

CHAPTER 13

NATURE, THE ENJOYER AND CONSCIOUSNESS

Connection between Chapter 12 and Chapter 13 / Introduction to *Jnana* Section

- ❖ In Chapters six through twelve, Lord Krishna concluded His description of *bhakti-yoga*. In Chapters thirteen to eighteen, He describes *jnana-yoga*
- ❖ One may ask, “If *bhakti* is the culmination of the yoga-ladder, why is *jnana* presented after the section on *bhakti*?”
- ❖ Understanding the connection between the *bhakti* section and the *jnana* section will help reveal the reason. In Text 12.7, Lord Krishna promised to save His devotees from the path of birth and death. Chapters Thirteen to Eighteen fulfill this promise by supplying the philosophical knowledge necessary to extricate oneself from material entanglement
- ❖ We call this section the “*Jnana Section*” but in truth the entire *Bhagavad-gita* is *bhakti*. The first six chapters discuss how to achieve *bhakti* through one’s works (*karma-yoga*). The last six chapters discuss how to achieve *bhakti* through knowledge. The middle six chapters discuss *bhakti* itself
- ❖ *Jnana* has its use in assisting our detachment from *maya* and our subsequent attachment to Krishna. When we utilize knowledge as a means to attain devotion it becomes a part of *bhakti*
- ❖ Without the touch of *bhakti* both *karma* and *jnana* are useless. This is another reason why the discussion of *bhakti* comes in the middle of *Bhagavad-gita*, where it can remain in contact with both, *karma* and *jnana*, and thus lend them value

BREAKDOWN OF CHAPTER 13

SECTION I (13.1 – 13.7) — ARJUNA’S SIX QUESTIONS & KRISHNA EXPLAINS THE FIELD OF ACTIVITIES AND THE KNOWER OF THE FIELD

(Text 13.2 – 13.7 answers the 3rd, 4th and 5th questions)

- Krishna explains the field of activities as the body, by which the soul engages within his allotted sphere of activities within the material world
- The soul, the knower of the field, has knowledge of his own field of activities
- Krishna, as the Supersoul, is the knower of all fields of activity of all living entities
- Knowledge is to know the field and its knowers

SECTION II (13.8 – 13.12) — KRISHNA EXPLAINS THE PROCESS OF KNOWLEDGE AND LIBERATION

(Krishna addresses the 5th question)

- The process of knowledge is
 - Activities by which a soul gets knowledge beyond the limitations of his field of activities
 - And thus transcends his field of activities

SECTION III (13.13 – 13.19) — KRISHNA EXPLAINS THE OBJECT OF KNOWLEDGE

(Krishna addresses the 6th question)

- The soul can know the Supersoul, the ultimate object of knowledge
- Only devotees can understand - the field of activities (the body), process of knowledge and both the soul and Supersoul

BREAKDOWN OF CHAPTER 13 continued...

**SECTION IV (13.20 – 13.26) — KRISHNA EXPLAINS PRAKRTI, PURUSA AND THEIR UNION
(Krishna addresses the 1st and 2nd questions)**

- *Prakrti, Purusa* (the “*jiva*” or *ksetra-jna*) and their union (13.20-13.22):
 - Material nature causes all material changes and effects, and
 - Living entity meets with good and bad according to the qualities he has acquired due to his association with material nature
- *Paramatma Purusa (ksetra-jna)* (13.23): The Supersoul exists within all bodies as the overseer, the permitter, and the supreme proprietor.
- *Result*: One who understands the *prakrti, purusa* and their interactions attains liberation from birth in material world
- Other methods of obtaining liberation are *jnana, astanga* and *karma* (13.25 – 13.26)

SECTION V (13.27 – 13.35) — JNANA-CHAKSHU: THE VISION OF KNOWLEDGE

- Those who see the distinction between the body, its owner and the Supersoul, and who recognize the process of liberation, can attain the Supreme goal (13.35)

**SECTION I (13.1 – 13.7)
ARJUNA’S SIX QUESTIONS AND KRISHNA EXPLAINS
THE FIELD OF ACTIVITIES AND THE KNOWER OF THE FIELD**

PRACTICAL APPLICATION OF SECTION I

Understanding reality means knowing matter, the spirit soul and the Supreme Lord in their proper perspective

Text 13.1

THEME: Arjuna asks 6 questions about the following subject matters;

1. **‘Prakrti’** – Material Nature
2. **‘Purusha’** – The Enjoyer of matter
3. **‘Kshetra’** – Field in which one can act within the material world
4. **‘Kshetra-jna’** – Entity which experiences the field of actions
5. **‘Jnana’** – Knowledge and the process of acquiring knowledge (*Explained in Texts 13.3, 13.8 – 13.12 and 13.24 – 13.25*)
6. **‘Jneyam’** – Object of knowledge

Text 13.2

THEME: Krishna answers about the *Kshetra* and *Kshetra-jna* – This answers Arjuna’s third and fourth question

- ❖ This body is called the field – ‘*Kshetra*’
- ❖ One who knows this body is called the knower of the field – ‘*Kshetra-jna*’

FOCUS OF LEARNING: PURPORTS 13.1 – 13.2

(a) Body as the field of activity

- For whom – For the conditioned soul
- Why does he get this field - Soul is entrapped in material existence because of his attempts to Lord it over
- Criteria to decide which body
 - According to the capacity to dominate material energy
 - According to the capacity to enjoy sense gratification, one gets a particular body to function accordingly

(b) *Kshetra-jna*: How to understand the difference between the body and the knower of the body

- Based on changing phases of the body – Body is constantly changing from childhood to old age, but one remains the same person (*Ref. Bg. 2.13 – “Dehino asmin...”*)
- Intuitive understanding
 - Although we may use many articles, we are different from the body and those articles
 - We may think “I am happy”, “I am man”, etc. These are bodily designations of the knower

(c) Comparison of knowledge in three sections of the *Bhagavad-gita*

- First six chapters – Discusses the knower of the body and the position by which he can understand the Supreme Lord
- Middle six chapters – Discusses the Supreme Personality of Godhead and the relationship between the individual soul and the Supersoul in regards to Devotional Service
 - It describes the superior position of Krishna and subordinate position of living entity
 - Four kinds of pious men who approach the Lord
- Last six chapters
 - Explains how the living entity comes in contact with the material nature
 - Explains how living entity is delivered by the Lord through different methods

Text 13.3*

THEME: Explains 2nd *Ksetra-jna* (knower of the field) and conception of *Jnana* (knowledge)

- ❖ There is also a “second knower” who is the knower of all fields – The Supersoul
- ❖ **Definition of “knowledge” (Arjuna’s 5th question)** – To understand body and it’s knower (Supersoul and soul) is called “knowledge”

FOCUS OF LEARNING: PURPORT 13.3

(a) How Krishna is the knower

- Supersoul is the plenary expansion of Krishna, Krishna says “ I am also the knower, but not the individual knower of the body”
- He is present in every body as the Super knower

FOCUS OF LEARNING: PURPORT 13.3 continued...

