

Life's Hardest Questions

After having spent a lot of time to book the movie tickets, looking forward for the day, spending almost an hour to go to PVR Cinemas all the way, and then sitting all through the movie for 3 full hours, we would rightly curse the director of this movie, “*Arey yaar! What a useless movie! Such a waste of time and money!*” None of us can rest in peace after watching such a thriller movie and not getting an answer to the ultimate question, “Who is the murderer?”

As intelligent human beings, each one of us seeks the fulfilment of our deep urge to find meaning and answers to every question we encounter. We are thrilled by puzzles but only if we can solve and find an answer. Nobody likes a puzzle that cannot be solved. However great a challenge maybe, it is only worth pursuing if there is a solution at the end.

Group Discussion:

Can you come up with few questions which you could categorize as ‘life’s hardest questions’ for which you would like to find an answer.

Yet when it comes to our own life we don’t pause to consider its meaning, nor its purpose. Our birth was abrupt, and we grew up unaware of how we came into this existence and into a particular family, where were we before we were born. We just grow up according to our parents’ upbringing and very soon get into the rat race of what is called an ‘education.’ After the ‘education’ of sheep mentality of following the flock of ‘aspiring engineers’ and ending up as one among the thousands who graduate every year, we get into the second rat race, ‘JOB’ and ‘CAREER.’ Once we feel we are ‘settled’ in career, comes the prospect of wedding and life appears a bed of roses from then on. Soon family life becomes a ‘thrilling’ experience to say the least and then the children arrive. Before we know it, the children grow up and the repeat show of our own life occurs with our own children. Not before too long, would we be enjoying cuddling our grandchildren and the life seems finally so comfortable at last. A feeling of satisfaction and relish of having a life’s hard work paying off by getting a comfortable retired life is just sinking in, when suddenly AN ABRUPT ‘THE END’ to this movie of life occurs! What is the next! Where are we to go! None of us know! Why did it occur!? No answer!

What was the purpose of this whole life then!? **Answer: UNKNOWN MYSTERY!** This is a sad mystery of our life! Yet, high intellectuals that we claim to be, we get along with life, without inquiring about this important subject matter, without asking these ‘Life’s Hardest Questions’:

- Who am I?
- Where have I come from?
- What is the purpose of my life?
- Where do I go after I die?
- What should be my aim of life?

The Vedic culture unlike the contemporary modern civilization gave maximum importance to explore answers to these questions. Education in Vedic society would concentrate on generating a group of individuals who would yearn for the answers to aforementioned questions. Apart from bestowing a general education by imparting certain skills which would help an individual survive in his life, the Vedic education would also intrigue a student’s intellect by posing these fundamental questions time and again.

The Vedanta Sutra’s first aphorism says, “*Athatho brahma jijjnasa*”- “Now, this human form of life is the time to inquire about Brahman (Soul & GOD).” These inquiries are unique and exclusive to human form alone, for we don’t find the animals capable of asking these questions. The *Hitopadesha* mentions,

Ahara nidra bhaya maithunam ca

Samanyam etad pasu hi naranam

Buddhi hy eko ‘dhiko viseso

Buddhi vihina pasu hi naranam

“Eating, sleeping, mating and defending are common to both animals and human beings. It is only the intellect which is unique to human beings, which separates them from animals, and devoid of this intellect, humans are no better than animals”

The Vedas not only sufficiently raise the thirst of an intellectual but also quenches this thirst by providing scientific and intellectually satisfying answers to the **‘Life’s hardest questions.’** When we buy any product such as an electronic gadget, say a LCD Television set; we also get a user’s manual which is provided by the manufacturer and authorised company dealer. Similarly, the Vedas are a set of User’s manual for LIFE, which gives entire information about how to use this rare gift of human form of life.

Who could be a better person to give us answers to these life’s hardest questions than the maker of this life Himself, GOD! The essence of all Vedic literature is mentioned in *‘Bhagavad-Gita’* also called *‘Gitopanishad’*, as it is the essence of all Upanishads. Lord Krishna, The Supreme Personality of Godhead Himself, answers all the **‘Life’s hardest questions’** in detail in the 18 chapters of Bhagavad-Gita and also provides a practical course of action in line with the purpose of human life.

This knowledge of *Bhagavad-Gita* was first imparted by Supreme Lord Krishna Himself to the Sun God Vivasvan, and then Vivasvan passed it on to Manu and Manu to his son, Ikshvaku. Thus this knowledge was received by the saintly kings. This system of knowledge transfer is called *parampara-* or disciplic succession.

In the same process of knowledge transfer called *parampara-* the knowledge *Bhagavad-Gita* which answers the **‘Life’s Hardest Questions’** is available today to us in English Translation entitled, *‘Bhagavad-Gita As it Is’* rendered by His Divine Grace A.C.Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, Founder *Acharya*, ISKCON. Srila Prabhupada is the current link in an unbroken chain of disciplic succession of self realized Spiritual Masters (*acharyas*) and is the 32nd acharya in this *parampara*.

In a small booklet **‘Beyond Birth and Death’**, based on *Bhagavad-Gita*, Srila Prabhupada provides complete and thorough answers to these **‘Life’s Hardest Questions.’** The members of Vedic Science club are urged to read this booklet **‘Beyond Birth and Death’** for the Vedic Thinker Course and explore the answers to these **‘Life’s Hardest Questions,’**

Find them yourself!

They are YOUR **‘Life’s Hardest Questions’!**