy upapadyate*

Translation: This is my doubt, O Kṛṣṇa, and I ask You to dispel it completely. But for You, no one is to be found who can destroy this doubt. (spoken by Arjuna, *Bhagavad-gītā* 6.39)

> *āpta-kāmo yadu-patiḥ*
> *kṛtavān vai jugupsitam*
> *kim-abhiprāya etan naḥ*
> *saṁśayaṁ chindhi su-vrata*

Translation: O faithful upholder of vows, please destroy our doubt by explaining to us what purpose the self-satisfied Lord of the Yadus had in mind when He behaved so contemptibly. (spoken by Parīkṣit Mahārāja, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 10.33.28)

"Theory and Method Underpinned by Values"

Theory: Principles
Method: Tools
Values: Vaiṣṇava Qualities

Please note that some of this material is here as background reading for the lesson and may not be discussed in the lesson itself.

Ways of Dealing with Difficult Śāstric Statements

Hermeneutical Qualities, Principles, and Tools are useful for explaining every statement from *guru-sādhu-śāstra*, but especially when such statement seem contentious, controversial, or difficult in some way. Sometimes using hermeneutics gives us one "correct" explanation. More often this ancient Vedic theory and method underpinned by values results in creating a boundary within which statements from *guru-sādhu-śāstra* can be understood "from many angles of vision."[5] Outside of that boundary are explanations that oppose the meaning and intention of the statement itself.

Even for those accomplished in hermeneutic analysis, what to speak of for those just learning, sometimes a resolution or understanding seems elusive. Such may be the case for several reasons. The most likely reason is that our personal state of consciousness may be lacking. On the first part of a hermeneutical path, one examines such questions as our daily habits and practices, our motives and biases, our current state of mind, our willingness for transformation, and our current spiritual qualification in relation to what we are trying to understand. Other reasons can include using hermeneutical Tools that are inappropriate for the specific statement. Finally, we may have some particular attachment to finding one "right" answer or finding an answer to which "everyone will agree" and feel some discomfort with the plurality that often exists within a hermeneutic boundary.

The following are ways of dealing with doubts about śāstric statements that we may have difficulty in fully accepting. We might be careful to acknowledge some difference between *guru, sādhu and śāstra*. You may notice that some of these ways are directly related to specific traditional hermeneutical Qualities, Principles and Tools and some are good practices in general.

1. Be patient and wait for an answer to be revealed.
2. Pray for guidance.
3. Meditate on, and clearly articulate, the doubt, and <u>why</u> it is troubling us (and write this down).
4. Search inwardly for an *anartha* that may be blocking our understanding (e.g. in the case of statement *we don't like,* perhaps because it challenges our own interests or conception of ourselves and of life.
5. Seek advice from a senior devotee.
6. Reflect on how one's previous misunderstandings have been cleared up as time passes.
7. Consider whether the textual statement is universally true or contingent on the specific context.
8. Consider for whom the text or statement is intended (it may not apply to you, for example).

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[5] Our Kṛṣṇa philosophy is so luxurious that you can explain the same idea from many many angles of vision and thus relish the Truth in this way and help others to increase their understanding. So try in this way, following the example I have set for writing, and that standard as laid down by the Goswamins and all big big acharyas in our line, and that way you will be sure to do very nicely. (letter to Hayagriva Jan 18, 1972)

9. In the case of an apparent paradox, consider how there may be a third solution e.g. a way that apparently conflicting ideas can be resolved (as in the philosophy of *acintya-bhedābheda-tattva*)
10. Consider the genre of writing (for example, numbers that seem to exaggerate may not be literal expressions but true poetically (e.g. expressions of appreciation and love).
11. Ask whether the statement might indeed be untrue, or a partial truth (in the case of an explanation by a less advanced *sādhu*).
12. Consider whether the writer or speaker is a devotee in good standing; failure to meet that criterion does not, however, by itself discredit the statement, but it may be treated with skepticism.
13. Consider that great souls may have differing opinions (but that they are still qualified, just as qualified doctors may sometimes differ in their medical opinions).
14. Ask whether an opinion (backed by a devotee or many devotees, and even if apparently supported by *śāstra*) represents a correct understanding of the text and is actually consistent with *siddhānta*.
15. Consider whether differences refer to context-relevant details or enduring principles.
16. If a teaching leans heavily toward one point of view but seems to neglect others, ask whether this was strategic (relevant to the historical context).
17. Consider how this one statement is complemented by others, which may qualify its apparent meaning when considered in isolation.

Responding to Doubt, Change and Uncertainty

A key element of hermeneutics, within religious traditions especially, is willingness and ability to respond to change. Not only to respond but to respond appropriately i.e. to ensure the authentic continuity of tradition and scriptural meaning. Below, we discuss related subjects, which are classified according to the three impact areas, namely

1. the individual devotee
2. ISKCON and its communities
3. wider society.

In this course, we pay most attention to our personal disposition and qualification.

The Individual: Psychological Disposition
1. A person's privileging a particular hermeneutical approach is intimately linked to his/her psychological disposition and the human quest for certainty (either well or poorly placed).
2. Without hermeneutical discourse, it's easier to maintain immature or erroneous approaches (in other words, we may not acknowledge shortcomings in our 'tacit' approaches).
3. Key questions are, "In what ways is the desire for certainty appropriate; in what ways inappropriate?" "In what ways is apprehension of change well or poorly justified?"
4. Certainty may be appropriate in the case of:
    a. one's trust in *śāstra*, to the extent that one is able to question and explore without losing faith
    b. one's trust in the unchanging self, which must negotiate life's vicissitudes

5. A sense of newness, mystery and adventure are essential to a personal spiritual philosophy. Spirit may be eternal and unchanging, but it is not static.

6. Some devotees may have a desire for 'foreclosure', to close down conversation, especially if it makes them vulnerable or otherwise uncomfortable. They may think, 'I already know the answer; my option and that of *śāstra* are precisely the same, so why do we need to discuss this further?'

7. At the same time, other devotees may have insufficient respect for śāstric authority, unduly privileging their own understanding, and too readily sacrificing principles (not just details).

8. Responding to change highlights the need to maintain one's virtues during śāstric conversation and to avoid, say, simply wishing to 'win the argument'.

ISKCON: Social and Managerial Influences

1. Naturally, managerial decisions should be consistent with Śrīla Prabhupāda's teachings. However, śāstric truth can be misappropriated (as elsewhere) to fulfil managerial imperatives, including personal and economic (e.g. through the adoption and perpetuation of slogans).

2. There are questions for managers, linked to our 'three leadership functions[6]', and especially the need to ensure that the Society's ethos, purpose and policies are measured and reviewed in the light of Śrīla Prabhupāda's teachings.

3. We might also consider the third leadership function, namely to ensure the appropriate perpetuation of tradition. In this endeavor, one may need to ask, "What is it that constitutes ISKCON's unchanging core?" For example, is it literally Śrīla Prabhupāda's words or the meaning he is trying to convey? The following purport may be relevant:

> [T]he most perfectly liberated soul, Śrīla Śukadeva Gosvāmī, is absorbed in the studies of the *Bhāgavatam* although he is already self-realized. Śrīla Sūta Gosvāmī is following his footsteps, and therefore his position is not the least less important because he was not expert in chanting Vedic *mantras* with metric pronunciation, which depends more on practice than actual realization. Realization is more important than parrotlike chanting. (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.4.13 purport)

The Wider World: Social and Historical Change

1. ISKCON was founded during the hippie counterculture, in which many people warmly embraced alternative, often Indian, forms of spirituality. The current social context and ethical climate are radically different.

2. We live in an era in which previous conduct is harshly judged by today's populist norms, which favor human rights and blunt and questionable notions of equality. Some of Śrīla Prabhupāda's statements feel untenable against these norms (which often neglect reflexivity and adequate consideration of context).

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[6] These three leadership functions are: maintain organizational purpose; support authentic brahminical dialogue, and ensure the continuity of paramparā. See *Foundation Document*, p 4:

Doubt, Change and Uncertainty: Evidence from Tradition

1. Vaiṣṇava dāsa Bābājī suggests to chant for some time in order to resolve doubts (*Jaiva-dharma*, Chapter 4)

2. Śrīla Prabhupāda had doubts (or, we might say, 'engaged in hermeneutical conversation') on witnessing Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta order a snake to be killed:

   > Sometimes Abhay would go to see him at the Caitanya Math, at the birthplace of Lord Caitanya in Mayapur. One day at the Caitanya Math, Abhay was in the courtyard when a large poisonous snake crawled out in front of him. Abhay called out for his Godbrothers, but when they came everyone simply stood looking, uncertain what to do. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta came out on the veranda of the second floor, glanced down, saw the snake, and immediately ordered, "Kill it." A boy then took a large stick and killed the snake.

   > Śrīla Prabhupāda: So I thought, "How is it that Guru Maharaja ordered the snake to be killed?" I was a little surprised, but later on I saw this verse, and then I was very glad*: Modeta sādhur api vṛścika-sarpa-hatyā* (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 7.9.14) "Even saintly persons take pleasure in the killing of a scorpion or a snake." It had remained a doubt, how Guru Maharaja ordered the snake to be killed, but when I read this verse I was very much pleased that this creature or creatures like the snake should not be shown any mercy." *Śrīla Prabhupāda-līlāmṛta,* Chapter 4 entitled "How Shall I Serve You?"

3. When an organism stops responding to its environment, it dies. Similarly, when a living tradition refuses to adapt, it may die. B.K. Matilal (2002: 253)[7] has asserted that "A culture that does not react and change with time is as good as a dead one, or it is dying or at best it maintains a fossilized form of existence, fit to be turned into a museum piece."

4. There are significant questions about how much—if at all—and in which ways, the *paramparā* stops after Śrīla Prabhupāda. Seen through a hermeneutical lens, there may be a leaning towards stopping the hermeneutical process, sometimes in (apparently) acknowledging the primacy of Śrīla Prabhupāda's books.

5. One clear example is the refusal to acknowledge any books published after a certain date (possible underpinned by a notion of continuity that refers only to the words themselves, rather than their meaning as meaning changes with time, and may therefore diverge from the author's original meaning and intent).

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[7] Matilal, B. K. (2002b) "Karma and Renunciation" in Jonardon Ganeri (2002*) The Collected Essays of Bimal Krishna Matilal (Volume 2): Ethics and Epics,* 123-125. Oxford: Oxford University Press p 253

Exploration 6.1: Responding to Uncertainty

(This Exploration will be done during the class.)

Your instructor may choose one of the following, or may have participants choose one:

Choice #1 -- Individual: Choose a difficult **statement** or **topic** that you have not been able to resolve **or** choose one that took years for you to resolve. Identify what Qualities, Principles, and Tools are involved in dealing with such situations.

Qualities:

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Principles:

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Tools:

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Choice #2 -- Individual or group: Choose a difficult **statement** or **topic** where you may personally find resolution but that is a source of conflict in the devotee community with little hope of resolution. It's best if this is one of the **topics** from Appendix 4 (page 95) or something similar. Identify what Qualities, Principles, and Tools might help in this situation.

Qualities:

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Principles:

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Tools:

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Exploration 6.2: 'Responding to Uncertainty' Role Play

(This Exploration will be done during the class.)

