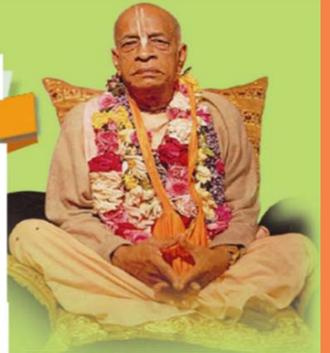




Hare Krishna Youth Journal

YOGA-KSHEMAM

Fulfills Your Requirements & Awards You Protection



An instrument for educating the youth in achieving Lord Krishna centric all-round excellence

With blessings of ISKCON Founder Acharya His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

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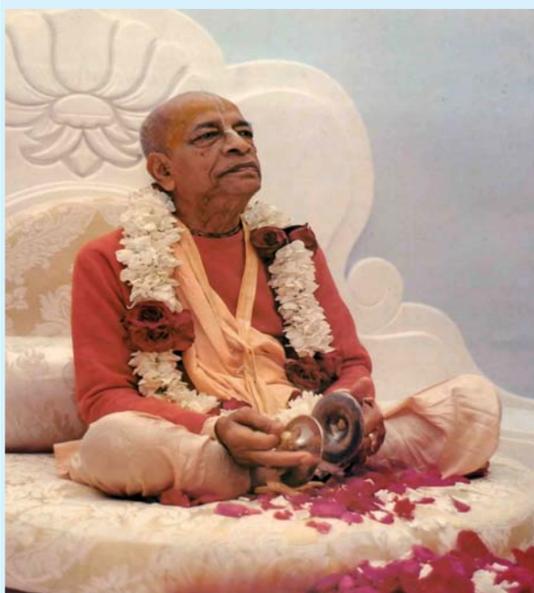
Issue 05

Message

From ISKCON Founder Acharya,
His Divine Grace

A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

Is Krishna Consciousness Science or Belief?



Once a disciple during the role play of a materialistic scientist asked Srila Prabhupada “Why do you call Krishna consciousness a science? It seems like it’s only a belief.” Srila Prabhupada said, “Your so-called science is also a belief. If you call your way science, then our way is also science.”

“But with science we can prove our beliefs”, said the disciple. “Then prove that chemicals make life”, asked

Srila Prabhupada. “Your belief is that life is made from chemicals. So prove it; then it is science. But you can’t prove it; therefore it remains a belief.”

The disciple again asked “Well you believe in soul, but you can’t prove that it exists. Since we can’t see the soul, we have to conclude that life comes from matter.” Srila Prabhupada then said, “You cannot see the soul with your gross senses, but it can be perceived. Consciousness can be perceived, and consciousness is the symptom of the soul. But if, as you say, life comes from matter, then you must demonstrate it by supplying the missing chemicals to make a dead body alive again. This is my challenge.”

The disciple further asked “You accept Bhagavad-Gita on faith. How is that scientific? It is only your belief, isn’t that correct?” Srila Prabhupada explained, “Why isn’t it scientific? The Bhagavad-Gita says, *annâd bhavanti bhûtâni parjanyaâd anna-sambhavah*: ‘All living entities subsist by eating sufficient food grains, and grains are produced from rain.’ Is that belief? Similarly, everything in the Bhagavad-Gita is true. If you think about it carefully, you will find it is all true. In the Bhagavad-Gita Krishna said that in society there must be an intelligent class of men, the *brahâmanas*, who know the soul and God. That is civilized man. “But where is such a class of men in today’s society?” Srila Prabhupada continued. The disciple said “That must be true.”

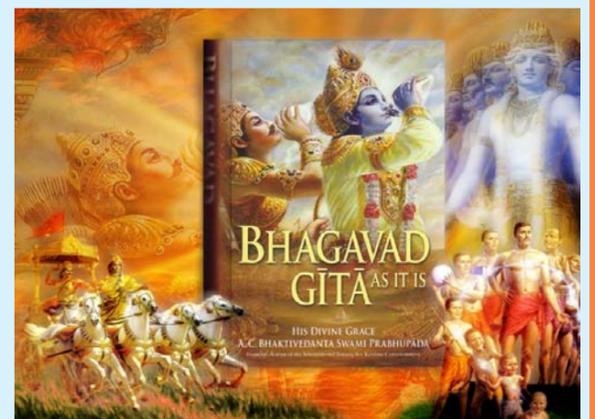
Excerpt from “The Hare Krishna Challenge”. For more details own a copy of the book from ISKCON center’s book stall.

