

51. Nama Aparadha (Chanting with offences)

Three stages of chanting

By considering the different stages of chanting and their relationship to the progressive degrees of Krsna consciousness, we will study the path through these stages, leading to the perfected platform of pure love of Krsna. Three stages are distinguished:

1. **Suddha-nama:** This is the pure stage of chanting where Krsna fully reveals Himself, together with the entirety of His innumerable potencies. A devotee who chants suddha-nama observes Krsna appearing personally on his tongue. As an effect of this chanting he is bestowed pure love of God.
2. **Nama-abhasa:** This is chanting on the clearing stage, with the deliberate endeavor to avoid offenses and to hear the holy name with full attention. On this stage pure love of God will not manifest immediately – it is only attained by suddha-nama. Nevertheless namabhasa is considered very auspicious because it leads to pure chanting and destroys all sins. By serving the spiritual master with full attention while chanting namabhasa, one gradually rises to the platform of suddha-nama and thus attains the final goal, pure love.
3. **Nama-aparadha:** Chanting with offenses. On this stage, pure love is even further away than on the clearing stage. As long as the chanting is performed with offenses, it is absolutely impossible to attain love of God. Nothing else should be aspired than to progress to the next stage as quickly as possible. Offenses have to be given up.

(Extract from The stages of chanting, Nectarean Ocean of the Holy Name – page 38)

By committing offenses against the holy name, we lose our taste for spiritual activities; we just do not feel any pleasure in hearing, chanting and performing devotional service. We are like a person affected with high fever who finds it impossible to eat delicious food. Such a person, however, can be cured in due course of time, by proper medicine and a suitable diet. Then the body will be able to eat the usual food again. Similarly through continuous, long-lasting spiritual practice the devotee can nullify the consequences of *nama-aparadhas* and regain his taste for the holy name. Through repeated hearing and chanting, and through other processes, pure love of Godhead is revealed step by step.

(Extract from The effects of nama-aparadha, Nectarean Ocean of the Holy Name – page 43)

The Root of all offenses

To be inattentive while chanting the holy name (*pramada*)

Bhaktivinoda Thakura states that inattention or distraction while chanting is the root of all offenses: Distraction in chanting produces a type of illusion, causing serious offenses against the holy name that are very difficult to overcome. This illusion leads to craving for wealth, women, position, success and even cheating. When these attractions cover the heart, the neophyte gradually loses interest in chanting the holy name. One must take a constant effort to drive these thoughts away from the mind and diligently follow the rules of Vaisnava etiquette.]

This offence is said to be the root of all other offenses and *anarthas*. It is called *pramada* in Sanskrit; literally, it means “madness”, for it is schizophrenic to ask Krsna to appear, on one hand, and then to ignore Him when He comes. This is why *pramada* means “inattention” and “indifference” as well.

(Extract from The Nectarean Ocean of the Holy Name by Sacinandana Swami – Root of all Offenses Page 85)

Discovery

1. What are the three stages of chanting?
2. What is the root of all offenses?

Understanding

1. What happens if we commit offences against the holy name?
2. How can the devotee nullify the consequences of *nama-aparadha*?

Application

What do you think is the quality of your chanting? How do you plan to improve it?

SRI NAMAMRTA

A disciple who lacks faith in his spiritual master or who acts independently from him cannot attain success in chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa

It appears from the talks of Lord Caitanya that a person who cannot keep his faith in the words of the spiritual master and who acts independently cannot attain the desired success in chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa. In the Vedic literatures it is stated that the import of all transcendental literature is revealed to one who has unflinching faith in the Supreme Lord and his spiritual master. Lord Caitanya firmly believed in the statements of His spiritual master, and He never neglected the instructions of His spiritual master by stopping His saṅkīrtana movement. Thus the transcendental potency of the holy name encouraged Him more and more in chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa, the mahā-mantra.

(Teachings of Lord Caitanya Chapter 19)

PREACHING IS THE ESSENCE

Qualifications for effective preaching:

If a devotee is qualified, sincere and serious about Kṛṣṇa consciousness and if he follows the instructions of a bona fide spiritual master, as Prahlāda Mahārāja did when preaching the instructions he had received from Nārada Muni, his preaching is effective.

(Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 7.8.1)