

Bhakti Vriksha Modules - Shraddhavan
Week 2 – Members’ Section

The Nectar of the Holy Name

The only hope in Kali Yuga

The people in this age are very short-lived and slow in understanding spiritual life. Actually, human life is meant for understanding spiritual values, but because everyone in this age is a shudra, no one is interested. People have forgotten life’s real purpose.

The word manda means both slow and bad, and everyone in this age is either bad or slow or a combination of both. People are unfortunate and disturbed by so many things. According to Srimad Bhagvatam, there will eventually be no rain and consequently a scarcity of food. The governments will also levy very heavy taxes. The characteristics of this age predicted by Srimad Bhagvatam are already being experienced to some degree.

Since Kali-yuga is a very miserable age, Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, who is Sri Krishna Himself, advises everyone simply to chant Hare Krishna.

*harer nāma harer nāma
harer nāmaiva kevalam
kalau nāsty eva nāsty eva
nāsty eva gatiḥ anyathā*

[Cc. Ādi 17.21]

“In this age of Kali there is no alternative, there is no alternative, there is no alternative for spiritual progress than the holy name, the holy name, the holy name of the Lord.” (Bṛhan-nāradiya Purāṇa)

This process is not Caitanya Mahaprabhu’s invention, but is advised by the shastra, the Puraṇas. The process for this Kali-yuga is very simple. One need only chant the Hare Krishna maha-mantra.

Teachings of Lord Kapila, the Son of Devahuti

Passage for Discussion

Coming Back

Two children are born at the same time on the same day. The parents of the first are wealthy and well-educated and have anxiously awaited the arrival of their first-born for years. Their child, a boy, is bright, healthy and attractive, with a future full of promise. Surely destiny has smiled upon him.

The second child enters into an entirely different world. He is born to a mother who was abandoned while pregnant. In her poverty, she feels little enthusiasm to rear her sickly new offspring. The road ahead is fraught with difficulties and hardships and to rise above them will not be easy.

The world is full of disparities like these; blatant inequalities that often provoke questions: How could providence be so unfair? What did George and Mary do to have their son born blind? They are good people. God is so unkind!”

The principles of re-incarnation, however, allow us to view life with a much broader perspective, i.e., from the stand point of eternity. From this point of view, one brief lifetime is seen not as the beginning of our existence but as nothing more than a flash in time and we can understand that an apparently pious person who may be suffering greatly is suffering the effects of impious activities performed in this or previous lives.

With this broader vision of universal justice we can see how each individual soul is alone responsible for its own Karma.

Our actions are compared to seeds. Initially they are performed or planted, and over a course of time they gradually fructify, releasing their resultant reactions.

Such reactions may produce either suffering or enjoyment for the living being, and he may respond by either improving his character or by becoming increasingly animal like.

A criminal chooses to enter prison by willful transgression of law, but another man may be appointed to sit on the Supreme court by dint of his excellence of service.

This is the special benediction of human life- even if one is destined to suffer terribly for impious acts performed in this and previous lives, one can by taking up the process of Krsna consciousness, change his *Karma*. The soul in a human body stands at the evolutionary mid point. From here the living entity can choose either degradation, or liberation from reincarnation.

If a living being makes some degree of spiritual progress in his present life, then in the next life he is allowed to continue from that point. The Lord tells His disciple Arjuna in Bhagavad-gita, "In this endeavour (Krishna Consciousness) there is no loss or diminution and a little advancement on this path can protect one from the greatest type of fear (returning in a lower- than- human form in the next life)." The soul may thus develop its inherent spiritual qualities through many lives, until it no longer has to reincarnate in a material body, until it returns to its original home in the spiritual world.

Coming Back , The Science of Reincarnation

Discovery:

1. Mention some inequalities we find in life among different people in their enjoyment and suffering.

Understanding:

1. Why do even pious people suffer sometimes?
2. Explain why each person is responsible for his own Karma
3. How can we overcome our suffering and bad Karma?
4. What are the advantages of taking up Krishna Consciousness?

Application:

1. Have you believed in re-incarnation so far? Why or why not?
2. Do you want to change your Karma? Do you think Krsna consciousness will help you achieve that? Why do you think so?

Preaching is the Essence

Preaching Krishna Consciousness is showing real mercy to living entities

“If a living entity is developed in Krishna Consciousness and is merciful to others, and if his spiritual knowledge of self-realization is perfect, he will immediately attain liberation from the bondage of material existence.”

In this verse the word *dayā jīvesu*, meaning mercy to other living entities, indicates that a living entity must be merciful to other living entities if he wishes to make progress in self-realization. This means he must preach this knowledge after perfecting himself and understanding his own position as an eternal servant of Krishna. Preaching this is showing real mercy to living entities. Other types of humanitarian work may be temporarily beneficial for the body, but, because a living entity is spirit soul, ultimately one can show him real mercy only by revealing knowledge of his spiritual existence.

Srimad Bhagvatam 4.29.1b