



# Harināma Cintāmaṇi

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Thākura

Translated by HH Bhanu Swami

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Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura

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## DEDICATION

This book is dedicated to **His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedānta Swāmī Prabhupāda**, who inspired the world to take up the path of bhakti.

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# Chapter One

## Introduction

All glories to Gadādhara Paṇḍita and Lord Gaurāṅga.  
All glories to Lord Nityānanda, the very life of Jāhnavā Devī.  
All glories to Sītā Devī and Advaita Ācārya.  
All glories to Śrīvāsa and all of the devotees.

On the shore of the ocean at Nīlācala (Puri), in the sacred temple of Lord Jagannatha, resides the Supreme Lord in a wooden form known as Dāru-brahma. The Lord, descending in this worshipable form, in order to save the living entities from their eternal bondage and to situate them in the transcendental realm, bestows material benefits to those who desire such things and bestows release from material attachment and the cycle of birth and death to the more advanced souls.

In this sacred abode of the Lord resides the same Supreme Lord in the form of a sannyāsī named Lord Caitanya at the house of Kāśī Miśra. He has manifested himself in order to bestow benedictions upon mankind by teaching the practical process of religion for the age of Kali (yuga-dharma).

In that place, like a desire tree yielding unlimited treasures, the Lord, surrounded by his devotees, distributed prema freely to all people. And there the Lord, taking great care, presented precise spiritual instructions for the benefit of all living entities. This he accomplished through the medium of his devotees, whom he made explain different aspects of devotional service while he sat and relished the devotional topics in great bliss.

Thus, through the mouth of Rāmānanda Rāya he taught the concept of rasa, through the mouth of Sarvabhauma Bhaṭṭācārya he taught the principle of real liberation, and through the mouth of Rūpa Gosvāmī he presented an intricate analysis of rasa. And through the mouth of Hari-dāsa Ṭhākura he taught the full glories of the Holy Name.

One day, after bathing in the ocean, the Lord met Hari-dāsa Ṭhākura at the siddha-bakula tree. In a blissful mood and with a special purpose in mind, he inquired from Hari-dāsa how the living entities could become delivered from the material world most easily.

His body shivering in ecstasy and tears pouring from his eyes, Hari-dāsa grasped the Lord's lotus feet and then spoke in great humility.

“Oh Lord, your pastimes are difficult to understand. I am absolutely worthless. I have no education or knowledge. Your lotus feet are my only shelter. Unreasonably, you have asked this question to such an unqualified person. What good can come of this? O Lord, you are Kṛṣṇa himself and have descended at this time in Navadvīpa Dhāma to deliver the living entities of Kali Yuga. My heart will be satisfied if you simply show your mercy and keep me under your lotus feet. By your great mercy, though you are fully spiritual and inconceivable to the material eye and mind, you have descended and revealed your unlimited name, your unlimited qualities, your unlimited, blissful form and unlimited pastimes in this material world, so that even low rascals such as I can taste them. You are the spiritual sun and I am a particle of light from one of the rays. You are the Lord and I am your eternal servant. My greatest happiness is the nectar of serving your lotus feet. And my only hope resides in reciting the nectar of your name. Being such a low person, how do I know what to say, O Lord? Yet still I must obey your order. Therefore, whatever you make me say, I will happily present that to you without worrying about its faults.”

## **The Lord**

Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Lord, the master of all that exists. He is completely independent, endowed with the free will to desire anything and have that desire fulfilled without effort, and with the free will to act as he desires. But though he is the exclusive, independent consciousness without a second—the absolute truth--inconceivably, he is constantly in the association of his eternal energies, his attributes. [\[1\]](#)

## **Kṛṣṇa and his Energies**

Though the energies are distinct from Kṛṣṇa, they must never be considered independent of Kṛṣṇa. In fact Kṛṣṇa is within all of his energies.