Bhagavad Gita

The King of Education

What should be done when faced with difficulties on the way to achieving the goals?

Generally, there is a chance that one will encounter obstacles and difficulties when trying to achieve the set goals. More importantly, based on the set goals, the intensity of difficulties will increase. Thus, what should one do when faced with obstacles and difficulties, is answered very well in Bhagavad-Gita.



“O son of Kunti, the nonpermanent appearance of happiness and distress, and their disappearance in due course, are like appearance and disappearance of winter and summer seasons. They arise from sense perception, O scion of Bharata, and one must learn to tolerate them without being disturbed.” (BG 2.14)

In the above sloka, Bhagavad-Gita tells us two important points. First, when we are on the course to achieving the set goals, happiness and suffering will come and go. i.e. they come on their own and go back the same way. No body invites difficulties and obstacles; they appear due to some reason. But, when we analyze, we find that we are responsible for the difficulties. In difficult situations, one should use his mental strength (steadiness of mind with support function of intelligence) and courage and remain steady. He should not take any hasty decisions and take the guidance from elders and teachers. It is very important in such situations. Thus, one should develop a relationship with intelligent persons so that they show us the way out at difficult times. The coming and going of difficulties is analogous to rainy season and winter season and is nicely described in Bhagavad-Gita. Everybody knows how the seasons will come and go and we do not worry very much about the change of seasons. But we adjust our lifestyle according to the prevailing season. Similarly, when faced with obstacles, difficulties during the course of achieving our goals, we should overcome them with the mercy of Krishna, Vaishnavas and Bhagavad-Gita. We should take the help of elders.

The second important point described in Bhagavad-Gita is “One should have patience” (*tantitikhswa*). When we face difficulties, we should develop the ability to live with them. Are we not withstanding the summer and winter seasons? Similarly, when we are faced with difficult situations, we should develop the habit of overcoming them and not aban-

don our path to achieving the set goals. The youth should understand this point. This is the wonderful message given in Bhagavad-Gita. Thus in order to succeed in achieving our goals, we should not only set the goals

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Be Your Own Mentor

Mental strength makes you the winner (Part 5)

We discussed in our last issue that how SWOT analysis of self under the guidance of an experienced person is very important in one's life through a case study. We also discussed that SWOT analysis without carefully analyzing the 24 elements leads to wrong or incomplete conclusions. So, now let's get into the details of it.



Take the example of one of the five working senses i.e., legs. We know pretty well of many uses of our legs. They are mainly used for standing, walking, dancing, jumping, running, swimming, riding etc. in our routine life. This is quite a normal phenomenon. Can we think of something beyond this? For this thinking one needs to use the mind in a proper way? So, the working senses when take the help of the parts of subtle body in a proper & positive way, it's going to be a powerful strength. Mind can become either strength or a weakness, depends on how we use it. Let us see through some practical examples.

The legs which we use for such general and important uses can be used for some higher purpose also. Many of you must be aware of Edmund Hillary. At the age of 33, he could conquer Mount Everest, the highest peak on earth, which is 29,028 feet above the sea level. The same legs which we use for routine purposes were used by him for something higher. This is called "self excellence". Similarly, every one of us has some special talents in us. These are nothing but God given gifts. But, majority of us don't even think of what special talents we have, what to speak of using them for some higher purpose. Why is it so? Did you ever think about this? The two quotes by Hillary sum up his life's philosophy:

1. It is not the mountain but we conquer ourselves.
2. People don't decide to become extra ordinary. They decide to accomplish extra ordinary things.

Thus conquering ourselves to accomplish extra ordinary achievements is the self excellence.

Arunima Sinha, one of the volley ball players has lost her right leg in a train accident. But she was never discouraged in her life and has proven herself being the first female amputee to climb the Mount Everest. What made her to achieve this? She could overcome her weakness with strong will power (mental strength) and achieved adorable success and became a role model. She is the best example for the case where a visible weakness can not deter the person from achieving highest position through focused efforts.