(b) Two knowers and their differences

- Soul as the individual knower; and Supersoul as the Super knower
- Supersoul is the Supreme proprietor of all the bodies, but soul is only for one body
 - *Analogy:* Citizen as the proprietor of one land, but King is the proprietor of all lands
- Supreme Lord is the Supreme Controller of the Senses (Hrsikesa); Soul is the secondary controller
 - King is the original controller of all activities; citizens are the secondary controllers
- One is fallible, other is infallible
- One is subordinate, other is superior
 - *Analogy:* It would be like equating the potent and the impotent
- *Supporting Ref. Vedic Literatures: "Kshetrani ..."* Mentions there are 2 knowers of the body

(c) Definition of "knowledge"

- To study the subject matter of the field of activity and the knower of the field very minutely

(d) Refutation of "Soul and Supersoul as the same" –

- **Word "ca" indicates the total number of bodies** – it indicates Krishna is present as Supersoul in every body while the atomic soul is present only in their individual bodies
- *Analogy:* Do not misunderstand a rope to be a serpent
- Real knowledge is to know Supersoul as the controller of both, the field of activities and the finite enjoyers

(e) Understand the position of *Prakriti* (nature), *Purusha* (enjoyer of nature) and *Ishvara* (The Supreme Knower)

- *Analogy:* Understand their differences and do not confuse between painter, the painting and the easel
- There are three Brahman conceptions
 - *Prakriti* (Material nature) is *Brahman* as the field of activities
 - *Jiva* (Living entity) is also *Brahman*, and is trying to control material nature
 - Controller of both of them is also *Brahman*

Text 13.4

THEME: Krishna proposes to explain 5 points about the field of activity (*Ksetra*)

1. How the body is constituted (*Explained in Text 13.6 and 13.7*)
2. What changes the body undergoes (*Text 13.7 and 13.20*)
3. How, when and where the body is produced (*Text 13.6, 13.21, 13.22 and 13.30*)
4. Identity of the knower of the field of activities (*Text 13.14-13.18 and 13.23*)
5. The influence of the knower (*Texts 13.14 – 13.18*)

FOCUS OF LEARNING: PURPORT 13.4

(a) Best way to solve these issues mentioned in translation

- Just understand this *Bhagavad-gita* as per the description given by Supreme Personality of Godhead
- **CAUTION!** Do not consider the Supreme Personality in every body to be one with individual soul, the *jiva*
 - *Analogy:* It would be like equating the potent and the impotent

Text 13.5*

THEME: Krishna cites the authorities: Summarizing philosophical conclusions of great sages, especially Vyasdeva's *Vedanta-Sutra*

FOCUS OF LEARNING: PURPORT 13.5

(a) **Way of learned scholars and standard authorities**

- They always give evidence from past authorities
 - e.g. Krishna gives such evidence, although He is the highest authority
- Besides Krishna Himself, Vyasadeva is a great sage who explains the concept of duality perfectly in *Vedanta-sutra*
- Vyasdeva's father, Parasara, also a great sage, writes in his books of religiosity: "*aham tvam ca tathanye...*"
 - "We – You, I and All living entities are transcendental, although in material bodies"
 - Now fallen into three modes: According to *karma*, some are higher and some are lower
 - It is all due to ignorance
 - But Supersoul is infallible and transcendental
- *Ref. Original Vedas, especially Katha Upanishad:* Establishes the distinction between soul, Supersoul and the body
 - Many great sages have explained this: Parasara is the principal among them
- Word "*chandobhih*" refers to various Vedic literatures e.g. *Taittiriya Upanishad*, a branch of *Yajur Veda*, describes nature, living entity and the Supreme Personality of Godhead

(b) **5 stages of Brahman realization: *Brahma puccham pratistha* (Taittiriya Upanishad 2.9) –**

- '**Annamaya**' – Food is the Supreme object of realization e.g. consciousness of young child or amoeba
- '**Pranamaya**' – Realizing the Supreme Absolute Truth in living symptoms or life forms. One seeks to preserve his life
- '**Jnanamaya**' – Realization to the point of thinking, feeling and willing
 - One appreciates the subtle interactions of mind and intelligence, emotions, aesthetics, etc. as ultimate object of realisation
- '**Vijnanamaya**' – Realization in which the living entity's mind and life symptoms are distinguished from the living entity himself
 - To realize the self as different from the field of activity, including the subtle body
 - Thus the soul itself becomes the ultimate object of realisation
- '**Anandamaya**' – Supreme stage of realisation of all-blissful nature
 - One realizes the distinction between the self and the Supreme Self and enters into a blissful loving relationship

(c) **Relationship of 5 above mentioned stages in terms of *kshetra* and *kshetra-jna***

- *Kshetra* includes:
 - Gross body – *Anandamaya* and *Pranamaya*
 - Subtle body – *Jnanamaya*
- *Kshetra-jna* includes:
 - Individual soul – *Vijnanamaya*
 - Supreme Soul – *Anandamaya*

FOCUS OF LEARNING: PURPORT 13.5 continued...

(d) Perfection of living entity

- Transcendental to the fields is the Supreme Lord who is full of joy
 - To enjoy His transcendental bliss, He expands into *Vijnanamaya*, *Jnanamaya*, *Pranamaya* and *Annamaya*
- If living entity decides to enjoy in dove-tailing himself with *Anandamaya*, he becomes perfect

(e) What truth to be searched for in *Vedanta-sutra* or *Brahma-sutra*

- Real picture of Lord as the Supreme Knower; living entity as subordinate knower; and nature as the field of activities (Ref. *Codes of Brahma Sutra: Study purport*)

Texts 13.6* – 13.7*

COMMON THEME: This verse indicates that **field or body is a non-permanent material thing** and *ksetra-jna* or knower of the field is different from the field

- ❖ Text 13.6 explains ‘what the fields of activities consist of’
- ❖ Text 13.7 explains ‘the transformations’ and ‘the interactions of the field of activities’

FOCUS OF LEARNING: PURPORTS 13.6 – 13.7

(a) Components of the fields of activities (Total: 24 in number)

- Five great elements
- Five sense objects
- Eleven senses including the mind
- Intelligence and false ego
- Unmanifested stage of three modes called Pradhana

(b) Interactions of gross body – desire, hatred, happiness, distress

(c) Interactions of subtle body – Living symptoms represented by consciousness and convictions

(d) Basis of all this knowledge – Authorities as per *Bg.* 13.5 Translation

(e) Pradhana

- “Five great elements” are a gross representation of false ego
 - Which represents the primal stage of false ego which is technically called as
 - Materialistic conception or *tamasa buddhih* (Intelligence in ignorance)
 - Which represents unmanifested three modes called Pradhana


(f) Six changes of the body – Takes birth, grows, stays, by-products, decay and death. Thus Srila Prabhupada answers the “*vikaras*” or the changes undergone by the body, as mentioned in Text 13.4

SECTION II (13.8 – 13.12)

KRISHNA EXPLAINS THE PROCESS OF KNOWLEDGE AND LIBERATION


PRACTICAL APPLICATION OF SECTION II

Since Lord reveals true knowledge to the heart of deserving persons,
Real method of acquiring knowledge is cultivation of saintly character, headed by humility

 **LINK BETWEEN SECTION I & SECTION II:** Now Lord Krishna explains how the *kshetra-jna* can disentangle one from the body by cultivating *jnana* (knowledge)

Texts 13.8* – 13.12*

COMMON THEME: Cultivation of these qualities is the real method of acquiring knowledge