Therefore the Vedas proclaim that Kṛṣṇa and his energies are non-different. Kṛṣṇa is the principal conscious entity (vibhu) and his energies are his attributes (vaibhava). Kṛṣṇa is vibhu, the omniscient, omnipresent, omnipotent master; his energies are the root of all other existing phenomena. Yet even in the midst of unlimited, countless phenomena scattered throughout endless time, Kṛṣṇa remains separate and independent in his original form.[\[2\]](#)

The energies unfold as vaibhava, the phenomena, which are the only medium of perceiving vibhu. The vaibhava are of three types: spiritual, material and marginal, according to scriptural evidence.

### **The Spiritual Manifestation**

Examples of the cid-vaibhava or spiritual manifestation coming from Kṛṣṇa's cit-śakti or superior spiritual energy are all of the Lord's spiritual abodes, such as the countless Vaikuṇṭha planets; the countless names of the Lord such as Govinda and Hari; the unlimited forms of the Lord such as his two-handed form holding the flute; his unlimited wonderful qualities such as his giving of joy to his devotees; and his various transcendental activities such as his rāsa-līlā in Vraja and his saṅkīrtana-līlā in Navadvīpa.[\[3\]](#)

All of these manifestations are non-material, completely spiritual, even though they sometimes descend into the material world and are visible to mortal eyes. All of these elements, intimately associated with the Lord and never separated from him, full of the Lord's infallible nature, are therefore glorified in the Vedas as *viṣṇupada*.

In the spiritual manifestation there is never any taint of material contamination. The material world is composed of a mixture of ignorance, passion and goodness, and even the goodness in the material world is always contaminated by ignorance and passion. But the spiritual manifestation, being untouched by any trace of passion or ignorance, creation or destruction, is called śuddha-sattva or pure sattva. The Lord, as Govinda, Lord of Vaikuṇṭha, Karaṇodaśāyī, Garbhodaśāyī and Kṣīrodaśāyī Viṣṇu, is always śuddha-sattva, completely pure. Whether in Goloka, Vaikuṇṭha, in the causal ocean or in the material world, the forms of the

Lord always maintain their transcendental status, and are thus called by the name *viṣṇu*, denoting their fully transcendental nature.

Though he enters by his various forms into the material world, the Lord remains the master of both the material energy and all other living beings. He always maintains a state of pure goodness, whereas the devatās under his control, such as Brahmā and Śiva, have a state of mixed goodness (*miśra sattva*), being touched with passion and ignorance. [4]

Thus the Lord, his names, forms, qualities, pastimes and his abode are the transcendental manifestations of the Lord's spiritual energy (*cid vaibhava*) for his own pleasure. They are intrinsic to him and are therefore called his internal energy.

### **The Material Manifestation**

On the opposite side of the Virajā, the boundary separating the spiritual realm and the material realm, lies the acid-vaibhava or non-spiritual manifestation, composed of fourteen levels of existence. Because the manifestations of these worlds are the product of Māyā-devī, the place is called Devī-dhāma. This world is composed of five gross material elements—earth, water, fire, air, and ether—which constitute all the non-living material forms and the gross bodies of the living entities; and three subtle material elements—mind, intelligence and false ego—which constitute the subtle material bodies of the living entities. All fourteen environments—the upper systems, composed of Bhū, Bhuvar, Svarga, Mahar, Jana, Tapa, Satya, and the lower systems, Atala, Sutala and others are the acid-vaibhava.

### **Manifestation of the jīvas**

Whereas the spiritual manifestation is the complete state of existence and the acid-vaibhava is its shadow, the jīva-vaibhava is of the same spiritual nature as the cid-vaibhava, but atomic in size. Being spiritual or cit by nature, the jīvas also have the similar character of independence and free will; in number they are unlimited; and their goal is unlimited bliss. Those jīvas who have chosen Kṛṣṇa for attaining that bliss remain as the associates of Kṛṣṇa in a liberated state. And those who, considering only their own happiness, harbor desire for the world of acit or māyā situated

on the other side of the Virajā, remain eternally turned from Kṛṣṇa and receive a material body in Devī- dhāma.

