

Krsna Consciousness is the Answer to Every Problem
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Can you grow a rose? “Sure,” you might reply. “Just plant a rose bush. Millions of people grow roses.” On one level that may be true, but consider the matter more deeply. Can you create the life in the rose bush that pushes out a bud and blossoms into a gorgeous rose? Who or what does generate that life force? If you knew the answer to that you would know the Source of a solution to every problem.

Who or what energizes the seed to sprout, grow and blossom; or the egg and sperm to unite and become an embryo of a man or animal? Who or what cause the child to grow and develop into a mature person, or makes the heart pump blood even while the body sleeps? Who or what powers the winds that blow, or turns the earth on its axis, or keeps the planets in their orbits and hurls the whole solar system through space at an incredible speed? These are not new questions. They have been asked by reflective humans for as long as we have records.

The Vedic tradition has also long contemplated this mystery. Indeed, Lord Brahma, the creator of this universe, contemplated this mystery for a very long time and got an answer from the Source Himself. “Brahma, it is I, the Personality of Godhead, who existed before the creation, when there was nothing but Myself. Nor was there the material nature, the cause of creation. That which you see now is I, the Personality of Godhead, and after annihilation what remains will also be I, the Personality of Godhead.” (Srimad Bhagavatam, 2:29:33)

Some people just call it “nature”. But as soon as you say “nature,” the natural question is, “Whose nature?” Is it a dog’s nature? Human nature? All Vedic literatures agree that it is Krsna’s nature. Krsna Himself declares in the Bhagavad-gita, “This material nature is working under My direction” (B.G. 9:10) and again, “I am the Source of everything. Everything emanates from Me. The wise who know this perfectly engage in My devotional service and worship Me with all their hearts.” (Bhagavad-gita, 10:8)

And that is what the name “Krsna” literally means: all-attractive. He is that which attracts and maintains everything, even as the sun is the all-attractive source and sustaining force of our solar system.

II.

Krsna is all-attractive because He is the reservoir of all attractive opulences. He has all wealth, all fame, all beauty, all knowledge, all power and all renunciation. But how can we know Him? The Vedic literatures say that He is unknowable, inconceivable, and unfathomable to the human mind. We are also conditioned to think that only things that we can see with our eyes, feel with our hands and know by our senses are knowable and real.

There is a higher realized spiritual knowledge, however, that is not a product of the mind and senses. It is a knowledge imparted by His grace. The Supreme Person, Krsna, is knowable – not from our side, by our senses – but from Him, by His omnipotent power. He can do anything, and He can reveal Himself to whomever He wishes; and He is anxious to reveal Himself to His surrendered devotee. Bhagavad-gita 18:61 tells us, “The Supreme Lord is situated in everyone’s heart...and is directing the wanderings of all living beings...” He further declares this same truth in the 15th Chapter, 15th Verse:

I am in everyone’s heart

For helpfulness

Granting knowledge, remembrance

And forgetfulness

The Absolute Truth can be known, indeed must be known, if we are to solve all the problems of material existence. But the Truth cannot be known by mental speculation or any other human endeavor. One must know the Absolute Truth in the same way that Lord Brahma, the creator of this universe, learned it, namely by submissive aural reception from Lord Krsna, the Source of all knowledge, or from His bonafide representative, the genuine spiritual master in discipular succession from Lord Brahma.

So first we have to accept the possibility of knowing the Truth. Only by recognizing the availability of the Absolute Truth, Krsna consciousness, through the medium of Lord Krsna’s representative, the bonafide Spiritual Master, can one properly hear and recognize the accessibility of the Truth. Our responsibility is to open our ears and hear submissively, thereby inviting the Truth into our hearts. Then to us also, He who “first imparted the Vedic knowledge unto the heart of Brahma...” will also speak His eternal Truth to us.

III.