 **PLEASE NOTE:** Some points of the purport are covered in the 'Focus of Learning' section below and the remaining points are covered in the table thereafter

FOCUS OF LEARNING: PURPORTS 13.8 – 13.12

- (a) **'Less intelligent' understand this process as 'interaction of the field of activity'**, but this is 'the real process of knowledge' (first line of purport) – This means that:
 - Acquisition of knowledge involves proper bodily and mental behavior and therefore one may wrongly deem it as a parcel of field of activity. (*kshetra*)
 - However since these perfect actions liberates jiva from body, we do not count them as part and parcel of bodily activities.
- (b) **Most important quality is described in Bg. 13.11** – "*mayi ca ananya-yogena...*"
 - Process of knowledge terminates in "unalloyed devotional service to the Lord"
 - If one takes to full Krishna consciousness, all the other mentioned qualities are automatically developed (*Ref. SB 5.18.12*)
- (c) **Essential quality** – Accepting spiritual master, even for one who takes to devotional service
- (d) **Ignorance** – Anything speculated beyond these items of knowledge is nonsense
- (e) **How to test one's progress** – Judge by qualities like humility and pridelessness, etc.
- (f) **Why discuss the miseries of material life, like birth, old-age disease etc**
 - Unless we have a pessimistic view of material life, there is no impetus for making spiritual advancement
- (g) **Best process to make home life pleasant** – Krishna consciousness (especially four things)
 - Chant Hare Krishna
 - Honor prasadam
 - Discussions on *Bhagavad-gita* and Srimad Bhagavatam
 - Deity Worship
- (h) **Be convinced that "I am subordinate"**
 - "Humility" is the beginning of knowledge
 - Anyone who wants to compete with God and still advance, will be frustrated

SUMMARIZED THEME 13A

TWENTY ITEMS OF KNOWLEDGE (13.8 – 13.12)		
S. NO	QUALITY	DEFINITION
1	Humility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not to be anxious to have the satisfaction of being honored by others
2	Pridelessness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not to be anxious to be famous for one's religion and entering into a group not actually following principles and wanting to advertise as a religious mentor
3	Non-violence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not to put others into distress Unless one elevates one to spiritual knowledge, one is practicing violence Try your best to distribute real knowledge
4	Tolerance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be practiced to bear insult and dishonor from others e.g. Prahlada Maharaja
5	Simplicity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> So straightforward that you can disclose the real truth even to an enemy Without diplomacy
6	Accepting a spiritual master	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approach spiritual master with all humility and offer all services If he bestows blessings, that will make it easier to follow all the regulative principles and one immediately advances
7	Cleanliness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bathing (external) and chanting (internal)
8	Steadiness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Determined to make progress in spiritual life
9	Self-control	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reject anything unfavorable to spiritual advancement
10	Renunciation of sense objects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not cater to unnecessary demands Cater the demands only to keep body fit for devotional service How to control – Engage by a systematic regulation especially chanting Hare Krishna and Prasadam
11	Absence of false ego	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reject: "I am this body, mind etc" Accept: I am a servant of Krishna
12	Perception of evils of birth, death, disease, old-age	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Must regularly hear about these topics from the proper source
13	Detachment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be ready to sacrifice everything for Krishna
14	No entanglement with wife, children, etc	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Affection is natural Renounce if not favorable for spiritual advancement e.g. Arjuna is asked to renounce family connections
15	Even mindedness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not elated or distressed at material gain or loss Possible by performing unbreakable devotional service
16	Unalloyed devotional service (<i>Ananya-bhakti</i>)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage in nine processes of <i>bhakti</i>
17	Aspiring to live in a solitary place	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not desiring to mix with materialistic men Living in the association of devotees
18	Detachment from general masses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not desiring to mix with materialistic men Living in the association of devotees

TWENTY ITEMS OF KNOWLEDGE (13.8 – 13.12) continued...		
S. NO	QUALITY	DEFINITION
19	Accepting the importance of self-realisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Give up unnecessary sporting, cinema going, social activities and such wastage of time
20	Philosophical search for the Absolute Truth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rejection of useless research of philosophical topics like sex life etc. Research into the nature of soul by philosophical discretion

SECTION III (13.13 – 13.19)
KRISHNA EXPLAINS ‘THE OBJECT OF KNOWLEDGE’ (JNEYA) –
ARJUNA’S SIXTH QUESTION

Text 13.13*

THEME: Jneya (knowable) – Soul and Supersoul are the real objects to be known

- ❖ Text 13.13 describes the first object of knowledge, i.e. the Soul (living-entity)
- ❖ Benefit of knowing the knowable: Relishes the nectar of life

FOCUS OF LEARNING: PURPORT 13.13

- (a) **Living entity as the “knowable”**
- Chapter 2 describes the living entity as eternal
 - No history of date of jiva’s manifestation available (therefore called ‘*anadi*’)
 - *Supporting Ref. Katha Upanisad: “na jayate mriyate...”* – knower of body has no birth and death, but is full of knowledge
- (b) **Supreme Lord as ‘Supersoul’**: Srila Prabhupada gives references for the presence of the Supersoul as the supreme knower and thus different from the individual soul
- *Ref. Svetasvatara Upanisad*: Supersoul is the chief knower of body and master of three modes
 - *Ref. Smrti*: Living entities are eternally servant of the Lord
 - *Ref. Lord Caitanya*: “Only Krishna is the Supreme Lord, all others are His servants”
- (c) **This verse refers to the living entity, i.e. Vijnana Brahman and not Ananda Brahman**
- *Ananda Brahman* is the Supreme Personality of Godhead

Text 13.14*

THEME: Supersoul is “All Pervading”

FOCUS OF LEARNING: PURPORT 13.14 - *Srila Prabhupada’s strongly confirms that this verse, which refers to the All-pervading, describes the Supersoul, not the living entity*

- (a) **Supersoul has hands, legs, eyes, ears, heads and faces everywhere**
- Supersoul is All-pervading – *Analogy*: Sun is all pervading by diffusing unlimited rays
 - In Him exist all unlimited individual living entities (Brahma to small ant)

FOCUS OF LEARNING: PURPORT 13.14 continued...

- (b) **Purport proves that Text 13.14 talks about Supersoul and not the individual soul** – as follows:
- Individual soul cannot claim that he has legs, hands, etc everywhere
 - To think this, is the effect of ignorance – If one thinks that under ignorance one is not conscious that his legs and hands are diffused everywhere, but when he attains to proper knowledge he attains to that stage, his thinking is contradictory
 - Refutation: If living entity has become conditioned by material nature, then how can he be Supreme
 - Individual soul cannot extend his hands and legs etc everywhere
 - Supreme Soul can extend without limit as shown by *Ref. Bg. 9.26: “patram pushpam...”* and *Brahma Samhita 5.37: “goloka eva...”*

Text 13.15

THEME: Supersoul is “Transcendental”