Being subjected to the cycle of action and reaction according to pious and sinful activities, these bound jīvas wander eternally in subtle and gross material bodies of one form or another. Sometimes they rise to the heavenly planets and sometimes they fall to the hellish regions, as they enjoy birth in each of the 8,400,000 types of living bodies.

However, since the conditioned jīvas are also the manifestation of the Lord, the Lord remains with the jīvas wherever they are, bestowing to them what they desire, while maintaining the eternal relationship of master and controlled, independent and dependent, giver and receiver. Always thinking of the ultimate welfare of the fallen jīvas, the Lord mercifully bestows that happiness which the jīvas are attempting to attain.

### **Karma Kanda, material pious activities**

Thus, one who wants the temporary happiness of the material world attains that happiness easily by the mercy of the Lord. One has only to perform śubha-karma or pious activities as directed in the scriptures, such as obedience to the rules of varṇa and āśrama (dharma), performance of ritual sacrifice, practice of yoga, offering of oblations in the fire and observance of specified penance. These śubha-karmas are all material, for even though Viṣṇu is acknowledged as the Lord of the sacrifice, the performers of the rites do not have spiritual intentions and, moreover, the activities take shelter of material objects, material time and material place. The result of this sādhana is material: rising to a higher planet and enjoyment of material comforts. But there is no satisfaction of the jīva in these material activities, and therefore that attempt is completely mistaken. Taking shelter of śubha-karmas, one achieves only the impermanent happiness of a higher material level.

Only when this person, through the association of devotees, understands that he is actually the servant of Kṛṣṇa can he cross over the ocean of material illusion. This point of good fortune is attained only through performance of devotional activities, not through any śubha-karma or karma-kāṇḍa.

## **Jñāna-kāṇḍa, cultivation of impersonal liberation**

Besides the jīvas who seek material enjoyment and take shelter of śubha-karma, there are other jīvas, who, being aware of the hopeless position of suffering of the jīva in any circumstance in the material world, with great effort try to escape from the material world. These people are called jñānīs. For these people the Lord has given jñāna-kāṇḍa, the path of culturing Brahman or impersonal realization. The māyāvādī philosophers use this knowledge to become liberated from matter and merge their existence into the Brahman. However, this situation of liberation is only the radiant light emanating from the Lord's body. Though it is situated beyond the Virajā River, or beyond the domain of māyā, even the demons that Viṣṇu kills can achieve this type of liberation.

Neither the karmīs nor the jñānīs direct themselves towards Kṛṣṇa and thus they can never taste the spiritual happiness of engaging in Kṛṣṇa's service.

## **Bhakti- sukṛti**

There are three types of sukṛti or pious activities: those yielding material happiness (karma); those yielding the bliss of liberation (jñāna); and those yielding the bliss of service to the Lord (bhakti). Bhakti-sukṛti consists of the activities of devotional service, which are done unconsciously or unknowingly. These are the most valuable types of sukṛti, since they result in the attainment of association with devotees of the Lord. Through bhakti-sukṛti the jīva becomes endowed with faith (śraddhā), and then seeks out association of devotees, consciously cultivates devotional practices, develops a taste for the Holy Name, and distributes the name to other jīvas.

## **Indirect Devotional Service in karma and jñāna**

The Lord of the jīvas, being an ocean of mercy, is always eager for the deliverance of the karmīs and jñānīs. Therefore he has given a way in which these materialistic people can gradually come to devotional service. The karmīs, by following the rules of varṇāśrama, which aim at the satisfaction of Viṣṇu, and by taking the association of devotees, can mix devotional elements with their activities of karma. This type of activity may be called indirect or secondary devotional service. By performing such activities the

heart gradually becomes purified of material desires and becomes suitable for planting the seed of devotion. Similarly, the jñānī, on the strength of bhakti-sukṛti and by the mercy of the devotees, may easily attain faith in the path of unalloyed devotional service.