Having humbled ourselves in recognition of the possibility of knowledge higher than mere sensual or intellectual knowledge, we become eligible for what Lord Krsna call “the king of education, the most secret of all secrets. It is the purest knowledge,” Krsna says, “and because it gives direct perception of the self by realization, it is the perfection of religion...everlasting, and...joyfully performed.” (Bhagavad-gita, 9:2)

Beyond the acknowledgement of the possibility of divine guidance is the realization by personal experience of this presence within one’s own self. What do we mean by “realization:”? Realization means in hippy slang, “You don’t think, man, you know!” There is no higher certainty. You know, Krsna says, not by mental speculation or intellectual reasoning, nor by perception through the physical eyes. Rather, it is perception by spiritual senses, sense purified by submission to Lord Krsna. “Because you are never envious of Me,” Krsna tells Arjuna, “I shall impart this most secret wisdom, knowing which you shall be relieved of all material miseries.” (B.G. 9:1) That’s the answer to every material problem!

There is a great spiritual magnet within each of us designed to pull us back home, back to Godhead. That spiritual magnet is constantly pulling us to higher and higher truths, the very substance of that transcendental abode. There is only one thing that can counter that invisible but irresistible force, and that is your free will. We have already heard that Krsna is in “everyone’s heart for helpfulness,” giving us knowledge, remembrance, or forgetfulness.” By our free will our desire, we get either knowledge or remembrance, which pulls us onto higher levels of Krsna consciousness, or we get forgetfulness by which we descend to lower levels of material entanglement. The choice is ours. Choose knowledge and remembrance and we can re-establish our loving relationship to Krsna as His eternal servant. Connected to Him, we are an integral, albeit infinitesimal, part of the Absolute – sat-chit-ananda, eternal knowledge, full of bliss. Choose separation and you live in a world of illusion, a world of duality, a world of “hard struggle for existence.” In truth, nothing is separate from Krsna – never was and never will be. You are eternally a servant of the King of Kings, blissfully conscious eternally, beyond time’s inescapable thrall. Choose wisely and be conscious of who you really are!

IV.

After recognizing the possibility of divine guidance and actually realizing its presence within ourselves, there naturally descends a profound spirit of awe and reverence. God is so great and so good that He is personally concerned with little insignificant me, you and everyone else! More than that, we are not separate from Him, or He from us. The Upanishads compare it to two birds on the same tree. One bird represents the Supreme Lord and the other bird the individual spirit soul. One bird is trying to enjoy the fruits of the tree, but the other bird, representing the Lord, is simply watching and waiting for His friend to turn his attention to Him. Unfortunately, living beings are very busy trying to enjoy the fruits of the material body – some sweet and some sour – but the Lord is simply the witness and waits for us to become fed up with the fruits of material life and turn our attention to Him.

How do we turn our attention to Him? In the Bhagavad-gita, Lord Krsna says, “Always think of Me.” Thinking of Him is as easy as chanting His Holy Name: Hare Krsna, Hare Krsna, Krsna Krsna, Hare Hare; Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare. This is called the Maha-mantra. Maha means “great” and mantra means “mind releasing”. By chanting the Maha-mantra we are released from our material entanglement as easily and quickly as we say Hare Krsna. Krsna is not different from His name. Being God, He is Absolute, all pervasive, and identical with His name. In the material world, a name is different from its referent. An apple is not the same as the word or sound apple. You can’t eat the word or sound, at least not and get any nourishment. But when you chant Hare Krsna, Krsna is fully present in all His potency. How is this possible? I can’t tell you how it is possible. I’m not God! But I know that God can do anything, even be fully present in His name. He is omnipotent! This is not my opinion, but the declaration of shastra (scripture). Rupa Goswami writes in Padyavali (2.9), “The holy name of Krsna is the controller of the opulence of liberation, and it is identical with Krsna. Simply by touching the holy name with one’s tongue, immediate effects are produced...” And Caitanya Caritamrta (Madya 17:131) says, “The Lord’s holy name, His form and His personality are all one and the same. There is no difference between them. Since all of them are Absolute, they are transcendently blissful.” Fix your consciousness on Krsna by fixing it on the sound of His holy name. Chant and be happy!