FOCUS OF LEARNING: PURPORT 13.15

- (a) **Supreme Lord is the source of all senses of the living entities**
- Does not have material senses like ours
 - *Ref. Svetasvatara Upanisad 3.19: Distinction between Supersoul and conditioned soul*
 - Supreme Lord has no hands which are materially contaminated but has transcendental hands – accepts whatever sacrifice offered to Him
 - Has no material eyes – but has spiritual eyes because He can see past, present and future (*e.g. Bg. 7.26*)
 - Has no material legs but has spiritual legs – can travel throughout the universe
 - **Conclusion** – The Lord is not impersonal but definitely has spiritual senses
 - How can we expect ‘part and parcel’ to have something which the Lord (the original source) does not have
- (b) **Lord appears by His internal potency and not contaminated by material energy** (*Ref. Bg. 4.6*)
- Vedic literatures explains His whole embodiment is ‘spiritual’ – some of the symptoms of the Supreme Personality of Godhead are as follows
 - Full of all opulences
 - Proprietor of all wealth and all energies
 - Most intelligent and full of knowledge
 - Maintainer of all living entities and witness of all activities
- (c) **Why we cannot see Him** – Because He is transcendental
- We are materially contaminated; even the impersonalists are materially affected
 - Only by transcendental elevation, one can see the Lord’s form

Text 13.16 *

THEME: Supersoul is “All-Reconciling”

FOCUS OF LEARNING: PURPORT 13.16**(a) Supreme Truth is outside and inside of all living beings**

- *Ref. Vedic Literatures* explains that “Narayana is residing both outside and inside of every living entity”; present in both the spiritual world and the material world and He is far away, but also near

(b) Because He is subtle, He is beyond the power of the material senses to see or to know

- Material mind and senses cannot understand Him
- Only possible, if senses are purified by Krishna consciousness
- *Ref. Bg. 11.54: “bhaktya tv...”* and *Brahma Samhita: “premanjana...”*
- That Krishna described the knowable in Text 13.16 as *avijneyam*, unknowable, indicates that the Supersoul cannot be understood by the material senses. Only by hearing with devotion from transcendental sources can He be understood

Text 13.17**THEME: Supersoul is “Undivided”**


- ❖ Although Supersoul appears divided, but is situated as one
- ❖ Although maintainer of all living entities, He devours and develops all

FOCUS OF LEARNING: PURPORT 13.17**(a) Examples in Vedic Literatures**

- Lord’s presence in everyone’s heart does not imply that He is divided
 - *e.g. Analogy:* Sun, if at meridian, is in one place but if we go 5000 miles in all directions; everyone experiences the sun’s presence on their head
- Vedic literatures say: “One Vishnu” is present everywhere by His omnipotence
- Vedic Hymns confirm Him as the ‘origin of all’ and ‘rest of all’

(b) “As devouring all”

- Explained in Chapter 11 – “I have come to devour all in the form of time”

 **LINK BETWEEN TEXTS 13.7 & 13.18:** Finally, in Text 13.18, Krishna clearly reveals the identity of the one He has been describing. The *jneyam* is the Supersoul, who is *hrdi-sarvasya*, within the heart of all. Srila Prabhupada kindly informed us earlier in his translations and purports to Texts 13.14, 13.15, and 13.17 that the supreme knowable object, who has been described as unknowable, is nevertheless situated in everyone’s heart as *Paramatma*. Srila Prabhupada cites several verses from the *Svetasvatara Upanishad* to substantiate that, these *Bhagavad-gita* texts have been describing neither the living entity nor Brahman, but the Supersoul

Text 13.18**THEME: He is the “Source of all knowledge and enlightenment”**

- ❖ Source of light in all luminous objects
- ❖ Is beyond the darkness of matter and is unmanifested
- ❖ He is knowledge, object of knowledge and goal of knowledge
- ❖ He is situated in everyone’s heart

FOCUS OF LEARNING: PURPORT 13.18**(a) Supersoul is the source of light of sun, moon, stars**

- *Ref. Vedic literatures: Spiritual kingdom* has no need of sun or moon because the effulgence of the Lord is there
- *Material world* – Brahmajoyti is covered by *mahat-tattva* and therefore we need the sun, moon etc.

(b) This establishes that the Supreme Lord is not in the material world but far far away – beyond the darkness of the material world


- *Ref. Svetasvatara Upanisad 3.8 – “aditya varnam tamsah parastat”*

(c) His knowledge is transcendental

- *Ref. Vedic literatures – “Brahman is concentrated transcendental knowledge”*
- To one anxious to go to spiritual world, knowledge is given by the Lord in the heart
- *Ref. Vedic literatures (Svetasvatara Upanisad) explains the goal of ultimate knowledge:*
 - “Only by knowing Him – One can surpass the boundaries of birth and death”

(d) He is everyone’s heart

- But He is different from the soul (There are two knowers)
 - He has hands and legs everywhere, but *jiva’s* hands and legs are localized
 - *Ref. Svetasvatara Upanisad* – Supreme Personality of Godhead is Prabhu or master of all living entities and therefore He is the shelter of all living entities

 **LINK BETWEEN TEXTS 13.18 & 13.19:** Krishna ends his explanation of the ‘knowable’ by describing to Arjuna the qualifications of one able to understand these topics.

**SUMMARISED THEME 13B
CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SUPERSOUL**

A) Supersoul as the object of knowledge (Jneya) – (13.14 – 13.18)

- All pervading – His hands, legs, eyes, ears, heads and faces are everywhere
- Original source of all senses, yet He is without senses
- Unattached, although He is the maintainer of all living entities
- Transcendental to the modes of material nature, although He is the master of all modes
- All reconciling – Outside and inside of all living beings
- Subtle and beyond the perception of material senses
- Undivided – Although appears divided among all beings
- Maintainer of all, also devours and develops all
- Source of all knowledge and enlightenment
- Situated in one’s heart

B) Supersoul as the knower of the field (Ksetra-jna) – (13.3)

- Superknower – Knower of all bodies
- Supreme proprietor and controller
- Infallible and always superior to the spirit soul

SUMMARISED THEME 13B continued...
CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SUPERSOUL

- C) **Supersoul as the 'Purusha' (Supreme enjoyer) – (13.23)**
- Transcendental enjoyer
 - Overseer and permitter
 - Maintainer and real friend

Text 13.19

THEME: Science of *Kshetra*, *Kshetra-jna*, *Jnana* and *Jneyam* is most fully understood only by devotees (*mad-bhakta*)

FOCUS OF LEARNING: PURPORT 13.19

- (a) **Vijnana** – Knower, knowable and process of knowing is called “*Science of knowledge*” or *vijnana*
- (b) **Opinion of monists** – At ultimate stage the above mentioned three items become one
- But the devotees do not agree to this
- (c) **Knowledge means** understanding oneself in Krishna consciousness and realizing Krishna in everything
- Knowledge is nothing but preliminary stage of understanding devotional service perfectly
- (d) **Conclusion** – Texts 13.13 – 13.18 explain the “Soul and Supersoul as the knowable”
- **Supersoul is the ultimate object to be known**

SECTION IV (13.20 – 13.26)

KRISHNA EXPLAINS PRAKRTI, PURUSA AND THEIR UNION

PRACTICAL APPLICATION OF SECTION IV

- Conditioned souls desire to control and enjoy matter binds him to material nature
- Supersoul is the factual enjoyer and controller
- Understanding this will lead the conditioned living entity towards liberation


Text 13.20

THEME: All good and bad events occur in matter

- ❖ Material nature and living entities are beginningless. (Their union is described as *anadi*, beginningless)
- ❖ Their “transformations” and “modes of matter” are products of material nature

