

Śaraṇāgati

ISSUE NO. 05

OCTOBER 2011

A QUESTION OF IDENTIFICATION

Question:

We are told that Kṛṣṇa takes our karma away, but it seems that my karma is still there. So did Kṛṣṇa take it away and in the meantime I produced more? Or should I just wait, five or ten more years and then the karma will dissolve just by the practice? Or do I need to do something really specific and special so that Kṛṣṇa will come and take it away?

Answer:

In the scriptures it is said that the karma of a devotee changes. How it changes is illustrated by an example: When you take a piece of paper and put it into fire, the fire will transform the paper into ashes. However, for some time the form of the paper will still be visible in the fire. So although Kṛṣṇa changed your karma you may still look like [name of the devotee asking] and you may still have certain characteristics from your mother and father. Your physical body will still be there and your mental body will also work in a certain way. The form that we perceive, this “ash-form”, is still there. However, the substance has changed.

Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura says the devotee has two bodies, not one. By material activities he nourishes the material body. By performing devotional service under the guidance of his spiritual master, like singing, chanting and worshipping he nourishes the spiritual body. Even though a devotee sees himself as a normal person there is something else at work which he may not always be conscious of: there is devotion inside of the devotee. He turns to Kṛṣṇa. He prays to Kṛṣṇa. He struggles with spiritual issues. This is new.

But if the devotee continues to identify him- or herself with the “ash-form”, this apparent form, then he or she is in trouble. It’s a question of identification. It is your decision with which body you want to identify. Will you go back into the “ash-form” and revive it with your strength or will you go to the devotional side and revive that with your strength? This is your decision.

At the same time you have to be frank and open and you cannot pretend that the “ash-form” is not there. It is there, and it influences you. Sometimes the “ash-form” gives a little

trouble in the form of diseases, mental issues and so on.

Therefore don’t think of yourself as a saint and don’t present yourself as a saint. It’s not true, the “ash-form” is still there. A devotee should remain humble and think, “I’m a westerner, I have poor *saṁskāras*. The “ash-form” is still with me like the shell of a turtle. But I have a chance – that is to identify with the spiritual body.”

If you have faith, you will do it, and you will get the strength. If you don’t have faith you will connect with your “ash-form” and you won’t have that type of strength with which you can obtain from your spiritual body. Strengthen your faith! Strengthen your faith! It’s all about that.

from a lecture by Śacīnandana Swami, Goloka Dhāma, Germany, August 22th, 2011



SHIFTING THE AWARENESS



Often we waste our lives with the unimportant. We become drawn to the lower self: the fearful self, the self which is full of material desires and problems. The *Bhāgavatam* says we live in the knot of the *ahaṅkāra*, which is false ego mixed with karma.

Kṛṣṇa consciousness offers us a positive alternative. But we have to strengthen and stabilize our spiritual position. If we don't strengthen our real self, our false self will eat away our life energy - it's quite aggressive. We need to learn how to strengthen the soul.

However, first of all you need to accept that you are an eternal soul and become aware of this. You can practice this in your daily life with the following little exercise. I do this every day: In the middle of some situation I go inside of myself and connect with that energy field within the body, which is the consciousness. I consciously look through the

eyes and hear through the ears but I don't identify with the eyes and the ears. I understand and practice being the observer. This simple exercise is explained in the *Bhagavad-gītā* 5.8-9. The moment you become conscious of the body there is a distinction between you, the observer, and that which you observe: the body. When you see things like this, you look through the eyes of knowledge and you will see many things which you have not seen before. Just by switching on the light of awareness you are no longer in the darkness of false identification. You are now free to act on the spiritual platform.

My dear devotees, this has changed my life. You have the possibility to shift the awareness, to go to another level, where you will see and feel differently. But you have to practice it. In fact, without practicing this you will never advance in your spiritual life because you have not done the first step. You will just remain in false ego – and suffer.

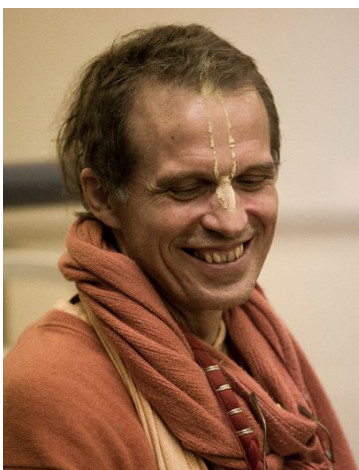
☪ from a lecture by Śācinandana Swami, Fruska Gora, Serbia, June 24th, 2007

Abandoning the dead horse

The Dakota Indians have a saying, “The moment you realize you are sitting on a dead horse, get down and walk.” Most of the people think “Well, the horse is dead, but maybe I should get a bigger whip!” or “Well, the horse is dead, but my neighbor's horse is also dead!” My dear devotees, when you see that you sit in a dead spiritual life, get up and walk! Start to go! Don't say, “The horse of another person is also dead” No! Look at your own life! Is your life filled with enthusiasm? Is there love for Kṛṣṇa in your life? Is it there? If not, then do something, get up!

☪ from a lecture, Goloka Dhāma, Germany, June 15th, 2011

Photo by Mickey Shah



MEET ŚĀCĪNANDANA SWAMI

Important events over the next months:

Oct. 9th	open program in Vṛndāvana (see webpage for details)
Nov. 13th- Nov. 18th	Japa-Retreat, Varṣāṇā, India
Nov. 23th- Sep. 29th	Govardhana-Retreat, Govardhana, India
Dec. 28th- Jan. 1st	Saṅga-Melā-Festival in Goloka Dhāma, Germany

You can find a more detailed schedule at www.saranagati.net