V.

What do we mean by “spiritual” or “transcendental”? Srila Prabhupada, the Founder-Acarya of the Hare Krsna movement in the West, explains in His commentary on Bhagavad-gita 2:16 that the body and mind are ever changing, whereas the spirit soul is eternal. “That is the difference between matter and spirit,” He says. All that is material is temporary and what is transcendental or spiritual is eternal. That is a whole different world from the one we usually live in. Most people spend most of their consciousness on what is external to them, but Lord Jesus told us, “The Kingdom of God is within you.” “Whatever pulls us outward,” Srila Prabhupada said, “is material. Whatever draws us within to be conscious of the Lord in the heart is spiritual.” Simply being “religious” by following certain external rituals is not necessarily spiritual. In fact, Lord Krsna concludes His Bhagavad-gita teaching by saying, “Abandon all varieties of religion and just surrender to Me. I will deliver you from all sinful reactions. Do not fear.” (B.G. 18:66)

What do you mean, “abandon all varieties of religion”, you ask? “I thought religion is good.” Krsna is telling us that there is something higher than mere “religiousness”. Lord Krsna advises, “Just surrender to Me.” Surrendering to Krsna is, in fact, the perfection of religion. That same truth is taught in the 9th Chapter, 27th verse:

“All that you do, son of Kunti, all that you eat,

Just place as a sacrifice at My lotus feet.”

Every action we perform is to be a sacred act, an act of sacrifice. This is the essence of all religion. Lord Krsna is calling us to a new way of thinking and a new way of acting. Instead of thinking, “everything I have is mine,” we now think “everything I have is Krsna’s.” Instead of acting for our own personal sense gratification, we act for Krsna’s gratification. In every action there is sense gratification, the only question is, “Whose gratification?” That is our minute independence. We can choose to either serve our own senses or Krsna’s. Krsna is calling us to a life of pure devotional service, a life of sat-chit-ananda – eternity, knowledge and bliss.

The most crucial aspect of real spirituality is surrender to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, whom we call Krsna, the all-attractive Cause of all Causes. “Not my will but Thine, O Lord.” This is perhaps a bitter pill to many people today, for we have been nurtured on a philosophy of “do it yourself”, with myriad “self-help”, which makes it very difficult to admit our ultimate helplessness and powerlessness. In truth, surrender is “sweet”! “Ah, sweet surrender!” True surrender ends all miseries, especially worry. Consider how we surrender ourselves every night to sleep. If you don’t, you don’t sleep! We don’t have to worry about who is going to keep our hearts pumping or our lungs breathing. But that same invisible force that pumps our blood and operates our lungs, asleep or awake, conscious or unconscious, is also willing and able to solve every other so-called problem of our existence. Not only that, but this Friend is all-knowing, all-powerful, and always present.

In the Bhagavad-gita, Lord Krsna says that He is the Father of every living being (B.G.14:4). Even earthly fathers show their love by trying to do what is best for their child. Do we expect less from our heavenly Father, who is Omniscient, Omnipotent, and Omnipresent? With such a father, what is there to worry about? He knows what is best, He wants to do what is best for His child, and He has the ability to do it – every time, everywhere, and without fail or exception. You and I have such a father and He is as close to us as our heart. Do you believe it? That’s our choice and our only responsibility. If you don’t, you can’t feel His presence or be confident of His perfection in all that happens to you. He is perfect, and He does everything perfectly. That’s His promise:

O My child, surrender to Me utterly

By My grace you’ll enjoy peace, wealth and victory.

He offers that gift to each of us, but we have to accept it by trusting Him more than we trust our physical feelings or our mind. Our senses and mind are often wrong. We have imperfect senses and a fallible mind that frequently makes mistakes. Why not trust the Complete and Perfect Whole, creating and maintaining countless universes with numberless planets and living beings, of which we are a little part. Trust Krsna! He loves us unconditionally – not because of what we do or don’t do, but because of who we are: His parts and parcels. In the Fourth Chapter of the Bhagavad-gita, He says, “...all living beings are part of Me – they are in Me and are Mine.”