FOCUS OF LEARNING: PURPORT 13.20

- (a) **Chapter 13 tells us about the body and differences between the two knowers of the body**
- Body is the field and the embodied individual soul is enjoying the activities of the body and therefore called *Purusha* – living entity is in the category of Lord's energy
 - Supersoul is another knower of the body; in the category of the Lord's personal expansion
- (b) **Mystery of material creation**
- **Similarity** – Both living entity and material nature are eternal
 - Material nature is eternal, although specific manifestations of matter are temporary
 - Living entity is eternal because of being Lord's superior energy
 - **Difference** between material nature and living entity
 - Material nature has constant transformation, but nature of living entity is Non-changing
 - Material nature is absorbed in the Supreme Personality of Godhead, 'Maha-Vishnu' and whenever required, it is manifested through the *mahat-tattva*
 - The Living entity also gets absorbed in 'Maha-Vishnu' and with the coming of the material nature they are given a chance to prepare to go back to Godhead
- (c) **Why the eternal living entity falls down to material world**
- Due to rebellious nature
 - It really does not matter how we came in contact with matter
 - The Supreme Lord knows "how and why" this took place
- (d) **What does the Lord focus on in the scriptures**
- The living entity attracted by the material nature is undergoing a hard struggle for material existence
 - Know for certain that all "transformations" and "influences of material nature by the three modes" are productions of material nature
 - As far as spirit soul is concerned living entities are all the same and all transformations and varieties are due to the body

 **LINK BETWEEN TEXTS 13.20 & 13.21:** The relationship between the living entity and the changes caused by material nature is elaborated upon in the next verse.

Text 13.21*

THEME: Happiness and distress are due to *purusa's* identifying with *prakriti*

- ❖ Nature is the cause of all material causes and effects
- ❖ Living entities is the cause of various sufferings and enjoyments in this world
 - Because of illusory oneness with matter, his desires and actions cause him to suffer and enjoy

FOCUS OF LEARNING: PURPORT 13.21

- (a) **Different manifestations of body and senses among living entities are due to material nature**
- Basis of 8.4 million species – They arise from different sensual pleasures and desires
 - Different bodies result in different happiness and distress
 - Conclusion – Material happiness and distress are due to the body and not to himself (the soul) as he is
 - Cause of being in the material world – Desire to lord it over material nature (*cf.* Spiritual world is pure and free from the desire to lord it over)
- (b) **Material world is a place of struggle** – provides different “residential quarters”
- Everyone is struggling to acquire different kinds of pleasure from the body
 - Body is the effect of senses and senses are the instruments for gratifying desires
 - The living entity gets a body according to “past desire” and “activity”
 - Past desire and activity decide one’s “residential quarters”
 - Law of nature – once a body is attained, one comes under the laws of nature and behaves as a dog or a hog or a demigod etc.
- (c) **Supersoul always accompanies us in all circumstances** (in all bodies)
- *Ref. Vedas (Mundaka Upanisad)*

Text 13.22*

THEME: ‘Desire to enjoy’ forges the bond between *purusha* and *prakriti*

- ❖ Living entity follows the way of life according to the three modes
- ❖ Association with material nature leads to different good and evil among various species

FOCUS OF LEARNING: PURPORT 13.22

- (a) **This verse signifies “How a living entity transmigrates from one body to another”**
- Transmigration is compared to a change of dress (*Bg.* 2.22)
 - Change of dress is due to “attachment to material existence”
 - Desire to lord over put him in undesirable circumstances – Sometimes born as demigod or human, or beast or bird or bug etc
- (b) **Binding factor to different bodies** – Association with the three modes
- In all cases, one thinks himself to be the “Master of his circumstances”, yet he is under material nature
- (c) **How Krishna consciousness helps** – “Helps to rise above the three modes and be become transcendental”
- (d) **How this change can be effected** – By “hearing from authoritative sources”
- Best example – Arjuna hearing science of God from Krishna
 - How hearing works – If living entity submits to hearing process he loses his long cherished desire to dominate, gradually and proportionately he comes to enjoy spiritual happiness
 - *Ref. Vedic mantra* – “As one becomes learned in association with Supreme Personality of Godhead, he proportionately relishes eternal blissful life”

PRACTICAL APPLICATION OF TEXTS 13.20 – 13.23

- Freedom from *prakriti* is available for one who recognizes the position of the “true purusa” (The Supreme enjoyer) described in Text 13.23
 - Because bondage is due to the attempt to take the position of the Lord
- One can come to this understanding through *jnana-yoga*, *astanga-yoga*, *karma-yoga* or *bhakti-yoga* which begins with hearing

Text 13.23**Describes actual *purusha***

THEME: Second type of *purusa* is mentioned here – He is never entangled like the ordinary *purusa*

- ❖ He is the transcendental enjoyer,
- ❖ The Supreme Proprietor, overseer and permitter
- ❖ He is known as the Supersoul

FOCUS OF LEARNING: PURPORT 13.23

- (a) **Monist philosophers take knower of the body to be ‘one’** – They think there is no difference between the Supersoul and the individual soul

Refutation: The Lord says that “He is represented by the *Paramatma* in every body”

- He is mentioned as “para” which implies transcendental – He is different from the individual soul
 - His name is *Paramatma* and not “*atma*”
 - Role of supersoul – Supersoul is present not as the finite enjoyer (like individual soul), but as the witness, overseer, permitter and Supreme enjoyer
 - All pervading – Supersoul has legs and hands everywhere
 - Maintainer – Supersoul is “*bhokta*” (maintainer) and individual soul is “*bhukta*” (maintained)
 - Real friend – Supersoul stays with all living entities as a friend – Present to sanction individual soul’s desires
- (b) **Relationship between living entity and Supersoul**
- Living entity is eternally part and parcel of Supreme Personality of Godhead
 - Intimately related as friends
 - Living entity is marginal entity – Because tendency to reject the Lord’s sanction and act independently to dominate
 - Cause of material strife in material nature – Misuse of independence
 - Lord as the Supreme well-wisher
 - In conditioned state of living entity, Lord stays with the living entity to get him back
 - Lord is always instructing from within, trying to convince us that the material world is not conducive to happiness – “Give it up and turn your faith to Me”
 - Instructing from without as *Bhagavad-gita*
- (c) **How does an intelligent person act** – Places his faith in the *Paramatma* and begins to advance to a blissful eternal life of knowledge

Text 13.24

THEME: Knowing the philosophy explained in *Bg. 13.20 – 13.23* causes liberation – no more births

FOCUS OF LEARNING: PURPORT 13.24

- (a) **This verse indicates the result of knowledge** – Knowledge of truly understanding the relationship between soul and Supersoul
 - Liberation and return to the spiritual world
- (b) **The purpose of knowledge** – To understand how the living entity has fallen into this material world in a precarious condition
- (c) **Understand your position**
 - Understand by personal endeavor in association with *guru, sadhu* and *sastra*
 - Revert to Krishna consciousness by understanding *Bhagavad-gita* as it is explained by the Supreme Personality of Godhead

Text 13.25

THEME: One can achieve this understanding (*Texts 13.20 – 13.23*) through various types of *yogas*

- ❖ Some perceive the Supersoul through meditation (*Dhyana*)
- ❖ Others through the cultivation of knowledge (*Sankhya-yoga*)
- ❖ Still others through working without fruitive desire (*Karma-yoga*)

