

In This Age Chanting of the Holy Name Is More Important than *Varṇāśrama-dharma*

In *Bhagavad-gītā* (18.46) Śrī Kṛṣṇa says that every man can become perfect by following his qualities of work:

*yataḥ pravṛttir bhūtānām
yena sarvam idaṁ tatam
sva-karmaṇā tam abhyarcya
siddhiṁ vindati mānavaḥ*

“By worship of the Lord, who is the source of all beings and who is all-pervading, man can, in the performance of his own duty, attain perfection.”

Thus if one executes his duties as a perfect *kṣatriya*, *vaiśya*, *śūdra* or whatever, Viṣṇu will be pleased. The purpose of work is to please Viṣṇu. Unfortunately, people have forgotten this. *Varṇāśrama-dharma*, the Vedic system of society, is therefore very important in that it is meant to give human beings a chance to perfect their lives by pleasing Kṛṣṇa. Unfortunately, the *varṇāśrama-dharma* has been lost in this age. Therefore Caitanya Mahāprabhu, just to give relief to the rotting, conditioned souls of this age of Kali-yuga, has given us the *mahā-mantra*.

*harer nāma harer nāma
harer nāmaiva kevalam
kalau nāsty eva nāsty eva
nāsty eva gatir anyatha
(CC Ādi 17.21)*

“In this age of quarrel and hypocrisy, the only means of deliverance is chanting of the holy name of the Lord. There is no other way. There is no other way. There is no other way.”
(Brhan-nāradya Purāṇa)

Although we may try to revive the perfect *varṇāśrama* system, it is not possible in this age. People are fallen, disturbed and unfortunate:

*prāyeṇālpāyusaḥ sabhya
kalāv asmin yuge janāḥ
mandāḥ sumanda-matayo
manda-bhāgyā hy upadrutāḥ*

“O learned one, in this iron age of Kali men have but short lives. They are quarrelsome, lazy, misguided, unlucky and, above all, always disturbed.” (ŚB 1.1.10)

In this age, there will be insufficient rainfall and food, and the government will plunder one's income by heavy taxation. All of these characteristics of Kali-yuga are described in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. People will become so disgusted that they will suddenly leave their wife and children and go to the forest. How can the peaceful *varṇāśrama-dharma* be revived when people are so harassed in this age? It is virtually impossible. Therefore the system of *bhakti-yoga*, the chanting of the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra*, should be adopted. The whole aim of *bhakti-yoga* is to satisfy Viṣṇu. *Yajñaiḥ saṅkīrtana-prāyaiḥ*: Viṣṇu, Kṛṣṇa, came Himself as Caitanya Mahāprabhu to teach us the way of *saṅkīrtana*.

— **Teachings of Lord Kapila, the Son of Devahūti**

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There is no other dharma of the *jīva* except *kīrtana* (singing of God's glories). To the extent one disbelieves in *bhakti* as denoted by *kīrtana*, or the holy name – in other words, those who think that all wants cannot be fulfilled by *kīrtana* – to that extent people are *nāstika* (atheists). The degree of help one gives toward propagating *bhakti* as denoted by *kīrtana* is the sole measure of one's belief in God. On the other hand, a man is a *nāstika* (disbeliever) to the extent that he obstructs *kīrtana*. As the name has to be taken every moment, even while eating or sleeping, as *bhakti* denoted by *kīrtana* is the only dharma of the *jīva*, as there is no other dharma except this, then where is time for alleviating flood or famine, or founding hospitals? All efforts except *Hari-kīrtana* are the cause of *saṁsāra* (the worldly sojourn), the road leading not to the east but in the opposite direction. On the other hand, continual performance of *Hari-kīrtana* is the turning away from every other direction to face east, or the journey homeward. The Gauḍīya Maṭha is the missionary of this constant *kīrtana*.

– **The Gauḍīya Maṭha: Its Message and Activities,**
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