Participants: There are four of you in each team. Please produce and perform a role play of just 2 minutes in length. You have about ten minutes to prepare. The purpose is: "To help us respond more effectively to doubt, ambiguity or uncertainty." **We are not trying to come up with a perfect answer in this role play, but to demonstrate how we can respond when there is more than one answer and "many angles of vision."**

The Team

First, please appoint each member to one of four roles:

1. Team leader/coordinator (optional; use if there are four people in each group)
2. Bhakti Śāstrī dāsa/dāsī, who reads out loud the 'difficult' śāstric passage.
3. Doubting Thomas, who responds to the passage
4. Mr. Herman U. Tix, who responds to Thomas

The Task

1. During your preparation for this lesson, each of your group members chose a difficult statement from Appendix 2 (page 81) or Appendix 3 (page 83). Within your group, quickly decide which one of your statements you will use for this exercise.
2. Decide (and write down) how Thomas might respond (i.e. in a somewhat negative way, doubting the authority of the statement or otherwise expressing discomfort or uncertainty).
3. Next, consider (and write down) how Herman might respond more positively. He (or she) **should refer to at least (a) one of our Tools and (b) one of our six Qualities.** The response should avoid being one that could be made without reference to hermeneutics.
4. Optionally, extend the conversation, i.e. initially with another response from Thomas and then further good advice from Herman.

The Role Play
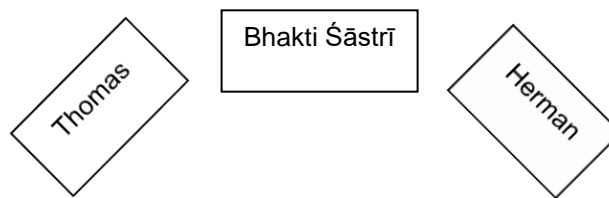
You have just two minutes. The leader directs everything. Please have fun but keep the mood reasonably sober, as suits our subject.

All three players should sit or stand (as you prefer) in the middle, facing the audience.

OR, if online, all other class members should turn off their video cameras as well as their microphones.

1. Bhakti Śāstrī reads out the śāstric passage (loudly and clearly)
2. Thomas responds (speaking to Bhakti Śāstrī)
3. Herman gives his/her advice (also speaking to Bhakti Śāstrī)
4. Continue (if time allows)

Lesson 7: Beyond the Devotee Community--Outreach on Difficult Points

Before Lesson 7, carefully read the following:

- *Participant Handbook Lesson 7*
- The three Explorations (just read them. We will do them during the class.)

Essential: Look over the list of difficult **statements** in Appendix 2 (page 81) and the list of difficult **topics** in Appendix 4 (page 95), and think about what statements you might want to use in the lesson. You might want to choose **two** specific ones in advance

- ▪ Statements for Hermeneutical Practice (Beginner/Intermediate) in Appendix 2 (page 81)
- ▪ Topics for Hermeneutical Practice (All Levels) in Appendix 4 (page 95)

Before Lesson 7, please answer as many of the following questions as you can, based on what you read and on your own experience and understanding. Answering these will help solidify your basic knowledge as a foundation for the learning experiences in the lesson. Instructors may or may not check the answers of individual participants.

1. What are the two main types of doubt we are likely to encounter in outreach when we present Kṛṣṇa consciousness to those who are new to the tradition? (*Participant Handbook* page 60)

2. What is the value of hermeneutics in terms of outreach? (*Foundation Document* page 4)

Aims:

1. To help participants effectively <u>convey meaning</u>, especially through
   a. teaching and outreach
   b. consideration of context, language, and relevance
2. To help participants constructively deal with the passages in Śrīla Prabhupāda's books that may appear unacceptable to 'outsiders'
3. To underline the importance of developing an ISKCON hermeneutics

Learning Objectives:

By the end of the lesson, participants should be able to:

1. Describe how changing ideas of truth (empirical and social) affect the public's reaction to śāstric statements
2. Identify hermeneutic Qualities, Principles and Tools that would be useful in teaching about a specific difficult statement
3. Propose a plan whereby hermeneutics can be used to help ISKCON's outreach

Meditation for this lesson:

naivodvije para duratyaya-vaitaraṇyās
tvad-vīrya-gāyana-mahāmṛta-magna-cittaḥ
śoce tato vimukha-cetasa indriyārtha-
māyā-sukhāya bharam udvahato vimūḍhān

Translation: O best of the great personalities, I am not at all afraid of material existence, for wherever I stay I am fully absorbed in thoughts of Your glories and activities. My concern is only for the fools and rascals who are making elaborate plans for material happiness and maintaining their families, societies and countries. I am simply concerned with love for them. (spoken by Prahlāda Mahārāja, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 7.9.43)

loko vikarma-nirataḥ kuśale pramattaḥ
karmaṇy ayaṁ tvad-udite bhavad-arcane sve
yas tāvad asya balavān iha jīvitāśāṁ
sadyaś chinatty animiṣāya namo 'stu tasmai

Translation: People in general all engage in foolish acts, not in the really beneficial activities enunciated directly by You for their guidance. As long as their tendency for foolish work remains powerful, all their plans in the struggle for existence will be cut to pieces. I therefore offer my obeisances unto Him who acts as eternal time. (spoken by Lord Brahmā, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 3.9.17)

atha cainaṁ nitya-jātaṁ
nityaṁ vā manyase mṛtam
tathāpi tvaṁ mahā-bāho
nainaṁ śocitum arhasi

Translation: If, however, you think that the soul [or the symptoms of life] is always born and dies forever, you still have no reason to lament, O mighty-armed. (spoken by Lord Kṛṣṇa, *Bhagavad-gītā* 2.26)

Note: the last verse for meditation is included as it shows the Lord adjusting His instruction for those who do not believe in the soul.

"Theory and Method Underpinned by Values"

Theory: Principles
Method: Tools
Values: Vaiṣṇava Qualities

Hermeneutics and Outreach

Non-devotee responses to *śāstra*, and doubts about śāstric authority, may sometimes be attributed to a lack of faith and other negative traits (or 'vices') such as envy. However, devotees should not neglect to acknowledge that

1. Devotees may also have doubts
2. Doubt can be a sign of intelligence ("Doubt is one of the important functions of intelligence; blind acceptance of something does not give evidence of intelligence." purport *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 3.26.30)
3. Answering such doubts is an essential part of outreach processes

Appendix 6 (page 98) lists fifteen ways in which someone could consider śāstric statements controversial or difficult. All fifteen ways could be grouped into these two categories, or types of doubt, where someone interprets statements as either or both:

1. <u>Cognitively flawed</u> e.g. are contradictory or otherwise seem not to make sense[8]
2. <u>Morally reprehensible</u>

The latter phenomenon is especially pertinent in the contemporary world. At least populist ethical thought harshly judges historical conduct by today's largely uncontested moral standards, and attendant notions of equality and human rights. Although issues related to equality (according to race, gender, etc.) were opened up for discussion in the 1960s, the conversation has since been largely closed down; hence if one considers men and women different (even biologically) one may be labelled as 'sexist'. We may benefit from awareness of such social trends. We can keep in mind that, while certain statements in *śāstra* seem wrong today (in factual and/or moral terms), some śāstric statements that seemed wrong previously are now accepted as what is "true" in society changes.

ISKCON outreach is linked to *śāstra*, directly or indirectly. Some involves teaching, as discussed on the previous page. Furthermore, outreach usually takes place in an environment radically different from that in which Kṛṣṇa consciousness was historically nurtured. It is in these situations, calling for cross-cultural dialogue and consideration of a different context, that hermeneutics is especially important.

The main tension appears to be between (1) fundamentalism or fanaticism, and (2) unwarranted compromise or 'diluting he message'. Hermeneutics is often presented as an antidote to both religious and secular fundamentalism[9] (Zimmerman 2015: 131)[10].

Some areas to consider after completing this course are: "What constitutes effective and ineffective outreach?" and "How are these underpinned by hermeneutics?" Alternatively, we might ask, "How can we concretely apply what we have learned in this course to improve outreach?"

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[8] Here, there may be two main sub-categories, linked to (a) logic (b) epistemology. These are often intimately connected, as with those who consider reason the main guiding principle for all moral and ontological questions.

[9] The former accepts revelation but discounts other forms of knowing and the exercise of personal autonomy. The latter accepts human rational but rejects revealed knowledge and ecclesiastical authority.

[10] Zimmermann, Jens (2015) *Hermeneutics: A Very Short Introduction,* Oxford: Oxford University Press page 131.

Exploration 7.1: Changing "Truth"

(These questions will be done during the class.)

Question #1: List 3-5 statements, topics, or practices which meet all three of the following conditions:

1. It is a statement, topic, or practice found in *śāstra* and Śrīla Prabhupāda's teachings.
2. In 1966-1977, public opinion commonly saw this as "wrong" i.e. cognitively flawed or morally reprehensible.
3. Today public opinion sees this as "true" or "acceptable."

Question #2: List 3-5 statements, topics, or practices which meet all three of the following conditions:

1. It is a statement, topic, or practice found in *śāstra* and Śrīla Prabhupāda's teachings.
2. In 1966-1977, public opinion commonly saw this as "true" or "acceptable".
3. Today public opinion sees this as "wrong" i.e. cognitively flawed or morally reprehensible.

Question #3: List 3-5 statements, topics, or practices which meet all three of the following conditions:

1. It is a statement, topic, or practice found in *śāstra* and Śrīla Prabhupāda's teachings.
2. In 1896-1925 (when Śrīla Prabhupāda was growing up), public opinion commonly saw this as "true" or "acceptable".
3. Today public opinion sees this as "wrong" i.e. cognitively flawed or morally reprehensible.

Addressing Difficult Statements: A Practical Method

By Rādhikā-ramaṇa dāsa

When we are faced with a difficult statement made by *śāstra* or guru, here is a simple 5-step method we can use to address the concern. These steps are written with a general audience in mind, but they can be modified for other audiences, or even for application in our own life.

1. **Acknowledge the problem and the challenge that the statement poses to the tradition. Perhaps also show how an *ācārya* or *śāstra* was also concerned about this problem.**

   The first step is to listen attentively to the questioner's concern and demonstrate that you (and even the tradition) share the concern. This changes the dynamic from adversarial to collaborative: "We are on the same team here." If you can, demonstrate that the tradition is self-critical, that it recognizes the risk of misinterpretation and the potential problem the questioner has raised. This can be done for most issues, even when they are "modern" problems. For example, the Vaiṣṇava *ācāryas* (including Śrīla Prabhupāda) have demonstrated great concern about the misapplication of *varṇāśrama* as the caste system based on birth.

2. **State clearly that you (and the tradition) do not condone using the difficult statement to oppress or discriminate against any person. Every living being has the same capacity to achieve the highest perfection.**

   While engaging in detailed śāstric discussions, the most important point can sometimes be lost on our audience, namely, that no śāstric statement should be used to commit harm to another living being. That would be a misapplication of the statements of *guru*, *sādhu*, and *śāstra*, since they all work for the ultimate good of all persons. As Vaiṣṇavas, we cultivate compassion toward every being and we work to relieve them of their suffering. This concern is at the heart of most debates about difficult statements, and so it is crucial to state it simply and clearly at the outset.

3. **Explain that**
   a. **scripture and guru often reflect and respond to particular historical circumstances**
   b. **the eternal principles of *siddhānta* are beyond those historical circumstances**

   To make your point, give an example of how *śāstra* makes very different statements on the same topic, depending on the context.

   Acknowledging the historical circumstances (in which the statement was made) is one of the most important hermeneutical tools to address difficult statements. *Guru* and *śāstra* often say different (even opposing) things depending on the time, place, circumstance, audience, and social situation. Pointing to such different statements helps the audience understand that the statement may not be eternal *siddhānta* but only a contextual application of *siddhānta* or a statement that indirectly supports *siddhānta*. (This is Part Two of the hermeneutical path.) Nevertheless, despite the opposing statements sometimes found in *śāstra*, the underlying siddhāntic principles always remain the same.