FOCUS OF LEARNING: PURPORT 13.25

- (a) **Lord explains two classes of conditioned souls** (Based on search for self-realization)
 - Faithful in spiritual life – Introspective devotees, philosophers and workers who have renounced fruitive results
 - Atheists, agnostics and skeptics are beyond the sense of spiritual understanding
 - It also includes those who establish the doctrine of monism
- (b) **Devotees of the Lord are best situated in spiritual understanding** – Because
 - They know that beyond the material nature are spiritual world and Supreme Personality of Godhead, who expands as *Paramatma*
- (c) **Sankhya philosophers are also in the class of faithful**
 - They analyze material world in twenty-four elements
 - They place the soul as the twenty-fifth element – gradually realize soul as transcendental to material elements
 - Realise the entity above the soul is Supersoul – the twenty-sixth element
 - Finally comes to devotional service in Krishna consciousness
- (d) **Renounced workers are also in the category of faithful and are perfect in their attitude**
 - Also given a chance to progress in Krishna consciousness



LINK BETWEEN TEXTS 13.25 & 13.26:

Can one advance if he cannot meditate, pursue *sankhya* or practice *niskama-karma-yoga*.

Text 13.26

THEME: Bhakti is the easiest and the best path to understand this science


- ❖ This verse talks about those who, although not conversant with spiritual knowledge:
 - They begin to worship the Supreme Person upon hearing about him from others
 - Because of tendency to hear, they also transcend the path of birth and death
- ❖ **Conclusion:** Hearing with faith from authorities has great potency

FOCUS OF LEARNING: PURPORT 13.26

- (a) **This verse especially applies to modern society**
 - Because in modern society – There is practically no education in spiritual matters
 - Some people appear atheistic, agnostic or philosophical, but actually they have no knowledge of philosophy
- (b) **Qualification** – Any common man, if a good soul – has a chance of advancing by hearing
- (c) **Lord Caitanya stresses “hearing” as important process**
 - Simply hear from authority and especially hearing *Hare Krishna Maha-mantra*
 - He also recommends as per *SB. 10.14.3* that there is no need to change your position but
 - Only give up the endeavor to know Absolute Truth by speculative reasonings, and
 - Learn to become servant of those in knowledge of the Supreme Lord
- (d) **Benediction**
 - If one takes advantage of hearing from realized souls, he gradually understands everything
 - Automatically leads to Supreme Lord’s worship
- (e) **Conclusive advice**
 - By good fortune, take shelter of pure devotee
 - Hear from him and follow his footsteps
 - Thus gradual elevation to pure devotion

SECTION V (13.27 – 13.35)

JNANA-CHAKSHU: THE VISION OF KNOWLEDGE

 **LINK BETWEEN SECTION IV & SECTION V:** In this chapter, the Lord described how to understand the position of *prakriti*, *purusa*, *ksetra*, *ksetra-jna*, *jnana* and *jneyan*. Now He will describe the vision of one who can understand them in the proper perspective

PRACTICAL APPLICATION SECTION V

One who can see Supersoul, living entities and material nature in their proper perspective, sees through the eyes of knowledge

Text 13.27

THEME: Realised person can distinguish between spirit and matter in all circumstances

- ❖ Whatever one sees in material existence, moving or non-moving is only a combination of the field of activities and the knower of the field
 - This verse explains that all species are a combination of material nature and living entity (purport)
 - Combination is effected by the Supreme Lord, controller of both, Superior and inferior energies

Text 13.28

THEME: One who sees the indestructible Supersoul always accompanying the indestructible individual soul in all bodies, is the “actual seer”

FOCUS OF LEARNING: PURPORT 13.28

- (a) **Explains the man in real knowledge** – To see the three things i.e. the body, its proprietor and the Supersoul as the friend of the soul, in their proper perspective
- (b) **How such vision is possible** – By good association with real knower of spiritual subjects
- (c) **Two meanings of “*paramesvara*”**
 - Maybe used for individual soul because he is the master of the body and remains unaffected with the destruction of the body
 - Also refers to Supersoul – In any case both the soul and the Supersoul are indestructible

Text 13.29

THEME: Thus seeing in proper knowledge, **one does not degrade himself by pursuing selfish desires** of the mind; but one approaches the transcendental destination

FOCUS OF LEARNING: PURPORT 13.29

- (a) **Current situation of living entity** – One has situated himself differently than in spiritual world
- (b) **Role of mind** – Mind is generally addicted to sense gratification; When the mind turns to the Supersoul, one becomes advanced

Text 13.30

THEME: Further describes the man who “actually sees” in real knowledge

- ❖ He sees that “Neither he nor others are acting”
- ❖ All activities are performed by the body, which is created by material nature (purport)
 - Body (like a machine) is given by the Lord according to past desires and *karma*
 - All acts are forced according to bodily constitution
 - Soul is outside bodily activities

Text 13.31


THEME: Only the body acts – Living entity is distinct from the field of activities

FOCUS OF LEARNING: PURPORT 13.31

- (a) A sensible man ceases to see different identities due to different material bodies
 - Thus absence of any material differentiation because of different bodies
- (b) Sees how beings are expanded everywhere, and thus attains to the “***Brahman* conception**”
 - Purified consciousness can thus develop Krishna consciousness

PRACTICAL APPLICATION OF TEXTS 13.29 – 13.31


- One should be neither disturbed, nor envious. He must act properly and see the Supersoul – The ultimate sanctioning agent – present in all beings (13.29)
- Text 13.30 explains further the knowledge given in Text 13.21: “I, the soul, am the cause of various sufferings and enjoyments, but I do nothing; only material nature acts.” For the purpose of engendering humility, it is stressed herein that the individual soul does nothing (13.30)
- All bodies must one day cease to exist. Therefore, when we see many different individuals, we should stop seeing them as their fields of activity; the *ksetra-jna*—both the soul and the Supersoul—have nothing to do with matter. That is Brahman vision. (13.31)

 **LINK BETWEEN TEXTS 13.31 & 13.32:**
What does a person with Brahman vision see?

Text 13.32

THEME: Vision of eternity is further explained – One can see that the soul never mixes with the body

- ❖ Imperishable soul is transcendental, eternal and beyond the modes
- ❖ Despite contact with material body, the soul neither does anything nor is entangled
- ❖ This fact is explained by two analogies in Texts 13.33 – 13.34

 **LINK BETWEEN TEXTS 13.32 & 13.33: QUESTION:** Krishna states clearly in Text 13.32 that only the body changes. The soul is eternal and changeless. As the soul is nevertheless within the body, does he combine with it? **ANSWER:** Krishna answers in Text 13.33 by saying that matter and spirit do not mix. He explains this with two analogies in Text 13.33 and 13.34 respectively

Text 13.33

THEME: 1st Analogy: Like the sky (because of its subtle nature) does not mix with anything, although it is all pervading; similarly the soul in Brahman vision does not mix with the body, though situated in the body

- ❖ e.g. Air enters mud, stool, water but does not mix with anything
- ❖ Similarly the living entity is situated in varieties of bodies but remains aloof
 - Scientists cannot ascertain this

Text 13.34

THEME: 2nd Analogy: As the sun alone illuminates all this universe, similarly the living entity illuminates the entire body by consciousness