VI.

Our eternal connection to Krsna, or God, is not to be realized by intensive study, scientific investigation, or any other material means. That relationship is realized only by love. We have to change our thoughts and feelings of doubt and envy to submission and love.

When Lord Krsna revealed His universal (divine) form to Arjuna, He said:

The countenance you now so happily see

Eludes mundane research and austerity.

Only by undivided devotional love

Can I be known as I am in Heaven above.

Our Heavenly Father wants to make conscious our eternal loving relationship, but He won't do so without our cooperation. As they say in Alcoholics Anonymous, "Without God we can't; without us He won't". He has given us the freedom to plug our hearts into one of two outlets. One gives material sense gratification and the other divine bliss. When we are connected to the material source, we engage in a hard struggle for material life's dualities of pleasure and pain, success and failure, happiness and distress. Plugged into Krsna Consciousness, however, we enjoy eternity, knowledge and bliss. Surrendering to the Lord at once gives us relief from our material entanglement and therefore brings peace and satisfaction. We can relax in the loving hands of our Almighty Father and Faithful Shepherd, confident that He will lead us into green pastures and beside still waters.

Naturally and spontaneously our love for such a wonderful Lord expresses itself in loving service, the activity of the spirit. As Lord Krsna says after showing His universal form to Arjuna,

And thus by pure action in loving devotion,

One's relieved of the curse of death's commotion.

Such a God-conscious soul comes quickly to Me;

This is My pledge and solemn promise to thee.

Love alone dissolves all negativity, even as the presence of the sun at once dissipates the darkness in every quarter.

VII.

True love is manifest in our surrender. “If you love Me, keep My commandments,” Lord Jesus told His followers. Such love is so wonderful that it evokes reciprocation for the Supreme Lord: “In the same measure that one surrenders to Me,” Lord Krsna says in the Bhagavad-gita, “I reciprocate with him accordingly.” (B.G. 4:11)

Surrender means to be conscious at all times of our subordinate though intimate connection to Krsna, our Higher Power. We no longer walk alone on life’s journey. We walk hand in hand with our beloved Lord. The most important question in your life is, “Who’s holding your hand?” Actually, we should ask it the other way around: “whose hand are YOU holding?” The Supreme Lord is always holding our hand, always in our heart for helpfulness,” but are you pulling Him forward or backward? He tells us in Sri Isopanishad that “He has been supplying everyone’s desire since time immemorial.” Do you desire knowledge and remembrance of His all-perfect will, or do you desire the forgetfulness of His Maya, a condition of illusion, separation, and death?

If you are holding Krsna’s hand, the hand of the Supreme Absolute, you are held up by the infinite power of love. You automatically lose all fear and negativity. When He holds your hand, you can empty your mind of worry about what to do and listen carefully to His voice, allowing yourself to be guided by His all-knowing perfect plan. This willingness to follow Him and do His will empties us of judgmentalism and negativity, and infuses us with forgiveness and love. Angry, blaming thoughts vanish miraculously. Wanting His all perfect agenda empowers us to simply “let go” of our imperfect speculations, which never worked in the past and never will in the future. Emptying ourselves of our ego-centered likes and dislikes, pride and shame, and all self-will, we open ourselves to Krsna Consciousness, the solution to every problem.

VIII.

In ordinary material consciousness, everyone and everything is separate. “I am me” and “you are you”, or “this is mine” and “that is yours”. The concept of “me” and “mine” is the most basic feature of material life. But it’s a lie! In truth, I am not this body, nor are you yours, nor is anything connected to this body mine or yours. Lord Krsna tells us in the Bhagavad-gita that when one knows the truth, “...you will know that all living beings are part of Me; they are in Me and are Mine.” (B.G. 4:35) Not only “believers” and “devotees” are included in that divine body of Lord Krsna, but all living beings. That includes men, women, children, birds, animals, insects, plants, trees, bacteria – everyone! There are millions of various types of material bodies and they are all temporary coverings for the eternal spirit soul. We are all part and parcel of the Supreme Spirit Soul, God; or Lord Krsna.