The above two examples give us an opportunity to do the SWOT analysis of our given working senses namely legs. Though the legs are strength for any human being, Edmund Hillary made the best use of his strength due to his mental strength (determination or steadiness of mind through intelligence). Thus it is the secret of his success. In the case of Arunima Sinha, the secret of her success lied in her multifold mental

strength. She demonstrated that mental strength (mind powered by intelligence) can be elevated to be much more powerful than any of physical means (tools, equipments such as legs in our context). Her case is thus an example showing how the physical means may sometimes appear superficial in front of real mental strength! Under the column 'Be Your Own Mentor' in subsequent issues we will further explore how to recognize this inner mental strength powered by the intelligence!

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Lion's Race and Rat's Race

In a forest, a lion and a rat became friends. Let us leave aside how they became friends and focus what happened in their friendship. Both of them became very good friends and started general discussions whenever they met. The lion used to narrate the events of the forest while the rat used to narrate the events of the town. One day, the lion was in a depressed state. The rat, in a jubilant mood, came to meet the lion. On seeing the state of lion, the rat started laughing and asked the lion the reason for being sad. The lion then asked the rat to first tell the reason for its happiness. The rat then said "I came first in the rat race that was organized today and all the rats praised me". The lion then said with a dejected face "I lost the lion race arranged in the forest today and all



lions laughed at me". The next day, the rat did not come to meet the lion. The lion then got a doubt and thought that somebody would have harmed the rat. Meanwhile, another rat told the lion "O Lion, your friend is no more. Your friend became arrogant after winning the race and was eaten by a cat. I have come to tell you the news." Then the rat went away.

The summary of the story is that the rat remained a rat even after winning the rat race. The danger from the cat did not disappear and fell prey to the cat. But, the lion, in spite of losing the lion race, lived like a lion with the same courage, bravery and strength. Setting small goals and succeeding will keep the man in the same state. But, setting higher goals, and in spite of working hard, one fails to succeed, a man will get valuable experience. This experience will double the enthusiasm and help in reaching the goals. The youth, should therefore, develop the habit of

setting higher goals. Even if they appear to be impossible and many people try to discourage, the youth should not go back. Many people would have discouraged Edmund Hillary, who conquered the Mt. Everest. He did not become victorious in his first attempt. After many attempts, he finally could reach the top of Mt. Everest. Hillary made history when he became the first man to conquer the world's highest peak.

Thus, it is better to remain as a lion in spite of losing the race rather than remain a rat even after winning the race, which is not good. This will not benefit anybody. Youth should always perform like a lion and grab their share. Then a bright future will await them.

This article is excerpted from Bhagavaddarshan, Telugu edition of BTG Translation is done by Bhakta Krishna Yerrapragada, Ph.D., IISc Bangalore. He is a senior scientist at Defense Research and Development Laboratory, Hyderabad.



Art of Work

Art of living in harmony with friends! (Part-5)

Each one of us is an independent individual with separate body, mind, intelligence, aspirations, goals and achievements in the backdrop of life's canvas consisting of sad, happy and peaceful moments. This individualistic behavior gets polarized when two or more friends come together. Given here is the surest way of developing strong and healthy bonding with friends leading to flow of positive energy.

'**Thanklessness**' represents selfishness with dangerous covering of inflated ego. People with such behavior always think about 'taking' from others without feeling obligated to 'give' anything in return, not even say 'thanks' to express any gratitude. Such behavior if prolonged, gives rise

"Thankfulness" on the other hand is the success mantra for harmonious living with the friends, in a family or in any society!"



to a kind of unhealthy 'competition' nurturing negative feelings about others. It then becomes the root cause of misunderstandings and mutual quarrel. Therefore people with thankless behavior either live as a loner or have tarnished relationship within their circle leading to an unhappy life.

'**Thankfulness**' on the other hand is the success mantra for harmonious living with the friends, in a family or in any society! Sincerely thanking to express the gratitude for all that we keep taking from others and Mother Nature is thus an art.