4. **Provide an example of the proper application of the statement (or the principle behind it) from *śāstra*, Śrīla Prabhupāda's life, or the lives of previous *ācāryas*.**

One of the rinciples of ISKCON hermeneutics is to always understand Śrīla Prabhupāda's statements (and the statements of *śāstra*) in relation to his mood and mission. Although Śrīla Prabhupāda made some challenging statements, he consistently demonstrated through his life and actions how a Vaiṣṇava mercifully provides everyone the opportunity to attain perfection. Thus, he showed flexibility in applying *siddhānta* based on the many contexts he was working in. The same is true of the previous *ācāryas* and the great Vaiṣṇavas described in *śāstra*.

5. **Conclude with humility, acknowledging the importance of properly applying the principles of *śāstra* and the need to practice those principles in our lives as we strive to become genuine Vaiṣṇavas.**

Humility and honesty are cardinal virtues of a Vaiṣṇava and key qualities for practicing hermeneutics. When we show by example that arriving at the truth is a process that takes sincere effort, and that we do not know everything, it touches the hearts of those we are addressing. There is, of course, the possibility that the questioner has no desire to understand but merely to aggravate, and in that case we need not engage further.

Exploration 7.2: Teaching and Outreach

(This Exploration will be done during the class.)

1. Identify target audience (For example, age, marital status, nationality, religion, occupation, education level, familiarity with Kṛṣṇa consciousness, gender, and so forth)
2. Identify demographic of devotee who is explaining or teaching (One could choose oneself or a theoretical other person)
3. Identify difficult statement or topic. Choose from Appendix 2 (page 81), Appendix 3 (page 83), Appendix 4 (page 95) or use your own
4. What Qualities, Principles and Tools would be most effective? Simply write a list from each
5. If possible, suggest a way of presenting that topic/statement that would use those Qualities, Principles, and Tools

Describe the audience to whom one is presenting Kṛṣṇa consciousness	
Describe the person who is presenting Kṛṣṇa consciousness (can be oneself)	
Write a difficult statement or topic one will be addressing to the "audience" (from Appendix 2, Appendix 3, or Appendix 4)	
List Qualities (use main Qualities and/or sub-qualities) of those doing hermeneutics that would be useful in this situation (*Foundation Document* page 5)	
List hermeneutical Principles that would be useful in this situation (*Foundation Document* page 6)	
List hermeneutical Tools that would be useful in this situation (*Foundation Document* pages 8-9)	
If possible, suggest a possible way of presenting that difficult topic/statement to the audience that would use those Qualities, Principles, and Tools	

Exploration 7.3: Teaching and Outreach Plan

(These questions will be done during the class.)

What steps could we take to use hermeneutics for teaching and outreach? (Use the "Well-formed Plan" model found on page 34 in this *Participant Handbook*)

1. Stated in positives (What we could do, instead of what we would like not to do)

2. Is this under my control (or the control of the group, if done as a group)? **Yes / No**

3. Specific behavior that we could do in the next month

4. What would be the "costs" if any, of this plan?

Lesson 8: Assessment: Putting it All Together

Before Lesson 8: If your class for Lesson 8 is directly after Lesson 7, carefully read over this lesson before the class.

OR

If you have a half-day or more between Lesson 7 and Lesson 8, complete **all** of the Lesson 8 self-assessment before the class. For question #1 complete **all** three sections A, B, and C

Meditation for this lesson:

agne naya supathā rāye asmān
viśvāni deva vayunāni vidvan
yuyodhy asmaj juhurāṇam eno
bhūyiṣṭhāṁ te nama-uktiṁ vidhema

Translation: O my Lord, as powerful as fire, O omnipotent one, now I offer You all obeisances, falling on the ground at Your feet. O my Lord, please lead me on the right path to reach You, and since You know all that I have done in the past, please free me from the reactions to my past sins so that there will be no hindrance to my progress. (spoken by the personified Vedas, *Śrī Īśopaniṣad, mantra 18*)

"Theory and Method Underpinned by Values"

Theory: Principles
Method: Tools
Values: Vaiṣṇava Qualities

Aims:

1. To assess participants for the entire course
2. To evaluate the course and the facilitation
3. To further motivate participants to apply what they have learned, especially by ensuring that the course finishes with an optimistic note

Learning Objectives:

By the end of the lesson, participants should be able to:

1. Successfully complete the examination within the allocated time and under the specified conditions
2. Constructively evaluate the course and the standards of facilitation
3. Identify and share their most memorable and heart-felt learning
4. Make a pledge to apply what they have learned in real life
5. Optionally, share contact details to ensure further collaboration

Exploration 8.1 Self-assessment

This self-assessment has four parts.

1. Application of learning (30 minutes)

If doing this assessment in class, choose ONE of the following three (A or B or C).

If there is a half-day or more between lesson 7 and lesson 8 and you are doing this self-assessment as preparation before the class, complete all three: A, B, and C (allow for 30 minutes each).

A. Using a hermeneutical path

You are giving a *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* class on 4.12.27 in a temple. Twenty secondary level (high school) students come to the class. The following appears in the purport:

> There are three processes for moving in outer space. One of the processes is known to the modern scientist. It is called *ka-pota-vāyu*. *Ka* means "outer space," and *pota* means "ship." There is a second process also called *kapota-vāyu*. Kapota means "pigeon." **One can train pigeons to carry one into outer space.** The third process is very subtle. It is called *ākāśa-patana*. This *ākāśa-patana* system is also material. Just as the mind can fly anywhere one likes without mechanical arrangement, so the *ākāśa-patana* airplane can fly at the speed of mind. Beyond this *ākāśa-patana* system is the Vaikuṇṭha process, which is completely spiritual. (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 4.12.27, purport)

The students ask how it is possible for pigeons to go into outer space, what to speak of carry one into outer space. The students will be coming again the next day, and you say you will give an answer then. Use a hermeneutical path to help arrive at a conclusion. (The next page has additional space for your answer.)

B. Using Hermeneutical TOOL 37

Two women in the devotee community are having a disagreement and ask you to help.

<u>One of the women shows this verse and purport from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 9.3.10:</u>

sukanyā—the girl named Sukanyā, the daughter of King Śaryāti; *cyavanam*—the great sage Cyavana Muni; *prāpya*—after obtaining; *patim*—as her husband; *parama-kopanam*—**who was always very angry**; *prīṇayām āsa*—she satisfied him; *citta-jñā*—understanding the mind of her husband; *apramattā anuvṛttibhiḥ*—by executing services without being bewildered.

Translation: Cyavana Muni was very irritable, but since Sukanyā had gotten him as her husband, she dealt with him carefully, according to his mood. Knowing his mind, she performed service to him without being bewildered.

Purport: This is an indication of the relationship between husband and wife. A great personality like Cyavana Muni has the temperament of always wanting to be in a superior position. Such a person cannot submit to anyone. Therefore, **Cyavana Muni had an irritable temperament**. His wife, Sukanyā, could understand his attitude, and under the circumstances she treated him accordingly. **If any wife wants to be happy with her husband, she must try to understand her husband's temperament and please him.** This is victory for a woman. …. However great a woman may be, she must place herself before her husband in this way; that is to say, **she must be ready to carry out her husband's orders and please him in all circumstances.** Then her life will be successful. When the wife becomes as irritable as the husband, their life at home is sure to be disturbed or ultimately completely broken. In the modern day, the wife is never submissive, and therefore home life is broken even by slight incidents. Either the wife or the husband may take advantage of the divorce laws. According to the Vedic law, however, there is no such thing as divorce laws, and a woman must be trained to be submissive to the will of her husband. Westerners contend that this is a slave mentality for the wife, but factually it is not; **it is the tactic by which a woman can conquer the heart of her husband, however irritable or cruel he may be**. In this case we clearly see that although Cyavana Muni was not young but indeed old enough to be Sukanyā's grandfather and was also very irritable, Sukanyā, the beautiful young daughter of a king, submitted herself to her old husband and tried to please him in all respects. Thus she was a faithful and chaste wife.

<u>The other woman shows you this quote from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 7.11.28:</u>

Translation: A chaste woman should not be greedy, but satisfied in all circumstances. She must be very expert in handling household affairs and should be fully conversant with religious principles. She should speak pleasingly and truthfully and should be very careful and always clean and pure. Thus a chaste woman should engage with affection in the service of a husband who is not fallen.

Purport: … The word *narādhama* means "nondevotee." Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu also said*, yei bhaje sei baḍa, abhakta-hīna, chāra* [*Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta. Antya* 4.67]. Anyone who is a devotee is sinless. One who is not a devotee, however, is the most fallen and condemned. It is recommended, therefore, that a chaste wife not associate with a fallen husband. A fallen husband is one who is addicted to the four principles of sinful activity—namely illicit sex, meat-eating, gambling and intoxication. Specifically, if one is not a soul surrendered to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, he is understood to be contaminated. **Thus a chaste woman is advised not to agree**

to serve such a husband. It is not that a chaste woman should be like a slave while her husband is *narādhama*, the lowest of men. Although the duties of a woman are different from those of a man, a chaste woman is not meant to serve a fallen husband. If her husband is fallen, it is recommended that she give up his association. Giving up the association of her husband does not mean, however, that a woman should marry again and thus indulge in prostitution. If a chaste woman unfortunately marries a husband who is fallen, she should live separately from him.

Identify the topic, then identify the doubt. Use the first verse and purport as one viewpoint, and use the second verse and purport as the other viewpoint. Choose a side, then reach a conclusion.

1. *viṣaya* – topic:	
2. *saṁśaya* – doubt:	
3. *pūrvapakṣa* – one viewpoint:	
4. *uttara-pakṣa* – another viewpoint:	
5. *nirṇayaḥ* – deciding in favor of a side:	
6. *siddhānta*– conclusion:	
7. List at least 2 Qualities, 2 Principles, and 2 other hermeneutical Tools you could also use to reach a conclusion.	

C. Using Hermeneutical TOOL 24 (twice)

A devotee who has been practicing Kṛṣṇa consciousness for six months comes to you confused. He presents the following two quotes:

Translation: for a respectable person, dishonor is worse than death. (*Bhagavad-gītā* 2.34)

Purport: "My advice is that you'd do better to die in the battle. For a respectable man like you, ill fame is worse than death. So, you should not flee for fear of your life; better to die in the battle. That will save you from the ill fame of misusing My friendship and from losing your prestige in society."

Translation: One who is equal to friends and enemies, who is equipoised in honor and dishonor, heat and cold, happiness and distress, fame and infamy, who is always free from contaminating association, always silent and satisfied with anything, who doesn't care for any residence, who is fixed in knowledge and who is engaged in devotional service—such a person is very dear to Me. (*Bhagavad-gītā* 12.18-19)

Doubt: The devotee asks you how Arjuna can please Kṛṣṇa by fighting in order to preserve his honor and avoid dishonor, when detachment from honor and dishonor (and fame and infamy) makes one dear to Kṛṣṇa.

Use Hermeneutical TOOL 24 TWICE: once for *Bhagavad-gītā* 2.34:

<u>Who</u> is it for and what are the qualifications of the intended audience? (*adhikāra*)	
<u>What</u> is it about? (*abhidheya* or *viṣaya*)	
<u>Why</u>? (what is it for?) (*prayojana* or *phala*)	
<u>How</u> does it go about teaching what it teaches? (*sambandha*, i.e. what is the relationship between the subject of the text and the text itself)	

Use TOOL 24 again for *Bhagavad-gītā* 12.18-19

1. <u>Who</u> is it for and what are the qualifications of the intended audience? (*adhikāra*)	
2. <u>What</u> is it about? (*abhidheya* or *viṣaya*)	
3. <u>Why</u>? (what is it for?) (*prayojana* or *phala*)	
4. <u>How</u> does it go about teaching what it teaches? (*sambandha*, i.e. what is the relationship between the subject of the text and the text itself)	

Then, reach a conclusion that you can explain to the devotee:

2. Self-assessment of how well I remember the information/knowledge taught in this course (20 minutes):

Give the answers to the questions below either by saying them or writing them, and then check your answer with the indicated document and pages. It is best to fill out all the answers first and then check all of them, as there are a number of situations where the answers to several questions are on the same page, so one might see the answer to an upcoming question while checking the answer to the current question if one checks after answering each question.

