

Week 12 – Members' Section

The Nectar of the Holy Name

Devotional service begins with hearing the holy name chanted by a pure Vaishnava:

Because the living entities are minute, atomic parts and parcels of the Lord, devotional service is already present within them in a dormant condition. Devotional service begins with *sravanam kirtanam* [SB 7.5.23], hearing and chanting. When a man is sleeping, he can be awakened by sound vibration; therefore every conditioned soul should be given the chance to hear the Hare Krishna mantra chanted by a pure Vaishnava. One who hears the Hare Krishna mantra thus vibrated is awakened to spiritual consciousness, or Krishna consciousness. In this way one's mind gradually becomes purified, as stated by Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu (*ceto-darpana-marjanam* [Cc. Antya 20.12]).

When the mind is purified, the senses are also purified. Instead of using the senses for sense gratification, the awakened devotee employs the senses in the transcendental loving service of the Lord. This is the process by which dormant love for Krishna is awakened.

Sri Caitanya-caritāmṛta Madhya-līlā 22.105

Passage for Discussion

What should we eat?

The laws of nature are very subtle and are very diligently administered, although people do not know it. In the Manu-samhita the concept of a life for a life is sanctioned, and it is actually observed throughout the world. Similarly, there are other laws which state that one cannot even kill an ant without being responsible. Since we cannot create, we have no right to kill any living entity, and therefore man-made laws that distinguish between killing a man and killing an animal are imperfect.

Although there are imperfections in man-made laws, there cannot be defects in the laws of God. According to the laws of God, killing an animal is as punishable as killing a man. Those who draw distinctions between the two are concocting their own laws. Even in the Ten Commandments it is prescribed, "Thou shall not kill." This is a perfect law, but by discriminating and speculating men distort it. "I shall not kill man, but I shall kill animals." In this way people cheat themselves and inflict suffering on themselves and others. In any case, however, God's laws will not excuse such behavior.

Everyone is God's creature, although in different bodies or dresses. God is considered the one Supreme Father. A father may have many children, and some may be intelligent and others not very intelligent, but if an intelligent son tells his father, "My brother is not very intelligent; let me kill him," will the father agree? Simply because one son is not very intelligent and the other desires to kill him to avoid the burden, the father will never agree. Similarly, if God is the Supreme Father, why should He sanction the killing of animals who are also His sons? In Bhagavad-gita God declares to Arjuna that all I am their seed giving father," the Lord says. just as in ordinary material procreation the father gives the seed and the mother develops the body by supplying the necessary blood to the embryo, similarly, the living entities, parts and parcels of the supreme father, are impregnated by the Lord in material nature.

The dimension of the spirit soul is very minute and is given in the scriptures as *kesagra*—one ten thousandth the portion of the tip of a hair. We can hardly imagine a very small point divided into thousands of parts. In other words, it is so minute that it cannot be perceived even by the most powerful microscope. Thus the dimension of the spiritual spark is so minute that it is invisible to mundane vision. All of this information is given in the scriptures, but because we do not have the proper vision, we cannot see. Although our material eyes cannot perceive the dimension of the soul, the soul is nonetheless within the body, and as soon as it departs, it takes another body according to its work.

Spiritual life is not a question of vegetarianism but of understanding higher knowledge. When one comes to the platform of elevated knowledge, he naturally becomes a vegetarian. *Panditah sama darsinah* : one who is very highly learned, does not distinguish between a learned scholar, a brahmana, an elephant, a dog and a cow. He is *sama-darsi*; his vision enables to see them all equally. How is this? He does not see the body but the soul, the spiritual spark (Brahman). He thinks: "Here is a dog, but it is also a living entity, although by his past karma, he has become a dog. And his learned scholar is also a living spark, but he has taken good birth because of his past karma". When one comes to that position, he does not see the body, but the spiritual spark, and he does not distinguish between one living entity and another.

Actually we do not make distinctions between carnivores and vegetarians, for the grass has life just as the cows or the lamb. A guideline, however, should be the Vedic instructions given in Isopanishad (mantra 1) : *isavasyam idam sarvam yat kinca jagat yam jagat / tena tyaktyena bhunjitha ma grdhah kasya svid dhanam* . "Everything animate or inanimate that is within the universe is controlled and owned by the Lord. One should therefore accept only those things necessary for himself, which are set aside as his quota, and one must not accept other things, knowing well to whom they belong."

Since everything is the property of the Supreme Lord, one can only enjoy what is allotted to him by the Lord, and cannot touch another's property. According to Vedic life and according to all Vedic scriptures, a man should live on fruits and vegetables, for his teeth are made in such a way that these can be very easily eaten and digested. Although it is nature's law that one has to live by eating other living entities (*jivo jivasya jivanam*), one must use discretion.

Fruits, flowers, vegetables, rice, grain and milk are made for human beings. Milk, for example, is an animal product, the blood of an animal transformed, but the cow delivers more milk than is needed by her calf because milk is intended by for man. Man should simply take the milk and let the cows live, and thus following nature's law, man will be happy. *Tena tyaktena bhunjitha*: one should take whatever God allots to him and thus live comfortably.

We have to elevate our consciousness through this science of Krishna.

Krsna consciousness the Matchless Gift

Discovery:

1. How are God's laws different from man-made laws? Explain with reference to the punishment given for taking any life.

Understanding:

1. Why are God's laws different?
2. Explain the dimensions of the spirit soul. When can we begin to understand the presence of the soul in everyone?
3. What are the reasons for us to be vegetarian?

Application

1. Discuss why people like to eat meat. What arguments or reasons will you provide for them to become vegetarian?

Preaching is the Essence

All devotees must preach:

When a person actually revives his consciousness with thoughts of Krsna by the mercy of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, he revives his spiritual life and becomes addicted to the service of the Lord. Only then can he act as an acharya. In other words, everyone should engage in preaching, following in the footsteps of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu. In this way one will be very much appreciated by Lord Krsna and will quickly be recognized by Him. Actually a devotee of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu must engage in preaching in order to increase the followers of the Lord. By thus preaching actual Vedic knowledge all over the world, one will benefit all mankind.

Cc Madhya 7.153 (Madhya: 3, p. 77)