Thanking not only gives an opportunity to express our gratitude, but more importantly, helps in understanding the fact that how much dependent we are. It helps us in introspecting to know our true worth (which is insignificant) and importance of others, and the nature's support in our life. This gives rise to humbleness and true respect for others resulting in 'cooperation' instead of unhealthy competition. The friends then develop

strong bonding and voluntarily support each other by sharing their resources with feeling of love and care. It helps them to perceive things more rationally in light of others' capabilities, aspirations & goals instead of viewing their own capabilities, aspirations and goals alone. The efforts then synergize helping everyone to remain highly motivated and enthusiastic to achieve higher peaks of success in their individual goals leading to more peace and happiness for all.

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Spiritual Symbiosis

"Yoga-Kshemam"

Spiritual symbiosis at its best

We all live in a society where we are needed to cooperate with each other and live in a harmonious way for a peaceful coexistence. Our quest for knowledge invariably starts by the journey of going to school, college, university, institutes seeking knowledge and seek education always in groups. Our long pursuit of knowledge seeking journey takes us towards attending a class where we sit with an unknown person and get acquainted with him. Later, this acquaintance metamorphoses into a friendship and together we symbiotically work towards the advancement of our knowledge. Thus, our pursuit of knowledge is always in groups which depending on the type of association, brings us great laurels and teaches us few lessons to imbibe.

Let us look at few of the benefits of study group symbiosis we experience in our educational life. Study groups represent the best form of symbiosis as these groups will enable students do well. When they get together, they share ideas and solve problems that would be too difficult for an individual to handle. When one student explains a concept to another, he reinforces the concept for himself. Had he been studying alone, he would not have considered the gaps in his knowledge. Study group is not only intellectually beneficial but also emotionally, as students encourage each other to study. Speaking out or trying to explain something to someone else helps in reinforcing their knowledge. The more we repeat the information, the stronger the long-term memory for that information becomes. The brain forms more synapses as we repeat the information, and more the synapses we have, the easier it becomes to recall the information.

But, in terms of seeking spiritual knowledge, we usually forget the principles of study group symbiosis and always take spiritual knowledge as personal issue and restrict these feelings to ourselves. We thus, do not focus to associate with a person to know this knowledge that becomes unfathomable and mystical. But, in reality, this quest for spiritual knowledge needs more synchronized studies in the form of symbiotic groups as it is more methodical and systematic in nature. Joining the precise spiritual symbiotic groups not only teaches us cooperation and trust but also helps in overall growth of the individual and brings out the best in us. Once we join this group, this association will rekindle in us a feeling of secureness as a contributing member of the group, augments bond of togetherness and will precisely guide us in a right direction. This is a taste of spiritual symbiosis.

“Yoga-kshemam” the magazine in your hands is the best utilized form of spiritual symbiotic network you have ever had. It is breaking the barriers of time and place, reaching you with the best possible message in it for your growth. It is high time for all of us to take this rare opportunity enthusiastically and explore the knowledge in its original form. This pursuit of spiritual symbiosis will help us to better understand our nature and help us thrive practically in our daily lives. As a ship moves towards its destination through the signals of lighthouse by the action of a symbiotic team of shipmen, let us pledge to move ahead in our lives with the help of this beautiful spiritual symbiotic group of individuals through the light shown by the wisdom of “Yoga-Kshemam”. Do not worry and be brave as we are sure the victory will be ours, since, from now onwards, our journey is in the hands of best captain of the ship.

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How humans can reduce or avoid the natural calamities?

Natural calamities are the result of bad Karma by people living predominantly in sinful areas performing irreligious activities. By avoiding bad karma and harmonizing with spiritual activities, one can protect themselves from the natural calamities.

Recently series of earthquakes struck a small country Nepal, which got devastated with in small duration of time. Thousands of people died under the debris of their own buildings and lakhs of people became homeless due to the damages that resulted due to the tremors. Similarly, in 2005 there was a tsunami that lashed several Indian ocean countries - either advanced ones like Japan or developing ones like Indonesia, Srilanka, Malaysia, India etc. And this disaster also took the lives of few thousands of people. In both these instances, the whole world got a big shock and many neighboring countries rushed humanitarian aid to



the effected people. And all scientists and researchers are proposing and trying to find improved detection technologies to decrease the calamities in future instances.