Scoring: Give yourself a score of 1-5:

1. —I didn't get the answer at all
2. —I got the answer a little bit correct
3. —I gave an adequate answer
4. —I answered quite well
5. —My answer was excellent

1. The meaning or definition of hermeneutics

Check *Foundation Document* page 3

My score____

2. The value of hermeneutics to an individual devotee

Check *Foundation Document* page 4

My score____

3. The value of hermeneutics to the devotee society

Check *Foundation Document* page 4

My score____

(This Self-assessment continues on the next page)

4. The value of hermeneutics in terms of outreach

Check *Foundation Document* page 4

My score____

5. Two Qualities needed by someone practicing hermeneutics

Check *Foundation Document* page 5

My score____

6. Two Principles of ISKCON hermeneutics

Check *Foundation Document* page 6

My score____

7. Two hermeneutical Tools

Check *Foundation Document* pages 8-9

My score____

(This Self-assessment continues on the next page)

8. Names and/or descriptions of the three kinds of discourse

Check *Foundation Document* page 10

My score___

9. Three parts (titles only) of a hermeneutical path

Check *Foundation Document* pages 11-13

My score___

10. Meaning of "a concise statement of *siddhānta*"

Check this *Participant Handbook* page 17 or *Supplementary Material* page 253

My score___

11. Four ways a śāstric statement can be related to *siddhānta*

Check *Foundation Document* page 12

My score___

Put a star by any score of 4 or 5. Well done!

Circle any score of 1 or 2 and consider if you want to spend time on review of that area in the next week.

3. Self-assessment of deeper learning (20 minutes):

During this course in hermeneutics, my faith has increased in the following ways:

If I have a question about a statement from *śāstra*, Śrīla Prabhupāda, and our *ācāryas*, or if a devotee or person new to Kṛṣṇa consciousness comes to me with such a question, this is how I will address it, from what I have learned in this course:

This is how I will work towards constructive discourse of controversial or difficult statements, from what I learned in this course:

This is how I will deal with poor discourse of controversial or difficult statements, from what I learned in this course:

Any other benefits I have gotten from this course:

These are my remaining unanswered questions or concerns regarding hermeneutics after finishing this basic course:

4. **My plans to bring hermeneutic study and practice into my personal devotional life and my service to society. Check all that you feel you can commit to (5 minutes):**

☐ I will use what I've learned in this course at least once a week

☐ I will teach at least one other person something I learned in this course

☐ I will spend more time with the *Supplementary Material* and learn more about parts that interest me, that we did not have time to cover in the course

☐ I will study the *Supplementary Material* thoroughly

☐ I will develop and/or get teacher materials and arrange to have the basic hermeneutics course taught to devotees in my area of leadership

☐ I will work towards teaching hermeneutics to devotees in my areas of leadership

☐ Other ways I will bring what I have learned into my life and service: Describe:

***************OM TAT SAT***************

Appendices

<u>Appendix 1: Acknowledgments</u>

Appendix 2: Statements for Hermeneutical Practice (Beginner and Intermediate)

NOTE: Unlike the difficult statements found in <u>Appendix 3</u>, some of these are NOT exact quotes from *śāstra* or Śrīla Prabhupāda (although some are). These are statements based on a section of *śāstra*., all of which may benefit from the hermeneutic approach. These statements are much easier to discuss than are the statements in Appendix 3, and thus especially suitable for beginning practice.

Bhagavad-gītā

1. **CHAPTER ONE:**
    a. Carrying on family traditions is important (destroying family traditions leads to hell)
    b. Women are especially prone to become degraded

2. **CHAPTER TWO:**
    a. The fact that the soul cannot die, and that we cannot kill anyone, means that external killing of others is allowed
    b. Compassion is an essential part of spiritual life

3. **CHAPTER THREE:**
    a. Self-realized souls do not have to do anything in the world other than the direct processes of *bhakti yoga*
    b. Lust controls us and therefore we are not responsible for what we are forced to do against our will

4. **CHAPTER FOUR:**
    a. The *Bhagavad-gītā* is five thousand years old
    b. Blind following of a *guru* is condemned

5. **CHAPTER FIVE:**
    a. We can live happily in the human body in the material world
    b. Only internal peace is important, not an externally peaceful world

6. **CHAPTER SIX:**
    a. Absolute celibacy is essential to practice yoga
    b. It is possible to control the mind and practice meditative yoga

7. **CHAPTER SEVEN:**
    a. One can be a yogi by meditating on how Kṛṣṇa is the taste of wine
    b. A person has to be pious to take up *bhakti*

8. **CHAPTER EIGHT:**
    a. We should take up *sat-chakra* yoga and chant *om*
    b. The time and place and circumstances under which we leave our body determine our destination

9. **CHAPTER NINE:**
    a. Our mother and father are Kṛṣṇa
    b. Someone who commits terrible sins can also be a devotee

10. **CHAPTER TEN:**
    a. Devotees do not have any need for the details of Kṛṣṇa's opulences in the world
    b. One should not spend one's time pondering over earning money.

11. **CHAPTER ELEVEN:**
    a. Everything that happens is already the Lord's arrangement
    b. The Lord literally eats and devours all the people and entities in the world

12. **CHAPTER TWELVE:**
    a. Devotees of Kṛṣṇa should not join any group or "faction"
    b. Impersonalism is good until one meets a pure devotee

13. **CHAPTER THIRTEEN:**
    a. The Lord is without senses
    b. The *jīva* soul can be called puruṣa

14. **CHAPTER FOURTEEN:**
    a. The best knowledge is about the three modes of nature
    b. Brahman is the constitutional position of ultimate happiness

15. **CHAPTER FIFTEEN:**
    a. Kṛṣṇa is the goal of all the Vedas
    b. We cannot understand the form of material nature

16. **CHAPTER SIXTEEN:**
    a. Anyone who disobeys the śāstric injunctions is a demon
    b. Greed is a gateway to hell and sane people must give it up

17. **CHAPTER SEVENTEEN:**
    a. One should not give charity out of obligation or at the request of a superior
    b. One should not eat tasteless food

18. **CHAPTER EIGHTEEN:**
    a. Regardless of one's spiritual situation and realization, everyone needs to engage in charity
    b. *Sannyāsīs* should encourage young men to marry

Śrī Īśopaniṣad

A. *Mantra 2*: Material welfare activities are completely useless.

B. *Mantra 6*: All devotees should love everyone.

C. *Mantra 7*: Because we see all living entities as one, that means all are the same.

D. *Mantra 7*: Anxiety about our service to Kṛṣṇa is good.

E. *Mantra 8*: The Lord gives everyone whatever they want.

F. *Mantra 8*: The Lord is unembodied.

G. *Mantra 11*: We should not use material science for anything because it's defective.

H. *Mantra 12*: Impersonalists are worse than demigod worshipers.

I. *Mantra 13*: All religious paths lead to the same goal.

J. *Mantra 13*: Kṛṣṇa-worship is the highest perfection of religion.

K. *Mantra 18*: We should pray to the Lord to remove the reactions of our previous sins.

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Appendix 3: Statements for Hermeneutical Practice (Advanced)

Statements which appear exclusive or sectarian

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Antya 3.254-5:

There is now a flood of the eternal nectar of love of Godhead due to the incarnation of Lord Caitanya. All living entities are floating in that flood. The entire world is now thankful to the Lord. Anyone who does not float in this inundation is most condemned. Such a person cannot be delivered for millions of *kalpas*.

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 4.9.11 purport:

The significant point in Dhruva Maharaja's statement is that he wanted the association of pure devotees. Transcendental devotional service cannot be complete and cannot be relishable without the association of devotees. **We have therefore established the International Society for Krishna Consciousness. Anyone who is trying to be aloof from this Krishna Consciousness Society and yet engage in Kṛṣṇa consciousness is living in a great hallucination, for this is not possible.** From this statement by Dhruva Maharaja, it is clear that unless one is associated with devotees, his devotional service does not mature; it does not become distinct from material activities.

Bhagavad-gītā introduction:

In this present day, people are very much eager to have one scripture, one God, one religion, and one occupation. Therefore, *ekaṁ śāstraṁ devakī-putra-gītam*: let there be one scripture only, one common scripture for the whole world- *Bhagavad-gītā*. *Eko devo devakī-putra eva*: let there be one God for the whole world- Śrī Kṛṣṇa. *Eko mantras tasya nāmāni*: and one hymn, one mantra, one prayer -- the chanting of His name: Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare. *Karmāpy ekaṁ tasya devasya sevā*: and let there be one work only -- the service of the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

Nitāi pada-kamala:

Anyone who has not established his relationship with Nityananda Prabhu is understood to have spoiled his valuable human birth. Such a human being is actually an uncontrollable animal. Because he never uttered the holy name of Nityananda, he has become merged into so-called material happiness. What can his useless education and family tradition do to help him?

Giant eagles

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 5.23.3 purport: Regarding the great eagles mentioned in this verse, it is understood that there are eagles so big that they can prey on big elephants. They fly so high that they can travel from one planet to another. They start flying in one planet and land in another, and while in flight they lay eggs that hatch into other birds while falling through the air. In Sanskrit such eagles are called *śyena*. Under the present circumstances, of course, we cannot see such huge birds, but at least we know of eagles that can capture monkeys and then throw them down to kill and eat them. Similarly, it is understood that there are gigantic birds that can carry off elephants, kill them and eat them.

Lying

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 8.19.43: In flattering a woman to bring her under control, in joking, in a marriage ceremony, in earning one's livelihood, when one's life is in danger, in protecting cows and brahminical culture, or in protecting a person from an enemy's hand, falsity is never condemned.

How the Yaksas are described

As pious persons, as ghostly or hidden, as demons, and as mystics. These descriptions seem contradictory.

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 4.10.3:

> *Uttamas tv akṛtodvāho*
> *mṛgayāyāṁ balīyasā*
> *hataḥ puṇya-janenādrau*
> *tan-mātāsya gatiṁ gatā*

SYNONYMS: *uttamaḥ*—Uttama; *tu*—but; *akṛta*—without; *udvāhaḥ*—marriage; *mṛgayāyām*—on a hunting excursion; *balīyasā*—very powerful; *hataḥ*—was killed; ***puṇya-janena***—by a Yakṣa; *adrau*—on the Himalaya Mountains; *tat*—his; *mātā*—mother (Suruci); *asya*—of her son; *gatim*—way; *gatā*—followed.

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 4.10.4:

> *dhruvo bhrātṛ-vadhaṁ śrutvā*
> *kopāmarṣa-śucārpitaḥ*
> *jaitraṁ syandanam āsthāya*
> *gataḥ puṇya-janālayam*

SYNONYMS: *dhruvaḥ*—Dhruva Mahārāja; *bhrātṛ-vadham*—the killing of his brother; *śrutvā*—hearing this news; *kopa*—anger; *amarṣa*—vengeance; *śucā*—lamentation; *arpitaḥ*—being filled with; *jaitram*—victorious; *syandanam*—chariot; *āsthāya*—getting on; *gataḥ*—went; ***puṇya-jana-ālayam***—to the city of the Yakṣas.