FOCUS OF LEARNING: PURPORT 13.34

- (a) **Consciousness is the proof of presence of soul** – e.g. Sunshine is the proof of sun
 - Consciousness is not a product of a combination of matter – Because
 - When soul leaves there is no more consciousness
- (b) **Difference between “Supreme consciousness” and “individual consciousness”**
 - Living entity is only conscious of one body, although he is qualitative one with the Supreme
 - Supersoul is conscious of all bodies

Text 13.35
A one verse chapter summary

THEME: Seeing with the eyes of knowledge, the following things, one attains the Supreme Goal

- ❖ The difference between the body and the knower of the body
- ❖ The process of liberation from bondage in material nature

FOCUS OF LEARNING: PURPORT 13.35

(a) Purport of Chapter 13

- One should know the distinction between the body, owner and the Supersoul
- Recognize the process of liberation as per Texts 13.8 – 13.12
- Then one can go to the Supreme destination

(b) How the process works

- Faithful person should have some good association
- Hearing in good association
- Accepts a spiritual master
- Know the difference between body and matter as the stepping stone for further realisation
- Analyze the body with twenty-four elements
- Then analyze soul and Supersoul as separate

(c) Conclusion and Suggestion

- These things are meant for contemplation and for realization
- Have a complete understanding of this chapter with the help of the spiritual master

SUMMARIZED THEME 13C
THE VISION OF KNOWLEDGE

- A) One can distinguish between spirit and matter in all circumstances (13.27)
 - One sees all moving and non-moving as a combination of the field and knower of the field
- B) One sees indestructible Supersoul accompanying the indestructible individual soul in all the bodies (13.28)
- C) One sees the Supersoul equally present everywhere (13.29)
- D) One sees that all activities are performed by the body and the self does nothing (13.30)
- E) One sees the living entity as distinct from the field of activities (13.31)
- F) One sees that soul never mixes with the body, but is transcendental and eternal (13.32)

☪ **END OF CHAPTER 13** ☪

CHAPTER 13 Appendix

Selected Texts extracted from “Surrender unto Me”

Text 13.3

The body, in this chapter, is often referred to as a *kṣetra*, a field. Just as different crops grow in a farmer’s field according to the seeds he has planted, a living entity’s happiness and distress similarly grow in his body—his field of activities—according to his previous actions. The living entity, as the *kṣetra-jñā*, knows his own body, but Kṛṣṇa says that another *kṣetra-jñā* knows all bodies. That *kṣetra-jñā* is the Supersoul. A farmer, like the soul, knows all about his own field, but the king, like the Supersoul in everyone’s heart, is the ultimate controller and knower of each and every field in his kingdom. In addition, the soul can only imperfectly know his own body; the Supersoul has complete and perfect knowledge of all bodies.

Kṛṣṇa in this verse has defined knowledge (*jñāna*) as knowing the body, the soul and the Supersoul. He will complete His description of knowledge in texts 8–12 and 24–37, by explaining the process of achieving knowledge.

Kṛṣṇa already discussed this point in Chapter Five: The living entity’s realization that “I am not this body” constitutes enlightenment. Such enlightenment, however, born of the mode of goodness, is insufficient for liberation. When his knowledge increases to include knowledge of the Supersoul, he becomes liberated. Thus to come to the *brahma-bhūta* (liberated) platform, one needs to know the Supersoul.

Śāṅkarācārya and other impersonalists have commented extensively on this verse. They say that the word *ca* means: “You should know that he who is the knower within the body is also (*ca*) Me. i.e., the soul is the same as the Supersoul.” Were that true, however, Kṛṣṇa would be contradicting His own statements in Chapter Fifteen wherein He clearly makes distinctions between the soul and the Supersoul. If the soul and the Supersoul are factually one, as Māyāvādīs claim, how could one aspect of the “one,” which is by definition undifferentiated, give knowledge to the other aspect of the “one”? How could the other aspect be lacking? How could something undifferentiated even possess an aspect? If both were “one,” absolutely no differentiation (even in terms of knowing and not knowing) could exist.

Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura explains:

This body, equipped with senses, is the facility for material contact and is the so-called field because it is the ground on which the tree of material existence grows. The *jīva* who knows it is called the *kṣetra-jñā*, both in his condition of bondage, wherein he identifies himself with the body (thinking in terms of “I” and “mine”), and in his liberated condition, in which he does not indentify with the body (or conceptions of “I” and “mine”).

Like a farmer, the *kṣetra-jñā* is also the enjoyer of the fruits of the tree in his field, as described by the Personality of Godhead: “The village vultures eat one fruit of this tree, while the forest swans eat another. One who, by the grace of worshipable souls, understands this tree, composed of *māyā* and appearing in many forms, is an actual knower of the Vedas.” This verse means: Vultures, who live outside a village, are called vultures (*ghṛdhra*) because they “seize” [sense gratification], and they are like the conditioned *jīvas*, who eat one fruit of this tree—misery. Even if they attain heaven, their experience is ultimately miserable. The swans living in the forest, however, are like liberated *jīvas*. They eat the fruit of happiness. The complete enjoyment of liberation is derived from their experience.

Thus the one tree of material existence appears in many forms, as the means of attaining hell, heaven and liberation. Because it is born from the Lord's external energy, it is called *māyā-mayam*. By the grace of the worshipable spiritual masters, one is made to understand this tree. Those who are in knowledge of the *kṣetra* and *kṣetra-jña* actually know the Vedas.

Śrīla Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa explains: "This body is perceived by ignorant persons as different kinds of selves: 'I am a demigod,' 'I am a human,' 'I am stout' and so on. Nonetheless, one who knows that in all conditions (sleeping, sitting, etc.) the body is separate from the self and is the means of the self's enjoyment and liberation—that person, distinct as the knower of the body, which is his object of knowledge—is called the *kṣetra-jña* by experts in knowledge of the factual identity of the field and the knower of the field."

Text 13.5

By quoting from the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* of the *Yajur Veda*, Śrīla Prabhupāda confirms Kṛṣṇa's words that more details are available in the Vedas. There are basically two Vedic systems by which one progresses indirectly, without descending information, in realization. The Second Chapter of the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad*, which Śrīla Prabhupāda quotes in his purport, describes one of them. It is called *vyāṣṭi*, the system in which a person directs his meditation toward the self and thus seeks to understand the Absolute by considering himself a fragment of the Supreme. Analogously, one can study the nature of the entire ocean by scrutinizing a drop. The second indirect system is called *samaṣṭi*, in which one studies the entirety of the universe while considering it the body of the Supreme.

In the *vyāṣṭi* system, one observes, encasing the living entity's consciousness, five *kośas*, or sheaths: *anna-maya*, dependence upon food for existence; *prāṇa-maya*, living symptoms and life forms; *jñāna-maya*, thinking, feeling and willing; *vijñāna-maya*, distinguishing the mind and life symptoms from the self; and *ānanda-maya*, realization of the all-blissful nature. All five are progressively developed stages of subjective, individual consciousness (or self-concepts) and are also objective manifestations of the Lord's energy in which Brahman, the Absolute or the greatest, is realized even if indirectly or relatively.