The calamities like tsunamis, floods, cyclones, hurricanes, earthquakes, droughts etc are display of

nature’s anger, which is surely greater than the controlling power of humans. As stated in Vedic Scriptures, all sufferings are the result of law of Karma. The law of Karma, which is universally infallible for the actions and reactions, provides pleasures and pains according to our actions. For example, smokers may get lung and other respiratory problems, while

alcoholics may get affected with liver diseases whereas, illicit-sex may result in STD’s and AIDS etc.

As the proverb says “As you sow, so shall you reap” – one gets reaction for all his misdeeds which are done either in this life or in the past lives. One may wonder – what types of wrong activities are resulting in natural calamities. In the present day society, the horrible activities like animal slaughter and abortions are very rampant and from nature’s point of view, these two activities are brutal – it’s like the powerful children of God (humans) are mercilessly killing the weaker children of God (animals and infants).

A murderer may justify his murder, but the law of any country or state will surely punish him. Similarly, we may justify or even legalize the activities of animal slaughter and abortions, but the law of karma will still punish us. Statistics show the number of murders the humans are making every day. As per statistics total number of cattle slaughtered in the year of 2000 were around 41.7 millions i.e. 1,14,250 per day out of total animals slaughtered (9.7 billion per year or 26.5 million per day) and the total annual abortions in USA alone are 1.21 million per year i.e. around 3315 per day. Therefore, from these figures, one can convincingly agree that the toll of life that we take every day are far more than the toll of human life that either an earthquake or tsunami took. So in a karmic sense, the human civilization deserves far more – the calamities are not nature’s cruelty but it is karmic justice.

The Vedic Scriptures say that the punishment for the karmic actions by humans comes from nature in the form of three types of miseries (Tri-vidha tapa).

1. Miseries caused by one’s own body and mind (Adhyatmika Klesha): Ex - fever, cold, stress and depression etc.
2. Miseries caused by other living beings (Adhi bhautika Klesha): Ex – Superiors, relatives, mosquitoes etc.
3. Miseries caused by higher natural powers (Adhi daivika Klesha): Ex – Earthquakes, floods, storms etc.

If we want to avoid these three fold miseries, we should not commit any bad activities/ karma. In addition, we have to harmonize ourselves with God for further protection. The severity of punishment even for a criminal gets reduced if he becomes law-abiding person and similarly, one can reduce the miseries and pains simply by harmonizing with the Lord. This is possible if we can adopt any yogic process and out of various such processes especially in the age of Kali, there is one best way – the chanting of the Holy Names of Lord, in other words through Mantra mediation technique.

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‘Sin’drome **(The symptom of a ghastly sin)**



Diet is an important tool in working to achieve environmental sustainability. Studies on world food security estimate that an affluent diet containing meat requires up to 3 times as many as resources as a vegetarian diet.

Sin in terms of non-vegetarian food is increasing. More than 276 million tons (1 Ton is 1000 kg) of meat is being produced globally on annual basis, which is 4 times higher as much as in 1961. Sea food consumption increased by 8 times compared to 1950 at 141 million tons per annum. Can you expect peace with increasing sin on continuous basis? BECOME VEGAN TO REDUCE SIN LOAD ON EARTH.

Spirituality and Science

The Soul is Eternal

The Chandogya Upanishad (6.11.3) states that although the body withers and dies, when the self leaves it, the living self does not die. The Bible also explains: “while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen as temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal”. (II Corinthians 4:18). Further enlightenment is given in the Srimad Bhagavatam (7.2.22):” The spirit soul, the living entity, has no death, for he is eternal and inexhaustible. Being free from material contamination he can go anywhere in the material or spiritual worlds. He is fully aware and completely different from the material body, but because of being misled by the misuse of his little minute independence, he is obliged to accept subtle and gross bodies created by the material energy and thus be subjected to the so-called material happiness and distress. Therefore, no one should lament for the passing of the spirit soul from the body.” The eternal



nature of the self is also explained in the Bhagavat Gita by Lord Sri Krishna: “Never was there a time when I did not exist, or you, or all these kings; nor in the future shall any of use cease to be. As the embodied soul continuously passes, in this body from boyhood to youth to old age, the soul similarly passes into another body at death. The self realized soul is not bewildered by such a change.” (Bhagavat Gita 2.12-13)