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 4.10.14:

> *hāhā-kāras tadai vāsīt*
> *siddhānāṁ divi paśyatām*
> *hato 'yaṁ mānavaḥ sūryo*
> *magnaḥ puṇya-janārṇave*

SYNONYMS: *hāhā-kāraḥ*—tumult of disappointment; *tadā*—at that time; *eva*—certainly; *āsīt*—became manifest; *siddhānām*—of all the residents of Siddhaloka; *divi*—in the sky; *paśyatām*—who were observing the fight; *hataḥ*—killed; *ayam*—this; *mānavaḥ*—grandson of Manu; *sūryaḥ*—sun; *magnaḥ*—set; ***puṇya-jana***—of the Yakṣas; *arṇave*—in the ocean.

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 4.10.5

> *gatvodīcīṁ diśaṁ rājā*
> *rudrānucara-sevitām*
> *dadarśa himavad-droṇyāṁ*
> *purīṁ guhyaka-saṅkulām*

SYNONYMS: *gatvā*—going; *udīcīm*—northern; *diśam*—direction; *rājā*—King Dhruva; *rudra-anucara*—by followers of Rudra, Lord Śiva; *sevitām*—inhabited; *dadarśa*—saw; *himavat*—Himalayan; *droṇyām*—in a valley; *purīm*—a city; **guhyaka**—ghostly persons; *saṅkulām*—full of.

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 4.10.28

<div align="center">

evaṁ-vidhāny anekāni
trāsanāny amanasvinām
sasṛjus tigma-gataya
āsuryā māyayāsurāḥ

</div>

SYNONYMS: *evam-vidhāni*—(phenomena) like this; *anekāni*—many varieties of; *trāsanāni*—fearful; *amanasvinām*—to the less intelligent men; *sasṛjuḥ*—they created; *tigma-gatayaḥ*—of heinous nature; *āsuryā*—demoniac; *māyayā*—by illusion; **asurāḥ**—the demons.

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 4.10.21

<div align="center">

apaśy amānaḥ sa tadātatāyinaṁ
mahā-mṛdhe kañcana mānavottamaḥ
purīṁ didṛkṣann api nāviśad dviṣāṁ
na māyināṁ veda cikīrṣitaṁ janaḥ

</div>

SYNONYMS: *apaśyamānaḥ*—while not observing; *saḥ*—Dhruva; *tadā*—at that time; *ātatāyinam*—armed opposing soldiers; *mahā-mṛdhe*—in that great battlefield; *kañcana*—any; *mānava-uttamaḥ*—the best of the human beings; *purīm*—the city; *didṛkṣan*—wishing to see; *api*—although; *na āviśat*—did not enter; *dviṣām*—of the enemies; *na*—not; **māyinām**—of the mystics; *veda*—knows; *cikīrṣitam*—the plans; *janaḥ*—anyone.

Pariksit's being envious

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 1.18.29:

<div align="center">

abhūta-pūrvaḥ sahasā
kṣut-tṛḍbhyām arditātmanaḥ
brāhmaṇaṁ praty abhūd brahman
matsaro manyur eva ca

</div>

SYNONYMS: *abhūta-pūrvaḥ*—unprecedented; *sahasā*—circumstantially; *kṣut*—hunger; *tṛḍbhyām*—as well as by thirst; *ardita*—being distressed; *ātmanaḥ*—of his self; *brāhmaṇam*—unto a brāhmaṇa; *prati*—against; *abhūt*—became; brahman—O brāhmaṇas; **matsaraḥ—envious**; *manyuḥ*—angry; *eva*—thus; *ca*—and.

Translation: O *brāhmaṇas*, thus the King*, due to the circumstance of extreme hunger and thirst, unprecedentedly directed his anger and **envy** toward a *brāhmaṇa* sage.

*Mahārāja Parīkṣit

Siva worshiped as the Supreme Lord in the *Bhāgavatam*:

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 8.7.22-31:

O lord, you are the cause of bondage and liberation of the entire universe because you are its ruler. Those who are advanced in spiritual consciousness surrender unto you, and therefore you are the cause of mitigating their distresses, and **you are also the cause of their liberation**. We therefore worship Your Lordship. O lord, you are self-effulgent and supreme. You create this material world by your personal energy, and **you assume the names Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Maheśvara** when you act in creation, maintenance and annihilation. You are the cause of all causes, the self-effulgent, inconceivable, impersonal Brahman, which is originally Parabrahman. You manifest various potencies in this cosmic manifestation. O lord, you are the original source of Vedic literature. You are the original cause of material creation, the life force, the senses, the five elements, the three modes and the *mahat-tattva*. You are eternal time, determination and the two religious systems called truth [*satya*] and truthfulness [*ṛta*]. You are the shelter of the syllable *oṁ*, which consists of three letters a-u-m. O father of all planets, learned scholars know that fire is your mouth, the surface of the globe is your lotus feet, eternal time is your movement, all the directions are your ears, and Varuṇa, master of the waters, is your tongue. O lord, the sky is your navel, the air is your breathing, the sun is your eyes, and the water is your semen. You are the shelter of all kinds of living entities, high and low. The god of the moon is your mind, and the upper planetary system is your head. O lord, you are the three Vedas personified. The seven seas are your abdomen, and the mountains are your bones. All drugs, creepers and vegetables are the hairs on your body, the Vedic mantras like Gāyatrī are the seven layers of your body, and the Vedic religious system is the core of your heart. O lord, the five important Vedic mantras are represented by your five faces, from which the thirty-eight most celebrated Vedic mantras have been generated. Your Lordship, being celebrated as Lord Śiva, is self-illuminated. You are directly situated as the supreme truth, known as Paramātmā. O lord, your shadow is seen in irreligion, which brings about varieties of irreligious creations. The three modes of nature-goodness, passion and ignorance-are your three eyes. All the Vedic literatures, which are full of verses, are emanations from you because their compilers wrote the various scriptures after receiving your glance. O Lord Girīśa, since the impersonal Brahman effulgence is transcendental to the material modes of goodness, passion and ignorance, the various directors of this material world certainly cannot appreciate it or even know where it is. **It is not understandable even to Lord Brahmā, Lord Viṣṇu** or the King of heaven, Mahendra.

Human sacrifices and purchasing people

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 9.7.9-22:

O King Parīkṣit, Hariścandra begged Varuṇa, "My lord, if a son is born to me, with that son I shall perform a sacrifice for your satisfaction." When Hariścandra said this, Varuṇa replied, "Let it be so." Because of Varuṇa's benediction, Hariścandra begot a son named Rohita. Thereafter, when the child was born, Varuṇa approached Hariścandra and said, "Now you have a son. With this son you can offer me a sacrifice." In answer to this, Hariścandra said, "After ten days have passed since an animal's birth, the animal becomes fit to be sacrificed." After ten days, Varuṇa came again and said to Hariścandra, "Now you can perform the sacrifice." Hariścandra replied, "When an animal grows teeth, then it becomes pure enough to be sacrificed." When the teeth grew, Varuṇa came and said to Hariścandra, "Now the animal has grown teeth, and you can perform the sacrifice." Hariścandra replied, "When all its teeth have fallen out, then it will be fit for sacrifice." When the teeth had fallen out, Varuṇa returned and said to Hariścandra, "Now the animal's teeth have fallen out, and you can perform the sacrifice."

But Hariścandra replied, "When the animal's teeth grow in again, then he will be pure enough to be sacrificed." When the teeth grew in again, Varuṇa came and said to Hariścandra, "Now you can perform the sacrifice." But Hariścandra then said, "O King, when the sacrificial animal becomes a *kṣatriya* and is able to shield himself to fight with the enemy, then he will be purified." Hariścandra was certainly very much attached to his son. Because of this affection, he asked the demigod Varuṇa to wait. Thus Varuṇa waited and waited for the time to come. Rohita could understand that his father intended to offer him as the animal for sacrifice. Therefore, just to save himself from death, he equipped himself with bow and arrows and went to the forest. When Rohita heard that his father had been attacked by dropsy due to Varuṇa and that his abdomen had grown very large, he wanted to return to the capital, but King Indra forbade him to do so. King Indra advised Rohita to travel to different pilgrimage sites and holy places, for such activities are pious indeed. Following this instruction, Rohita went to the forest for one year. In this way, at the end of the second, third, fourth and fifth years, when Rohita wanted to return to his capital, the King of heaven, Indra, approached him as an old *brāhmaṇa* and forbade him to return, repeating the same words as in the previous year. Thereafter, in the sixth year, after wandering in the forest, Rohita returned to the capital of his father. **He purchased from Ajīgarta his second son, named Śunaḥśepha. Then he offered Śunaḥśepha to his father, Hariścandra, to be used as the sacrificial animal and offered Hariścandra his respectful obeisances. Thereafter, the famous King Hariścandra, one of the exalted persons in history, performed grand sacrifices by sacrificing a man and pleased all the demigods**. In this way his dropsy created by Varuṇa was cured. In that great human sacrifice, Viśvāmitra was the chief priest to offer oblations, the perfectly self-realized Jamadagni had the responsibility for chanting the mantras from the Yajur Veda, Vasiṣṭha was the chief brahminical priest, and the sage Ayāsya was the reciter of the hymns of the Sāma Veda.

Infanticide

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 9.20.34-35:

O King Parīkṣit, Mahārāja Bharata had three pleasing wives, who were daughters of the King of Vidarbha. When all three of them bore children who did not resemble the King, these wives thought that he would consider them unfaithful queens and reject them, and therefore they killed their own sons. The King, his attempt for progeny frustrated in this way, performed a sacrifice named marut-stoma to get a son. The demigods known as the Maruts, being fully satisfied with him, then presented him a son named Bharadvāja.

Vaiṣṇava *aparādha* or karmic reactions of one person given to a group

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Antya 3.149-164:

Translation: For two purposes – to spread the cult of *bhakti* and to defeat and subdue the atheists – Lord Nityānanda, the most dedicated devotee of the Lord, moved throughout the country. Lord Nityānanda, who is omniscient because He is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, came to the house of Rāmacandra Khān and sat down on the altar of the Durgā-maṇḍapa. When the Durgā-maṇḍapa and courtyard became filled with crowds of men, Rāmacandra Khān, who was inside the house, sent his servant to Lord Nityānanda. The servant informed Lord Nityānanda, "My dear Sir, Rāmacandra Khān has sent me to accommodate You in some common man's house. You might go to the house of a milkman, for the cowshed is spacious, whereas the space here in the Durgā-maṇḍapa is insufficient because You have many followers with You."

When Nityānanda Prabhu heard this order from the servant of Rāmacandra Khān, He became very angry and came out. Laughing very loudly, He spoke as follows. "Rāmacandra Khān has spoken rightly. This place is unfit for Me. It is fit for cow-killing meat-eaters." Having said this, Lord Nityānanda stood up and left in an angry mood. To chastise Rāmacandra Khān, He did not even stay in that village.