The mystic Sufi poet Rumi had a similar vision. Rumi saw everyone as flowers in the great garden of God, flower of different colors, shapes, fragrances and textures, but all connected in a mystical way to comprise that exquisite garden of divine love.

Lord Caitanya, an incarnation of Lord Krsna who appeared in Bengal, India, in the 15th Century, described this great divine unity in terms of fire. He said, "The Lord is like a great blazing fire, and the living entities are like small sparks of that fire." (C.C. Adi: 7:116) Connected to the fire, the spark blazes brightly, but separated from the fire the spark is extinguished. When we associate with the Lord's devotees, follow the rules and regulations of the Spiritual Master, the representative of Lord Krsna, and engage in the Lord's devotional service, we blaze brightly and maintain our quality of divine fire; but separated from these we again become covered by Maya and "go out". Therefore we must nurture our connections and Krsna, the Whole, and thereby nurture our connection to all His parts and parcels.

The more one sees themselves as part of the Whole, seeing no one as either enemy or special friend, the more one can see that we are all connected in service to the Whole, partners in a divine mission. Living in the awareness of connection to the Whole, Krsna, entitles us to ask that the divine loving force which surrounds, empowers, and connects us to all other things, also guide us at every step of life's journey in a perfect way right now. This frees one from all anger and frustration, and allows us to observe everyone and everything as positive assistance in reaching your goal. According to our development of spiritual awareness, Krsna consciousness, we will feel that connection. Simultaneously all of our problems and irritations will dissolve and vanish.

IX.

If you are truly developing spirituality, willing to do or be whatever our all-good, loving Heavenly Father wants, and if we really have confidence that His plan is perfect and the best of all possibility, we will thank Him for everything that happens to us and be grateful for every situation He puts us in or allows us to be put into. The barometer of spiritual advancement is gauged by our gratefulness for whatever Krsna sends or allows to come into our life. If we are grateful only for the things that are pleasant to our senses, how are we any different than a gross materialist?

Having a mentality of unconditional gratitude and cheerfulness immediately puts us in a state of grace, and in that state we can readily perceive our intimate relationship with Lord Krsna and simultaneously relieves us of concern with anyone or anything external to our higher self. Genuine spirituality is not a matter of belonging to a certain organization or tradition, or even professing a certain creed. It is, however, a matter of having spiritual qualities, such as love, surrender, connectedness, and gratitude.

Now let us turn our attention briefly to what we mean by a problem. My Spiritual Master, His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, used to say, “The only problem in the whole world is lack of Krsna (God) Consciousness.” When we forget the Truth – that we are an integral part of Krsna, the complete Whole – and think that we are separate from Him, we have a problem. All so-called “problems” of the human being – whether sicknesses, discord, poverty, anxiety, want, worry, etc. – are all states of mind. When we realize that we are not the body but a spirit soul, part and parcel of Krsna, the Supreme Spirit Soul, our source and eternal rest, all these “problems” disappear.

Does this sound too simple? Truth is always simple. Two plus two equals four. Simple! It is, and nothing else. Only error is complicated. The Absolute Truth is simple: Krsna (God) is the Cause of all causes and all that is! Everything else is illusion. Simple! He is eternal, full of knowledge and bliss. Simple! You are a little part of that Supreme Absolute. Simple! When you imagine that you are disconnected, separate, there is immediately a problem. But that is an error, an illusion. Simple!

X.