“Know that which pervades the entire body is indestructible. No one is able to destroy the imperishable soul. Only the material body of the indestructible, immeasurable, and eternal living entity is subjected to destruction. (Bhagavat Gita 2.17-18)...For the soul, there is never birth nor death, nor having been, does he ever cease to be. He is unborn, eternal, ever-existing, undying and primeval. He is not slain, when the body is slain. (Bhagavat Gita 2.20)...As a person puts on new garments, giving up old ones; similarly, the soul accepts new material bodies, giving up the old and useless ones.” (Bhagavat Gita 2.13)

Certainly this knowledge can relieve anyone from the anxiety that comes from thinking our existence is finished at death. Spiritually, we do not die; yet, the body is used until it is no longer fit to continue. At that time, it may appear that we die, but that’s not the case. The soul continues on its journey to another body according to its destiny. And if one has sincerely practiced and perfected a genuine spiritual path, then one’s next body will not be material, but can be completely spiritual. Further descriptions of the indestructibility of the soul are explained in a way that reveals how it is beyond the influence of all material elements.

“The soul can never be cut into pieces by any weapon, nor can he be burned by fire, nor moistened by water, nor withered by the wind. This individual soul is unbreakable and insoluble, and can neither be burned nor dried. It is said that the soul is invisible, inconceivable, immutable, and unchangeable. Knowing this, you should not grieve for the body.” (Bhagavat Gita 2.23-25)

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Pearls of Wisdom



Is The Caste System Designed for Spiritual Equality?

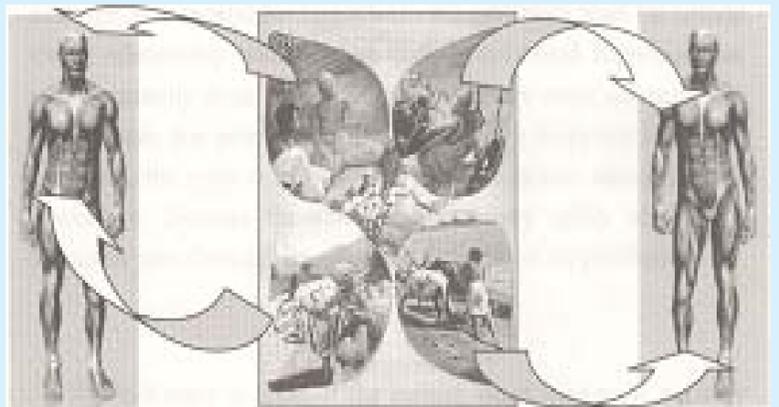
YES – Certainly it is designed for providing a common platform for human beings to feel the spiritual equality amidst of material diversity. It is designed to establish that all people were spiritually equal as servitors of God irrespective of their social position.

Caste system is a system involving segregation of people based on hereditary occupational duties. Probably this topic is the most widely discussed and misunderstood by many people especially in India. Interestingly, Vedas do not consider birth as the basis for fixing the caste system, but it is based on the qualities of the individual.

Lord Krishna mentions that according to the three modes of material nature and the work associated with them, the four divisions of human society are created by Lord Himself. Further, it is mentioned that Varnashrama system – the basis for the social divisions is based upon the activities (Guna Karma). Vedic scriptures explain that the universe is made up of three unseen subtle basic components (Trigunas) – namely Satva, Rajas and Tamas. In addition, the varnashrama system is created in such a way that everyone gets a chance to lead life according to their temperament or constitution (Trigunas) and their spiritual evolution is the varnashrama system. In the Vedic period, there was nothing like lower and higher varna – the divisions were made to make it convenient for the people to render different functions like priests, rulers, traders and servants - accordingly the divisions were named as Brahmana, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Shudra. In Rig Veda (10.90.12) these divisions were compared to the human body – The brahmanas (teachers) are compared to head, the Kshatriyas (rulers or administrators) to the arms, Vaishyas (traders) to the belly and Shudras (workers) to the feet of the body.

Just like the human parts of the body are arranged either at higher or lower position to facilitate its optimum contribution to the body, different varnas are introduced in the society with some social hierarchy to ensure optimum social utilization of intellectual abilities. All parts need nourishment and if any part is neglected it results in the suffering of the

w h o l e
b o d y ,
similarly
all the
varnas are
valued for
t h e i r
contribution
to the
society. If



any class of varnashrama is exploited or neglected, the entire society will get adversely affected.