Rāmacandra Khān ordered the servant to dig up the dirt in the place where Nityānanda Prabhu had sat. To purify the Durgā-maṇḍapa temple and the courtyard, Rāmacandra Khān sprinkled and smeared it with water mixed with cow dung, but still his mind was unsatisfied. Rāmacandra Khān's business was questionable, for he tried to avoid paying income tax to the government. Therefore the government's minister of finance was angry and came to his residence. The Muslim minister made his residence in the Durgā-maṇḍapa of Rāmacandra Khān. He killed a cow and cooked the meat at that very place. He arrested Rāmacandra Khān, along with his wife and sons, and then he continuously plundered the house and village for three days. In that very room he cooked the flesh of a cow for three consecutive days. Then the next day he left, accompanied by his followers. The Muslim minister took away Rāmacandra Khān's position, wealth and followers. For many days the village remained deserted. **Wherever an advanced devotee is insulted, for one man's fault the entire town or place is afflicted.**

Gives pastimes to the external potency

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 2.8.23:

> *yathātma-tantro bhagavān*
> *vikrīḍaty ātma-māyayā*
> *visṛjya vā yathā māyām*
> *udāste sākṣivad vibhuḥ*

SYNONYMS: *yathā*—as; *ātma-tantraḥ*—independent; *bhagavān*—the Personality of Godhead; *vikrīḍati*—enjoys His pastimes; *ātma-māyayā*—by His internal potency; *visṛjya*—giving up; *vā*—as also; *yathā*—as He desires; *māyām*—the external potency; *udāste*—remains; *sākṣivat*—just as the witness; *vibhuḥ*—the almighty.

Translation: The independent Personality of Godhead enjoys His pastimes by His internal potency and **at the time of annihilation gives them up to the external potency**, and He remains a witness to it all.

Purport: Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, being the Supreme Personality of Godhead and fountainhead of all other incarnations, is the only independent person. He enjoys His pastimes by creation as He desires and gives them up to the external energy at the time of annihilation. By His internal potency only, He kills the demon Pūtanā, even though enjoying His pastimes in the lap of His mother Yaśodā. And when He desires to leave this world He creates the pastimes of killing His own family members (Yadu-kula) and remains unaffected by such annihilation. He is the witness of everything that is happening, and yet He has nothing to do with anything. He is independent in every respect. Mahārāja Parīkṣit desired to know more perfectly, for a pure devotee ought to know well.

Stones: dead or alive

There are trees, plants and stones that cannot move, but still they must be considered living entities, or spiritual sparks. The soul is present in bodies like those of trees, plants and stones. They are all living entities. (purport Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya 19.144)

A living being cannot be vacant of desires. He is not a dead stone. (purport *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.6.22)

This *kāma*, or desire, cannot be annihilated. There are some philosophers who say that if one gives up his desires, he again becomes liberated. But it is not at all possible to give up desire, for desire is a symptom of the living entity. If there were no desire, then the living entity would be a dead stone. (purport *Śrīmad-Bhā*gavatam 4.11.22)

Returning to the spiritual world without change of body

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 1.15.47-48:

Translation: Thus by pure consciousness due to constant devotional remembrance, they attained the spiritual sky, which is ruled over by the Supreme Nārāyaṇa, Lord Kṛṣṇa. This is attained only by those who meditate upon the one Supreme Lord without deviation. This abode of the Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, known as Goloka Vṛndāvana, cannot be attained by persons who are absorbed in the material conception of life. But **the Pāṇḍavas, being completely cleansed of all material contamination, attained that abode in their very same bodies**.

Purport: According to Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī, a person freed from the three modes of material qualities, namely goodness, passion and ignorance, and situated in transcendence can reach the highest perfection of life without change of body. Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī says in his *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa* that a person, whatever he may be, can attain the perfection of a twice-born *brāhmaṇa* by undergoing the spiritual disciplinary actions under the guidance of a bona fide spiritual master, exactly as a chemist can turn gun metal into gold by chemical manipulation. It is therefore the actual guidance that matters in the process of becoming a *brāhmaṇa*, even without change of body, or in going back to Godhead without change of body. Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī remarks that the word *hi* used in this connection positively affirms this truth, and there is no doubt about this factual position. The *Bhagavad-gītā* (14.26) also affirms this statement of Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī when the Lord says that anyone who executes devotional service systematically, without deviation, can attain the perfection of Brahman by surpassing the contamination of the three modes of material nature, and when the Brahman perfection is still more advanced by the selfsame execution of devotional service, **there is no doubt at all that one can attain the supreme spiritual planet, Goloka Vṛndāvana, without change of body**, as we have already discussed in connection with the Lord's returning to His abode without a change of body. (See the purport to text 32 of this chapter.)

Śrīla Prabhupāda's statements about chanting 16 rounds and following 4 regulative principles bringing one back to Godhead in this life

(Note: we could not find any such statements in his books or lectures, and only one conversation; such statements seem to be limited to letters):

1. Morning Walk -- June 18, 1976, Toronto:

Prabhupada: Oh, yes, oh, yes, thousand times. [break] ...gentleman has not come?

Devotee: Yesterday? No. *Bhagya*.

Prabhupada: *So 'ham bhagya* [Hindi conversation] [break]

Subhavilasa: ...initiated devotee, and he follows those four regulative principles and chants sixteen rounds, will he go back to Godhead?

Prabhupada: Oh, yes. *Mam evaisyasi asamsaya*. Kṛṣṇa says. *Man-mana bhava mad-bhakto mad-yaji mam namaskuru mam evaisyasi asamsaya* [*Bhagavad-gītā* 18.65]. *Asamsaya*, without any doubt.

2. Letter to Amogha -- Bombay 26 December 1972

Please accept my blessings. I wish to acknowledge receipt of your letter dated December 1, 1972, and I have noted the contents. It is very much pleasing to me to hear that you are making such steady advancement in Kṛṣṇa Consciousness. If you continue in this way, and strictly follow the four regulative principles, making sure to chant at least sixteen rounds on the beads, daily, it is without a doubt that at the end of this lifetime, you can go back home, back to Godhead.

3. Letter to Ghanasyama -- Sydney 16 February 1973

Please accept my blessings. On the recommendation of Satsvarupa I am herein accepting you as my initiated disciple. Henceforth your name will be GHANASYAMA DASA. Now you must agree to very rigidly follow the rules and regulations, i.e. chanting sixteen rounds of beads daily, rising early and attending Mangala Arati, observing the four principles, attending the classes, eating only *bhagavata prasadam* as well as working under the instruction of my representatives, such as your GBC representative and Temple President, and if you follow this procedure very strictly then your life will be glorious and you will go back to Home, back to Godhead, this I can guarantee. I hope this meets you in good health.

4. Letter to Bhakta dāsa -- Los Angeles 8 July 1974

Now be sure these devotees know and vow to follow the four rules and that they are chanting at least 16 rounds daily. Initiation does not mean they have completed all spiritual perfection and now they can relax but it means now they have begun spiritual life. If they are true to their vows they will [missing text] all perfection in this life and be eligible to go back to home back to Godhead.

5. Letter to Bhakta Lance -- Bombay 16 December 1974

My simple request is that you remain in association of devotees and continue to chant your 16 rounds daily and follow strictly the four regulative principles and read our books daily with great care. In this way your Kṛṣṇa Conscious advancement will be assured success and at the end of this life you will go back to Godhead, back to home, and live with Kṛṣṇa eternally.

6. Letter to Damodara – Honolulu 16 January 1974:

Now instruct them very seriously about their responsibilities. To promise to follow the four prohibitive rules and to daily chant sixteen rounds means they cannot deviate. You can hold a fire yajna and inform them that in promising before the Deity and before the spiritual master, one cannot later break the rules without being punished, just as in the law court one is held for perjury. If we simply follow these instructions however, spiritual life becomes very simple and we can go back to Kṛṣṇa in the spiritual world at the end of this life, which is the success of the human life. You may send their beads for chanting to Kirtanananda Maharaja.

Saṅkīrtana and Kṛṣṇa consciousness

Bhagavad-gītā 3.10 purport:

Saṅkīrtana-yajña and Kṛṣṇa consciousness go well together.

Being callous

Morning Walk -- May 8, 1975, Perth:

So we should be callous with all these political, social... We should simply go on. That is Caitanya Mahaprabhu. He was callous. Family affairs, wife responsibility, for mother's responsibility, for... Nothing. Simply chant Hare Kṛṣṇa. *Kirtaniyah sada harih* [*Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Adi* 17.31]. That is Caitanya Mahaprabhu's life. Even didn't care for anything, no responsibility. "My only business is chanting."

Bhagavad-gītā 6.20-23 purport:

[A] person who is in pure *bhakti-yoga*, or in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, does not arouse the senses while meeting the demands of the body. Rather, he accepts the bare necessities of life, making the best use of a bad bargain, and enjoys transcendental happiness in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. He is callous toward incidental occurrences -- such as accidents, disease, scarcity and even the death of a most dear relative -- but he is always alert to execute his duties in Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Killing demons as our mission

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 7.10.42 purport:

The Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is spreading all over the world with two aims—to establish Kṛṣṇa as the Supreme Personality of Godhead and to kill all the pretenders who falsely present themselves as *avatāras*. The preachers of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement must carry this conviction very carefully within their hearts and kill the demons who in many tactful ways vilify the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa. If we take shelter of Nṛsiṁha-deva and Prahlāda Mahārāja, it will be easier to kill the demons who are against Kṛṣṇa and to thus reestablish Kṛṣṇa's supremacy.

Apparent mis-statements of fact

1. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 2.1.10 purport:

So the complete text of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, beginning with the *janmādy asya* verse up to the last one in the Twelfth Canto, was spoken by Śukadeva Gosvāmī for the attainment of salvation by Mahārāja Parīkṣit.

2. Letter Jadurani, September 9, 1967, Vrindavan:

Please accept my blessings. Your letter of 8/24 contains some important questions. The six goswamis are not all eternal associates of Kṛṣṇa. Only Rupa and Raghunatha Goswami are eternal associates. You know there are two kinds of living entities: *nitya mukta* or eternal associates of the Lord, and *nitya baddha* or eternally conditioned. This material manifestation is a chance for the eternally conditioned entities to go Back to Godhead; but when they go back there is no distinction between the two. When Kṛṣṇa appears, some of his eternal associates come with Him to assist Him in His different incarnational activities; and some of the living entities from conditioned life are liberated by following the footprint of Lord Kṛṣṇa and His bona associates; so all the six became eternal associates of Kṛṣṇa. Regarding Sarvabhauma Bhattacharya, he descended from higher planet for being liberated in the association of Lord Chaitanya, so his conditioned life came to an end after he contacted Lord Chaitanya.

3. Letter to Saradia -- Los Angeles 12 December, 1968:

Arjuna and Kunti Devi are not in Kṛṣṇa Loka. They are eternally associated with Kṛṣṇa only in the material world. Just like Kṛṣṇa is always in the spiritual world, so similarly He is always in the material world and His Pastimes are going on there also. In the material world, Kṛṣṇa also has eternal associates, such as Arjuna and Kunti Devi. There is a difference between the body and soul of Arjuna and Kunti Devi.

4. Room Conversation -- July 19, 1973, London:

Revatinandana: Another, related question that also arose...These come in Bhāgavatam class with the devotees, because they think about the questions, and sometimes they come up with nice ones. When Kṛṣṇa is incarnating in His plenary incarnations like Varaha, Nrsimha, like that, He's appearing...

Prabhupada: That is in this material world.

Revatinandana: Yes. And sometimes devotees become devoted to those forms. Are there corresponding planets in Vaikuntha for those forms of incarnation? Is there a planet of Nrsimha, or Nrsimha-loka in the Vaikuntha sphere?

Prabhupada: So far I know, those planets are here within this material world.

Revatinandana: Wherever He is appearing.

Prabhupada: Hmm. Even Ramacandra's. So far I have...

Revatinandana: On all the Vaikunthas, Kṛṣṇa is in His *catur-bhuja*, four-armed form?

Prabhupada: Hmm.

Revatinandana: But those devotees will eventually go there. Those kind of devotees like the devotees of Sita-Rama, they will also attain the spiritual sky in their various positions?

Prabhupada: Yes, yes.