A mundane example of subjective consciousness that nevertheless has objective existence is one's relationship with his country of birth. A citizen does not create the concept of belonging to that country as its citizen; the country itself creates the category and the requirements of citizenship. Citizenship, therefore, exists independently as a reality outside of an individual. However, a human being who possesses the requirement of a specific type of subjectively experienced consciousness will identify with his country and consider himself Indian or American or Russian. Dogs, monkeys, birds and so on do not possess the required subjective consciousness to identify themselves with their country of birth, though they certainly exist within that country. In the same way, the five *kośas* are both subjectively experienced stages of consciousness and objective energies—levels of Brahman realization—manifest by the Supreme.

One experiencing the *anna-maya* stage experiences a unifying oneness by viewing all as potential food. Such a consciousness makes no distinction between that which is alive and that which is not. It does not even possess any awareness of its own existence as separate from the existence of all else. Although this self-concept is the most basic form of consciousness, it is nevertheless also a manifestation of the Lord's energy.

When one comes to the stage of *prāṇa-maya*, his consciousness advances to an awareness of his own active life symptoms, and he identifies with them. His view of the external world is unified by the principle of maintaining his own survival. Materialistic human society, more or less, exists on this

primitive level of realization. Again, as are the kośas, this stage of consciousness is also the Lord's energy.

In jñāna-maya, one's self-concept expands to awareness of his own thinking, feeling and willing. One's perception of reality is then based upon and limited by that vision. Śrīla Rāmanujācārya, however, explains that the Taittirīya Upaniṣad places on the jñāna-maya platform only those civilized human beings who follow Vedic culture. According to him, this is because one's perceptions and actions must be based on actual knowledge, Vedic knowledge, to qualify one for the platform of jñāna-maya, which is full of knowledge.

These first three stages refer to a living entity trapped in illusion—one who fully identifies with and is limited by his field of activities. In the fourth stage, the vijñāna-maya stage, the living entity realizes himself as eternal spirit, separate from his gross and subtle bodies. This is the platform of transcendental knowledge.

The Supreme Lord is known as ānanda-maya, full of bliss, and in this final stage of consciousness, one realizes and indentifies himself as a servant of that supremely blissful Lord.

Thus the Lord expands His energy as the five kośas and provides levels of consciousness to the kṣetra-jñā, the knower of a field of activities.

Text 13.6 – 13.7

The field of activities for the conditioned soul can be compared to a playground in a backyard surrounded by a big fence. The child playing there has freedom to play as he wishes, but he cannot extend his activities beyond the allotted field. He is limited by the fence. Similarly, the living entity is limited by the interactions of his body, mind and karma, which constitute his field of activities. An earthworm, for example, has a very small field of activities. He cannot read, write, jump or run. He can simply crawl through the dirt, surface when it rains and crawl back into the soil when the rain stops. A dog has a relatively larger field of activities, and a human being a still larger one. One's kṣetra is based on his karma.

A wealthy child will possess many toys to play with in his backyard, but he is still restricted by the fence. Although he may be proud of the scope of his playground, and even think himself happy and free, with his swing and toy car and sandbox, he is nevertheless absorbed only in an insignificant backyard. He knows nothing of life beyond the fence. Similarly, the living entity, according to the limitations of the body and mind he has received through his karma, cannot see beyond his limited field of activities.

Every living entity's kṣetra is arranged by his karma, through the agency of māyā. Kṛṣṇa therefore is not partial, because as the Supersoul, the knower of all kṣetras, He simply sanctions the awarding of each living entity's field of activities.

Texts 13.8-12

This is a continuation of Kṛṣṇa's explanation of knowledge. Kṛṣṇa has already defined knowledge as knowing the field and the two knowers of the field. These verses describe the process of obtaining jñāna. According to Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura, of the twenty items mentioned, seventeen apply to both the jñāni and the bhakta. The last two, accepting the importance of self-realization (adyātma-jñāna-nityatvam) and philosophical search for the Absolute Truth (tattva-jñānārthadarśanam), are technically only for the jñāni. "Constant and unalloyed devotion to Me" is the sole

quality specifically for the devotee. All other qualities come to a devotee who exclusively endeavors for constant, unalloyed devotion.

These twenty items include qualities—such as cleanliness—(which, if developed, are favorable for spiritual advancement) and elements of the process of advancement such as approaching a bona fide spiritual master and perceiving the evils of birth, death, disease and old age. Integrated as a process, these items are the means of acquiring transcendental knowledge, or an accurate understanding of the body, the soul and the Supersoul.

Therefore, taken as a process that carries one to transcendence, these twenty items have nothing to do with the field of activity and its interactions.

Text 13.13

The term “knowable” (jñeyam) used here signifies “the object of knowledge” about which Arjuna inquired in text 1. Śrīla Prabhupāda clearly mentions here that there are two knowable objects: “The Lord has explained the field of activities and the knower of the field. He has also explained the process of knowing the knower of the field of activities. Now He begins to explain the knowable, first the soul and then the Supersoul. By knowledge of the knower, both the soul and the Supersoul, one can relish the nectar of life.”

Text 13.14

Śrīla Prabhupāda’s purport strongly confirms that this verse, which refers to the all-pervading, describes the Supersoul, not the living entity. In his purport to Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 2.2.1, however, Śrīla Prabhupāda describes that those who wish to understand this verse as referring to the living entity as all-pervading may properly do so: “The kingdom of God is unlimited; therefore the number of the assisting hands of the Lord is also unlimited. The Bhagavad-gītā (13.14) asserts that the Lord has His hands, legs, eyes and mouths in every nook and corner of His creation. This means that the expansions of differentiated parts and parcels, called jīvas or living entities, are assisting hands of the Lord, and all of them are meant for rendering a particular pattern of service to the Lord.”

Text 13.16

That Kṛṣṇa described the knowable in text 16 as avijñeyam, unknowable, indicates that the Supersoul cannot be understood by the material senses. Only by hearing with devotion from transcendental sources can He be understood.

Text 13.21

This text again addresses the topic of the doer. The living entity is the cause of all his sufferings and enjoyments because he has illicitly embraced māyā with the desire to predominate and enjoy independently of Kṛṣṇa. He thus becomes entangled in material nature. Taking his karma into consideration, material nature then creates for him a field meant ultimately for suffering. This all takes place under the sanction of the actual puruṣa, the Supersoul. Therefore, although nature is the cause of the entire material manifestation, the living entity causes his own happiness and distress.

Text 13.22

Puruṣaḥ prakṛti-stho hi bhuṅkte prakṛti-jān guṇān/ kāraṇaṁ guṇa-saṅgo 'sya sad-asad-yoni-janmasu. Kṛṣṇa is actually the only puruṣa, or predominating enjoyer. The jīva, in contrast, as described in Bg. 7.5, is His subordinate energy. Because of illusion, however, he is placed within the material energy (puruṣaḥ prakṛti-stho hi) to imagine himself as a puruṣa. Thus, incarcerated and suffering within matter, the jīva focuses his attempt (bhuṅkte prakṛti-jān guṇān) on the impossible: enjoying by exploiting creations of the gunas, the modes of material nature. By his association with material nature while in an enjoying spirit (kāraṇaṁ guṇa-saṅgo 'sya), a jīva traps himself in the cycle of repeated birth and death (sad-asad-yoni-janmasu). Practically, by his attempt, the living entity “becomes” matter and experiences change—birth, death, old age and disease—though he is changeless.