Importantly, these four classes of varnashrama are not discriminately man-made divisions, rather they are four human types found in every human society. Most often, people do exhibit qualities that reflect an overlapping of these qualities, but certainly one occupational inclination eventually predominates in every individual. In Kaliyuga, every person exhibits all four classes i.e. Brahmana, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Shudra for some time

of the day – becomes brahmana while studying, Kshatriya while fighting according to the situation, Vaishya when earning livelihood and Shudra while he is doing some physical work. Hence, everyone needs to undertake



the constitutional practice of the four classes of Varna system for some time every day. This type of varnashrama system is not only observed in human society, but also in animal kingdom – cows belong to Brahmana category (Sattvik) while lion or a tiger will exhibit Kshatriya quality (Rajasik) etc.

Way back in 380 BC, a Greek Philosopher, named Plato in his book on “The Republic” mentioned about the varnashrama system and the qualities of

the people in these four classes. Engaging people as per their constitutional nature has several benefits like individual job satisfaction, reducing unnecessary competition and further providing satisfaction for everyone’s material needs in an efficient and uncomplicated manner.

The caste by birth idea is certainly non-Vedic and the Vedic texts provide with examples of many qualified people, even if low-born being elevated to respectable places in society. For example, Chandogya Upanishad narrates how Gautam Rsi declared Satyakama Jabali (who is a maid servant’s son) to be a brahmana as the boy is unhesitatingly truthful which is the hallmark of a true brahmana. In addition Suta Goswami, Tukaram, Kanchipurna, Kanaka, Thiruvalluvar, Haridasa Thakur and Sura Dasa were all revered as saints despite being born in low-born category.



Micheal Pym, author of the book “The power of India”, mentions that the caste is the secret of that amazing stability which is the characteristic of the Indian Social structure and is the strength of Hinduism. He further feels that it can naturally be misused and abused. The moment a Brahmin treats a sweeper cruelly because he being a sweeper, then he is no longer a brahmana – he loses his brahminhood. He becomes as a social danger / usurper and in due course he will have to pay for his mistake.

An eminent researcher Gerald Heard in his book on “Man the Master” published by Scientific book club during 1945 glorified the Indian traditional varnashrama system to be of “Organic democracy”. He further mentioned that this type of system could make people to maintain a living relationships rather than mechanical relationships. In addition people are known to be of equal value and could contribute equally for the essential growth of the society.

As modern intelligent Indians, we should certainly do all that we can to end caste discrimination. At the same time, while striving to remove the cataract of casteism, let us make sure that we don’t pluck out the eye of Vedic Spiritual Wisdom. The ultimate purpose of original varnashrama, which is known as Daivi Varnashrama, the divinely-ordained system, was not just material social organization, but systematic spiritual elevation. As spirit souls, we are beloved sons and servants of Lord Krishna; we can attain eternal happiness only in His devotional service. This selfless divine love enables us to live as happily as is ever possible in this world and finally reach our original home – the spiritual world, where we live in eternal ecstasy by reciprocating love with the Lord. Varnashrama offers the best springboard to catapult us to our spiritual birth right. Hence cultivating genuine spirituality – Krishna consciousness and returning back to the spiritual world is the only real solution to all problems, including the problem of discrimination and exploitation.

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FAQ

Is there a need to engage in devotional service in the childhood? Can we not start this after completing all activities when we become old?

The above question can be answered in many ways. The simple way to answer is man’s lifespan is uncertain. It is like a water bubble. It can burst anytime. Thus, everlasting and meaningful devotion should be started right from childhood and this is mentioned in the holy scriptures. Elders also tell us the same way. Anybody can understand the above point.

Another way of answering the above question is that devotion is a program that is really practiced in the holy state of mind. We commit many sins in our life and fill the mind with negative thoughts, and thus when we grow old, it is not possible to start devotional service with the impure mind. Devotion does not germinate in a sinful heart. Will a tree grow in a desert? No. Hence, if devotional service is practiced in the childhood, it is possible to keep away from all sinful activities. Thus, the mind and heart will be calm and clean. Practicing devotion right from childhood doesn’t mean that the child has to get completely immersed in devotional activity leaving everything properly un-attended. It is enough if he keeps away from sinful activities and has faith in devotional activities. The seed of devotion will germinate in his heart at an appropriate time. To be into Krishna Consciousness, one requires a clean heart, sinless life and devotee association. Without any of these qualities, it is not possible to suddenly start devotional activities. Hence, it is essential that devotional activities be started in the childhood.