Revatinandana: All right. Thank you very much. [offers obeisances]

5. *Bhagavad-gītā* 10.21:

> *ādityānām ahaṁ viṣṇur*
> *jyotiṣāṁ ravir aṁśumān*
> *marīcir marutām asmi*
> *nakṣatrāṇām ahaṁ śaśī*

SYNONYMS: ādityānām—of the Ādityas; aham—I am; viṣṇuḥ—the Supreme Lord; jyotiṣām—of all luminaries; raviḥ—the sun; aṁśu-mān—radiant; marīciḥ—Marīci; marutām—of the Maruts; asmi—I am; nakṣatrāṇām—of the stars; aham—I am; śaśī—the moon.

Translation: Of the Ādityas I am Viṣṇu, of lights I am the radiant sun, of the Maruts I am Marīci, and among the stars I am the moon.

From the Purport: Among the stars, the moon is the most prominent at night, and thus the moon represents Kṛṣṇa. It appears from this verse that the moon is one of the stars; therefore the stars that twinkle in the sky also reflect the light of the sun.

Explanation of why this is a difficult statement: Nakṣatra is the term for lunar mansion in astrology. A *nakṣatra* is one of 28 (sometimes also 27) sectors along the ecliptic. Their names are related to the most

prominent asterisms (groups of stars) in the respective sectors. Śrīla Prabhupāda's point in this purport seems to be that all the members of a category must be equal in all important features with the chief of that category, with which Kṛṣṇa identifies. However, such is not the case with some of the other similar verses in this chapter. For example, Kṛṣṇa says that He is Viṣṇu among the Ādityas. Yet Viṣṇu belongs to a fundamentally different category, He is *viṣṇu-tattva*, whereas the other Ādityas are *jīva-tattva*. Also, Kṛṣṇa says that He is the sun among lights (*jyotiṣām*). Yet by the reasoning in the purport to 10.21, this would mean that all lights, (*jyotiṣām* includes fires on earth and all other lights) would have to be suns, since they are mentioned in the same category with the sun.)

Sannyāsa and renunciation topics

1. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 3.22.19 purport:

After fulfilling his responsibility to produce a nice child, one should take *sannyāsa*.

2. Lecture on *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 3.25.22 -- November 22, 1974, Bombay:

The Vedic principle is that you remain family life for some time, not for all the days. *pañcaśordhvaṁ vanaṁ vraje*. As soon as you're fifty years old, you must give up family life. Compulsory.

3. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 3.24.34 purport:

A mendicant *sannyāsī* should not live anywhere for more than three days.

Fifty percent required

1. *Bhagavad-gītā* 10.4-5 purport:

As far as charity is concerned, one should give fifty percent of his earnings to some good cause. And what is a good cause? It is that which is conducted in terms of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

2. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.5.36 purport:

The major portion of our monetary income, not less than fifty percent, must be spent to carry out the order of Lord Kṛṣṇa.

3. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.17.38 purport:

The citizens of the state must give in charity at least fifty percent of their income for the purpose of creating a spiritual atmosphere in the state or in human society, both individually and collectively.

Compulsory marriage and making divorce illegal

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 1.17.38 purport:

There must be compulsory marriage of young boys and girls attaining twenty-four years of age and sixteen years of age, respectively. There is no harm in coeducation in the schools and colleges, provided the boys and girls are duly married, and in case there is any intimate connection between a male and female student, they should be married properly without illicit relation. The divorce act is encouraging prostitution, and this should be abolished.

Very early marriage

Room conversation, 15 August 1971, London:

Yes. That is psychological. They develop…Sex life, sex urge is there as soon as twelve years, thirteen years old, especially women. So therefore early marriage was sanctioned in India. Early marriage. Boy fifteen years, sixteen years, and girl twelve years. Not twelve years, ten years. I was married, my wife was eleven years. I was 22 years. She did not know what is sex, eleven years' girl. Because Indian girls, they have no such opportunity of mixing with others. But after the first menstruation, the husband is ready. This is the system, Indian system… And the psychology is the girl, after first menstruation, she enjoys sex life with a boy, she will never forget that boy. Her love for that boy is fixed up for good. This is woman's psychology.

Fixing one's mind on any incarnations or not diverting one's attention to any incarnations?

1. *Bhagavad-gītā* 8.14 purport:

A pure devotee always engages in devotional service to Kṛṣṇa in one of His various personal features. Kṛṣṇa has various plenary expansions and incarnations, such as Rāma and Nṛsiṁha, and a devotee can choose to fix his mind in loving service to any of these transcendental forms of the Supreme Lord.

2. *Bhagavad-gītā* 18.65 purport:

These words stress that one should concentrate his mind upon Kṛṣṇa -- the very form with two hands carrying a flute, the bluish boy with a beautiful face and peacock feathers in His hair. There are descriptions of Kṛṣṇa found in the *Brahma-saṁhitā* and other literatures. One should fix his mind on this original form of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa. **One should not even divert his attention to other forms of the Lord. The Lord has multiforms as Viṣṇu, Nārāyaṇa, Rāma, Varāha**, etc., but a devotee should concentrate his mind on the form that was present before Arjuna.

Appendix 4: Topics for Hermeneutical Practice (All Levels)

Roles and behavior

1. Appropriate dress for priestly roles
2. Appropriate dress for women devotees
3. Appropriate dress for men devotees
4. How to speak to women
5. Women acting as *gurus*
6. Women acting as priests (giving temple classes, doing public temple Deity worship, etc.)
7. Women being only mothers/homemakers versus women having other service and careers
8. The definition of illicit sex
9. Standards for *kirtana*
10. Gay marriage and homosexuality in general
11. Divorce, remarriage, polygamy
12. Types of medical treatment that is acceptable or wanted
13. The use of astrology (and other types of divination such as Tarot, I-Ching, etc.)
14. How devotees get recreation/what are frivolous sports
15. The role of ordinary charity in the life of devotees and in the ISKCON society
16. The value and place of various bodily austerities

Deities and *prasadam*

1. Using commercial milk
2. Veganism
3. Specific rules of Deity worship
4. Specific rules of festival observance
5. What types of food and recipes can be offered to temple Deities
6. What types of food are devotees permitted to eat
7. Demigod and other types of murtis on ISKCON property
8. Inclusion of programs, rituals, and worship that may be "Hindu inspired"

Governance/Structure

1. How *diksa gurus* are authorized to give *diksa*
2. Position of ISKCON *diksa gurus* relative to Śrīla Prabhupāda
3. Relation of the *diksa guru* to ISKCON authority
4. What *varṇāśrama* means
5. The relationship between *varṇāśrama* and *bhakti*
6. ISKCON's relationship with other Gauḍīya lines and institutions and their followers
7. ISKCON's relationship with other non-Gauḍīya religions and their followers
8. The role and position in ISKCON of those who give large financial donations
9. How to compensate devotees who work full-time for ISKCON
10. Using corporate tools in ISKCON management

Devotee Care

1. Engaging devotees in service according to their natures versus according to the need
2. Facilities and help for devotees with disabilities of various kinds
3. Dealing with devotees who break their vows
4. Dealing with devotees who commit crimes of various sorts
5. How to deal with mental illness
6. Mixed messages about the *gṛhastha āśrama* (encouraging *brahmacaris* who should marry not to marry, seeing *gṛhasthas* who work outside ISKCON as second-class citizens, etc.)

Education

1. How children in the movement should be educated
2. Higher education in non-devotee colleges and universities
3. The role of activism in Kṛṣṇa consciousness such as dealing with abortion, environmentalism, politics, etc.
4. The role of the hard sciences (math, chemistry, physics, astronomy, geology, etc.) in Kṛṣṇa consciousness (conflicts between the hard sciences and *śāstra* and/or Śrīla Prabhupāda)
5. The role of the soft sciences (psychology, sociology, anthropology, etc.) in Kṛṣṇa consciousness
6. Role of Sanskrit scholarship

Philosophy

1. The origin of the conditioned *jīvas*/the cause of illusion
2. Qualifications for *raganuga bhakti*

Other

1. Which editions of Śrīla Prabhupāda's books are bona-fide
2. What status in terms of authority do we give to translations of *śāstra* by translators other than Śrīla Prabhupāda (see Appendix 7 page 99)
3. Racial superiority issues (including among breeds of cows)

Appendix 5: Further Questions for Introspection and Discussion

1. Differences of opinion over interpretation of *śāstra*, *ācārya's* statements or Prabhupāda's statements may arise from time to time between two or more devotees. How should these devotees behave towards each other until the time such differences of opinion are resolved?

2. If a senior devotee insists on a particular understanding of the truth about any subject matter by citing his/her age, number of years of service etc., then is such a devotee's behavior justified? How should other younger devotees who do not agree with the senior devotee behave?

3. How should devotees discuss hermeneutical contentions on the internet, especially in situations where they do not know each other personally?

4. If a particular devotee says that his/her interpretation of *śāstra*, *ācārya's* statements or Prabhupāda's statements is not being followed in ISKCON and he/she needs to form a new group independent of ISKCON to ensure that correct interpretations are being adhered to, then how should such attempts of separation (schism) be looked upon? Does Śrīla Prabhupāda approve of such behavior?

5. How does Vedic culture define a civil discussion? How do two parties that are opposed to each other's views discuss points of contention in Vedic culture?

6. How justified is it to ban or throw out devotees from a temple/group/devotee society in cases of differences of opinion over hermeneutical issues?

7. Can two individuals having two different opinions on the same issue (e.g. *jīva* falldown issue) serve Śrīla Prabhupāda side-by-side without one of them having to leave the institution? How long can they neglect their differences of opinion?

8. Do differences of opinion over various issues exist even in the spiritual world? If yes, can examples be given of the same? How do devotees having differences of opinion behave towards each other in the spiritual world? Can such behavior be taken as a role model for devotee behavior in ISKCON?

9. If two devotees serving in ISKCON have differences of opinion over a specific issue and each one thinks that the other is suffering from *tattva-bhrama* (erroneous conclusion), can both these devotees achieve perfection at the end of their lives irrespective of the fact that one or both of them may be mistaken in his/her philosophical understanding?

Appendix 6: Types of Contentious Statements

The following list classifies the various types of potentially "contentious" śāstric statements. Although they can usefully confront shortcomings in our own understanding, they also have potential to raise doubts about the authenticity of *śāstra*. Such doubts may need to be addressed.

Some categories may be largely applicable to non-devotees, usually lower on this list. Others will be more relevant to devotees; and there are points of cross-over. We may keep in mind that dichotomy of perception between self and *śāstra* may derive from several factors, not only degrees of devotional disqualification, e.g. lack of faith, but also less hierarchical considerations, such as cultural variance.

Difficult or contentious śāstric statements may:

1. Seem **ambiguous or paradoxical** or to contradict other statements of *guru-sādhu-śāstra*.[11]

2. Appear to **exaggerate** the benefits of devotional practices or other virtuous conduct.

3. Apparently **use fear** to promote conformity, e.g. descriptions of the dire, frightening, and possibly exaggerated consequences of failing to comply with religious observances.

4. Be **unduly repetitive** of the same point or conclusion, sometimes disconcertingly or with little apparent recognition of the listener's knowledge or stage of advancement.

5. Seem **impractical or unreachable,** e.g. giving 50% of one's wealth, especially if tainted by cynicism born of śāstric misappropriation, e.g. by leaders desperate to secure more funds.

6. Seem to **compromise ultimate truth**, e.g. by suggesting that non-Viṣṇu deities are Supreme, or sometime implicitly endorsing worship of them as Supreme.

7. Appear **exclusive,** e.g. in pronouncing the fate of those who do not follow Lord Caitanya; they may appear to be, or at least resemble, a form of sectarian self-eulogy.

8. Suggest (to some) that Śrīla Prabhupāda was **callous** or **judgmental**. This is linked to the corresponding mythologization of Śrīla Prabhupāda, i.e. as "really heavy".