The Truth is simple. In the Bhagavad-gita (10:8), Krsna discloses Himself to be the Source of everything. In the Srimad Bhagavatam (2:9:33), the same truth was instructed to Brahma by Lord Krsna. “Before this creation all that existed was Myself; during cosmic manifestation, all that exists is Myself; and after annihilation, what remains is Myself.” So where does all of the negativity that we generically call “problems” come from? Lord Krsna answers that in the Bhagavad-gita (4:5-7) “The mind is the friend of the conditioned soul and his enemy as well. For him who has conquered the mind, the mind is the best friend; but for one who has failed to do so, his very mind will be the greatest enemy. For one who has conquered the mind, Supersoul is already reached, for he has attained tranquility. To such a man happiness and distress, heat and cold, honor and dishonor are all the same.”

“Problems” are the creation of a mind that feels separate from Krsna. What we call a “problem” is really nothing but an illusion, beginning with the illusion, “I am this body”. The “sufferings” and “evils” of the whole material existence are our own creation. Let us resolve to make them into an opportunity to acquire transcendental knowledge. I know this may sound “far out” to some and “unbelievable” to others, but are you willing to examine the facts with an open mind? That is all we ask. If you are, we can together travel a path of spiritual healing that promises “peace that passes human understanding” for your life permanently.

The term Maya is what most Eastern traditions call this present world of apparent evil and problems. The word Maya refers to “what is not”. A mirror image is a good example of Maya. If I hold an apple in front of a mirror, suddenly I have two apples. Both appear the same, but one is real and the other is Maya, illusion. Similarly, the existence separate from Krsna imagined by the mind is not real, but in that imagined state myriad problems and

evils arise. In Krsna Consciousness (spiritual awareness apart from this temporary material body) life is eternal, fully conscious and always blissful. In material consciousness, despite the scientists' and politicians' dreams of a "permanent solution" – immortality for the body – everybody dies. In the material world, everyone and everything is down by time, as Lord Krsna says in the Gita, "I am time, destroyer of all" (10:30) Does anyone claim to be separate and unaffected by time? This is the proof that this whole material world and its problems is Maya, unreal. Reality is sat-chit-ananda, eternal, full of knowledge and bliss. "The unreal never was and the real never ceases to be." (B.G. 2:16)

Lord Krsna ends His Gita discourse by advising His disciple to give up all kinds of speculation and surrender to Him with adoration. "Do not fear," the Lord says, "I will deliver you from every problem."

XI.

Mental speculation is the wrong way to gain real knowledge. As your best and most earnest speculation you may conclude that two plus two equals five, but with such mistaken thinking you will never arrive at a correct mathematical answer. It never works. At Alcoholics Anonymous meetings you frequently hear an older member advising a younger, "Your best thinking got you here." The same thing can be said of everyone in the material world. Although we are all fragments of the One Supreme Personality of Godhead, due to wrong thinking, we have fallen into this material world with four defects.

We have imperfect senses. We can't see everything, only within a narrow band of the light spectrum. We can't hear everything, only within a certain range of frequency. All our senses are very limited.

We make mistakes. Who hasn't mistaken a stranger for an acquaintance, or heard something incorrectly? The tongue may tell you something is good and sweet, but it is really poisonous.

We are conditioned by Maya, illusion. We think we are this body, when factually we are the spirit soul animating this body. There is no difference in the living man and the dead man anatomically or chemically. The only difference is the presence of a spirit soul. We are spirit soul, the driver of the body, but illusion conditions us to think we are the body.

Lastly, we have a tendency to cheat. Ask someone a question, even though they don't really know, they will give you an answer or a direction that is plain wrong. No one wants to admit they don't know, and so they act as if they do. This is cheating. This is especially true in the realm of spiritual knowledge, which is beyond the range of material senses. Transcendental truth cannot be known by mental speculation, but the world is full of pretenders, bogus gurus, and imitation "gods".

There is only one way to know spiritual truth. Lord Krsna tells Arjuna, “Just try to learn the truth by approaching a spiritual master. Inquire from him submissively and render service to him. The self-realized soul can impart knowledge unto you because he has seen the truth. (B.G. 4:34)

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