Another answer is that devotion will help in establishing a relation with God. A child from the day he is born will develop love and affection towards his parents. As he grows he will develop a relation with the parents and this remains for the rest of his life. Suppose if a person at the age of sixty is introduced to his parents, how will he develop love and affection towards them? Even if the relation is assumed, it will only be superficial and will not be deep rooted. Similarly, if one wants to engage in devotional service at the age of sixty or seventy, when the body is not in proper condition to render any service and mind is completely polluted, how can he establish a relation with God? So, the children should be introduced to devotional activities right from the childhood. Youth should also take part in devotional activities. For true devotion the ideal places are the ISKCON centers, where devotion is taught in a scientific way. All doubts pertaining to spiritual life are fully clarified in these centers.

This answer is excerpted from Bhagavaddarshan, Telugu edition of BTG. Translation is done by Bhakta Krishna Yerrapragada, Ph.D., IISc Bangalore. He is a senior scientist at Defense Research and Development Laboratory, Hyderabad.

Saintly Words



That one is wise whose efforts are not obstructed by cold, heat, fear, love, affluence or poverty.

That one is wise who does not hanker after the unattainable, who does not worry over what is lost and who faces calamities without losing his senses.

That one is fool who makes the enemy his friend, hurts and kills his friend and always engages himself in wrongful activity.

Alone one should not apply thought to matters of substance.



How I Feel About Krishna Consciousness?

Knowledge of spirituality helped me at all times

I came to my college in 2009 with two goals in my mind. One was to achieve dynamic career in my life and second to have decent entertainment. I focused on the things that supported my studies and my future goal such as learning communication skills, leadership qualities, learning techniques to focus my mind, mantra meditation and spirituality. Thus I was always able to maintain good academic performance (around 9 pointers CGPA).

I have seen many of my seniors who came to this college after a lot of hard struggle in intermediate but because of not having proper guidance and higher supervision got into wrong tracks and lost their career. In fact I was also in the same category, but the knowledge of spirituality helped me to take right decisions in difficult situations. For me spirituality helped, to build good character and studies built competence, and I feel both are of same importance just as a coin needs two sides for it to be valued. The knowledge of spirituality helped me at all times. I witnessed at least one suicide every year during my stay in the campus. Whenever it happened I said to myself, "Had they known the spiritual knowledge and value of life they would have not done so."

In fact presently now in my job also I am able to maintain my cool and calm and that is because of following Krishna consciousness in my life.

*E. Sai Prasad
Alumni, NIT Warangal*

From the Editor's Desk



In this month's editorial we discuss about our fourth objective, which is "S - to present Spirituality in a systematic and scientific way as is revealed in the scriptures".

In an interview, ISKCON's founder Acharya, Srila Prabhupada defines Science as to know things as they are and scientist as someone who knows things as they are. Spirituality means to know the science of the spirit soul. By now, we have begun to acknowledge or at least have a rudimentary understanding about the fact that we are not the body, but spirit soul. This human life is a journey of this spirit soul and the soul is confined in this human body, which is transitory. Now once we appreciate that we are spirit soul, and then we need know and coin individual goals for this spirit soul. Through the medium of Bhagavad Gita, Lord Sri Krishna himself distributes this spiritual knowledge. Srila Prabhupada explains (Chapter 4, text 1) this as follows. Human life is meant for cultivation of spiritual knowledge, in eternal relationship with the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and the executive heads of all states and all planets are obliged to impart this lesson to the citizens by education, culture and devotion. In other words, the executive heads of all states are intended to spread the science of Krishna consciousness so that the people may take advantage of this great science and pursue a successful path, utilizing the opportunity of the human form of life.

It is one of our objectives to spread this knowledge through proper scientific understanding, we will endeavor to present various aspects to you as we move ahead.



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Note: We invite devotees to write youth focused articles to publish in this journal.

Articles thus received will be reviewed for readership and suitability.

Please send your articles to the editor at: hk.youthjournal@gmail.com