9. Appear **culturally bizarre.** Mother Yaśodā treating adolescent Kṛṣṇa as one would only an infant in other cultures.

10. Appear **morally unacceptable**, even morally abhorrent, e.g. statements that support lying, slavery, bigamy, infanticide, early marriage, human sacrifice and so on.

11. Appear **contradictory to modern science** or show an incomplete knowledge of it.

12. **Stretch the reader's credulity**, e.g. giant eagles flying in space.

13. **Endorse violence** or fail to question it, often through narrative, e.g. horses and elephants used in warfare.

14. Non-critically employ **contemporaneously repulsive terms and concepts**, i.e. that today often meet with immediate scorn and rejection, e.g. "hierarchy", "class divisions", and "absolute truth".

15. Otherwise appear **outdated** and **superstitious.**

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[11] There may be various sub-categories here. For example, young devotees often experience bewilderment at devotees giving them contradictory instructions or conclusions. This entails differences between two *sādhus*. Furthermore, sometimes a devotee may hear instructions different from those of his or her *dīkṣā* guru.

Appendix 7: Status of translations of *śāstra* by translators other than Śrīla Prabhupāda

How do we explain and accept English translations of scripture other than those done by Śrīla Prabhupāda? Here are two examples, one from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and one from *Vidagdha Madhava*.

Specific example from the *Bhāgavatam*

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 11.2.38 From the purport by Hṛdayānanda Goswāmī:

The living entities are fragmental parts of the supreme shelter, Kṛṣṇa, but **have fallen from Kṛṣṇa's kingdom of spiritual pastimes**. Because of forgetting the Supreme Lord, they become prone to sinful life and turn their attention to dangerous material objects, which fill them with constant fear.

In this section of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, Hṛdayānanda Goswāmī was directly translating the Bengali commentary of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura. The relevant Bengali sentence was:

cid-vilāsa-rājya ha-ite vicyuta āśraya-jātiya bhedāṁśagaṇa bhagavad-vismṛti-phale vikāra-yogyatā lābha kariyā aprītitakara vastvantarera vicāra-pūrvaka bhīti lābha kare.

The phrase "fallen from Kṛṣṇa's kingdom of spiritual pastimes" translates the Bengali phrase *cid-vilāsa-rājya ha-ite vicyuta.*

Whether any particular instance of a Vaiṣṇava technical term in Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's Bengali is itself a Bengali word to be interpreted per conventional Bengali usage, or a Sanskrit word to be interpreted with conventional Sanskrit usage, or a term specific to the Vaiṣṇava lexicon to be interpreted per Vaiṣṇava usage, is ambiguous, just as whether any particular instance of the word "yoga" in English by contemporary Vaiṣṇava authors is itself an English word to be interpreted per conventional English usage (e.g., "stretching exercises"), or a Sanskrit word to be interpreted with conventional Sanskrit usage (e.g., *Yoga-sūtra* 1.2), or a term specific to the Vaiṣṇava lexicon to be interpreted per Vaiṣṇava usage (as in *karmis*, *jñānis*, and *yogis*, or as in *karma-yoga*, *jñāna-yoga*, and *bhakti-yoga*), is ambiguous.

Here, in the Bengali phrase in question, *cid* refers to *cit*, spiritual knowledge / cognizance.

The meanings of *vilāsa* given in Monier-Williams *Sanskrit-English Dictionary* are:

1. shining forth, appearance, manifestation
2. sport, play, pastime, pleasure, diversion (esp. with women etc ; but also applied to any playful action or gesture)
3. coquetry, affectation of coyness, wantonness (a form of feminine gesture considered as indicative of amorous sentiments)
4. liveliness, joviality
5. wantonness, lust
6. grace, charm, beauty (here Monier-Williams references *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*)
7. of a grammatical work
8. of a preceptor
9. of a meter

The Sanskrit prefix *vi* often indicates separation, though sometimes it simply indicates emphasis.

The meaning of the Sanskrit root √*las* in Whitney's *The Roots, Verb-Forms, and Primary Derivatives of the Sanskrit Language* is "be lively".

The meanings of *vilāsa* given in the *Samsad Bengali-English Dictionary* are:

1. enjoyment of milk and honey
2. luxury, daintiness and foppery
3. sport, recreation, pastime
4. amorous sport, dalliance
5. wantonness
6. an assumed artistic gesture or pose

Here *rājya* means "kingdom".

Here *ha-ite* may mean "from", "through", or "via".

The meanings of *vicyuta* given in the Monier-Williams *Sanskrit-English Dictionary* are:

1. fallen asunder or to pieces
2. fallen or departed or swerved or deviated from
3. failed, perished, lost
4. loosened, set free
5. (in surgery) separated from the living part, sloughed

Again, the Sanskrit prefix vi often indicates separation, though sometimes it simply indicates emphasis.

The meaning of the Sanskrit root √cyu in Whitney's The Roots, Verb-Forms, and Primary Derivatives of the Sanskrit Language is "move, stir".

The meanings of *vicyuta* given in the *Samsad Bengali-English dictionary* are:

1. detached
2. fallen off, shed
3. separated
4. estranged
5. deviating or strayed from

Considering all the above, multiple possible translations of the Bengali are tenable, and, therefore, the Bengali phrase may or may not give evidence or resolve the question of the *jīva*'s fall. Here are several possible translations of *cid-vilāsa rājya vicyuta*:

cid—spiritual; *vilāsa*—pastimes; *rājya*—kingdom; *vicyuta*—fallen from;

"fallen from [Kṛṣṇa's] kingdom of spiritual pastimes"

cid—spiritual consciousness; *vilāsa*—shining forth; *rājya*—kingdom; *vicyuta*—separated;

"separated from the kingdom of spiritual consciousness shining forth"

cid—spiritual; *vilāsa*—feminine gesture indicative of amorous sentiment; *rājya*—kingdom; *vicyuta*—estranged;

"estranged from the kingdom of spiritual feminine gestures indicative of amorous sentiment [i.e., *mādhurya rasa*]"

cid—spiritual; *vilāsa*—beauty; *rājya*—kingdom; *vicyuta*—deviated from;

"deviated from the kingdom of spiritual beauty"

cid—spiritual; *vilāsa*—joviality; *rājya*—kingdom; *vicyuta*—failed;

"failed the kingdom of spiritual joviality"

cid—spiritual; *vilāsa*—enjoyment of milk and honey; *rājya*—kingdom; *vicyuta*—fell asunder;

"fell asunder from the spiritual kingdom where there was enjoyment of milk and honey"

Specific example from *Vidagdha-mādhava* section

1. First example: Rādhā/*dhārā*

Translator #1:

Candrāvalī: O handsome one, you are just like a bumblebee who is always seeking new companions. How is it that you wish to enjoy among these *gopis* who are like withered lotus flowers due to separation from you?

Kṛṣṇa: O dear Candravali, you appear newer and fresher at every moment. Please cool the burning fire of separation from you with the nectar of your embrace.

Padmā: How is it that you are burning with distress simply because of the separation of my dear friend Candravali?

Subala: Don't speak in this way! My friend is staring at Candravali just as a thirsty *cakora* bird gazes at a cooling water-laden cloud.

Kṛṣṇa: O beloved please listen. During our separation, when I was in the forest, there was only one thing to relieve my distress. That thing was full of nectar, cooling to the touch, and very sweet. That thing was Rādhā. (Bewildered) I mean *dhārā*, *dhārā*. (*Dhārā* means a stream of water).

Candrāvalī: (with jealous anger) Then Go! Go serve Rādhā!

Kṛṣṇa: O beloved, I said 'Water' not 'Rādhā'.

Candrāvalī: Then why did my ears hear something else?

Kṛṣṇa: O beloved, your ears did not properly hear what I said.

Candrāvalī: (turns her head down, reddened with anger) O generous one, what is the need of this pretense? Today the captivating gold earrings, which are the 2 syllables of Rādhā's name, have been placed upon my ears and filled them with nectar.

Kṛṣṇa: O Candrāvalī, your eyes are as beautiful as those of a frightened deer. Your words are very appropriate. Your golden earrings are certainly beautifying your ears. However, the nectar like liquid gold coming from your moon-like face and mouth is now agitating my eyes and ears.

Translator #2:

Candrāvalī: O beautiful Kṛṣṇa! Your nature is to seek newer and newer flowers like the bee. How can you enjoy lotuses devoid of nectar for a long time?

Kṛṣṇaḥ: O dear Candrāvalī! Each time I see you, you are newer than anything else. Now extinguish the pain of separation by the *rasa* of an embrace.

Padmā: Why do you experience pain by separation from my dear friend?

Subalaḥ: Ah! Do not speak in this way. Pained by separation from Candrāvalī, he throws his body in a cooling cloud. Like a *cakora* bird which throws itself to a cool cloud, my friend looks at Candrāvalī and nothing else.

Kṛṣṇaḥ: O beloved, please listen. In the forest, during separation from you, I experienced what was cooling to the touch, full of sweet rasa, and full of nectar. It combined to destroy my suffering. It was Rādhā (in fright) -- I mean it was a stream of water (*dhārā*), that relieved me of pain.(*Madhura* means *śṛṅgāra-rasa* and sweet.)

Candrāvalī: (With anger) Go away and serve Rādhā!

Kṛṣṇaḥ: O beloved, I said *dhārā,* a stream, not Rādhā.

Candrāvalī: Why did we hear you say the syllables reversed into the name Rādhā?

Kṛṣṇaḥ: O beloved, I think that you heard the syllables reversed, or your ears were reversed.

Candrāvalī: (Bowing her head, with red face) O generous Kṛṣṇa! Stop hiding your feelings. Now my ears are filled with great sweetness because I am wearing golden earrings which attract the mind.(The other meaning is "Because of uttering two attractive syllables my ears are filled with beauty.")

Kṛṣṇaḥ: O Candrāvalī, with eyes of a frightened doe! A golden ornament makes your two ears

beautiful. The excellent syllables emanating externally from the middle of your moon-like mouth agitate my two ears and the gold extending to your cheeks agitates my eyes. (*Cakita-sāraṅga-nayane* means "a woman with eyes of a frightened doe." Gold ornaments are in your ears. The emanation of sweet syllables from your mouth agitates my two ears. The word *suvarṇa* indicates words of longing. "Outside the moon-like face" also means the cheeks. They become beautiful. The reflections of gold from the earrings spread to your cheeks which become beautiful and agitate my eyes.)

2. Second example: Viśākhā and Padmā

Translator #1:

Viśākhā: (Laughing) O Padmā, it is true. You and your friends have many sufferings. I and my friends have only one.

Padmā: Oh! What is that?

Viśākhā: For Rādhā, Kṛṣṇa is like an unreachable star shining in the sky. Rādhā is continually tormented by the desire to attain this unattainable Kṛṣṇa, who is like a regal young maddened elephant enjoying pastimes on the shore of the Yamuna.

Translator #2:

Viśākhā: (Laughing) O Padmā, it is true that you have many sufferings. We have only one suffering.

Padmā: What is that?

Viśākhā: O Padmā, Rādhā shines like a star in the sky, impossible for mortals to attain. Kṛṣṇa, like an intoxicated, young male elephant enjoying on the bank of the Yamunā, always yearns for her with tormented mind.

NOTE: Considering that she is so difficult to attain Kṛṣṇa becomes mad (*sama-dāsya*) like a young elephant hard to control (*gandha-kalabhendra*). He does not enjoy Candrāvalī because she is easy to obtain. He finds it difficult to pray for enjoyment with Rādhā, since she is hard for him to meet. Thus he approaches us. We consider this to be torture (*kadarthanā*) for him.