The Lord considers all these jīvas his servants. Though they have given up the Lord in preference to the trifling fruits in the material world, the Lord first makes arrangements by which all the jīvas can give up their desires for material enjoyment and liberation, and then bestows devotional service. Thus while the Lord engages them on the indirect paths of karma and jñāna to fulfill their desires, he simultaneously nourishes their faith in the path of bhakti. The success of this process depends on the mercy of the Lord. Without that mercy, the jīvas could not become purified.[\[5\]](#)

### **Kali Yuga Dharma**

In Satya Yuga, the Lord purified the sages by the process of meditation and then bestowed to them pure devotional service. In Treta Yuga, the Lord arranged for purification through performance of sacrifices, and in Dvāpara Yuga the Lord gave the system of temple worship for purification.

But seeing the pitiful state of the jīvas in Kali Yuga, the Lord gave up hope in the processes of jñāna, karma and yoga. In Kali Yuga the jīvas are afflicted by short life span, many diseases, decreased intelligence and decreased strength. The rules of varṇa and āśrama, analytical study, yoga, jñāna and other processes of secondary, indirect devotional service are not sufficiently powerful to deliver the living entities in Kali Yuga. Karma and jñāna as indirect paths to bhakti become crowded with obstacles and are no longer a practical method for advancement in Kali Yuga. The path of jñāna depends on association of devotees in order to turn it towards bhakti, and the path of karma depends of activity performed without desire, which is offered to the Lord selflessly, in order to turn it towards bhakti. These processes have been corrupted in Kali Yuga because, instead of devotees, one finds imposters and instead of selfless activity for purification of the heart one finds greed for material enjoyment predominant. Thus no good effect is produced. As well the process for Dvāpara Yuga, arcana, has become spoiled by various evils.

The difficulty is due to the essential difference between the paths of karma and jñāna (being material means) and the spiritual end, Kṛṣṇa prema. Practicing these indirect paths only brings more difficulties to the life of the living entities in the age of Kali.

### **The Direct Method of Delivering the Living Entities**

The Lord, thinking of the welfare of the jīvas in Kali Yuga, has thus descended along with his name. The Lord has descended and taught the yuga-dharma of nāma-saṅkīrtana, the direct path for attainment of love of God, Kṛṣṇa-prema. In Kali Yuga the living entities need only remember the Lord's name (nāma-smaraṇa or japa) and chant the Lord's name (nāma-saṅkīrtana).

The method or means (sādhana or upāya) is the Holy Name. The goal to be attained (sādhya or upeya) is prema or love of God. At the stage of perfection or prema, the Holy Name is not given up but chanted all the more, since it is intrinsic to the activities in prema. The name is non-different from the Lord; it is the very embodiment of prema. Thus there is no conflict of interests between the means (chanting the holy name) and the goal (chanting the holy name). Through the Holy Name the jīva can directly reach the desired goal of life, Kṛṣṇa-prema. By the mercy of the Lord, the jīvas can easily be delivered in the age of Kali.

In contrast, the paths of karma and jñāna are not the direct means of attaining the goal, the mercy of Kṛṣṇa, or Kṛṣṇa prema, for when they approach near to the goal, by their very nature, they disappear. The sādhana of the Holy Name is not like this, for it is non-different from the Lord. Thus at the stage of attainment of the goal the name, which was the means or sādhana, remains as the goal itself. One can understand this truth by great fortune alone.

Hari das concluded, "I am just a fallen, low person, attached to the material world. Being an utter fool, I did not take to the chanting of your name."

Tears flowing in streams from his eyes, Hari-dāsa Ṭhākura, incarnation of Lord Brahmā, sighed heavily and fell at the Lord's lotus feet.

The Holy Name, the touchstone which yields all desires, which yields Kṛṣṇa-prema, becomes the life and soul of that person who develops exclusive taste for the Lord, the Lord's service and the Lord's servants.

## Chapter Two

### Accepting the Holy Name

All glories to Gadādhara Pundit and Lord Gaurāṅga.  
All glories to Nityānanda Prabhu, the very life of Jāhnavā Devī.  
All glories to Advaita Ācārya, Śrīvāsa and all the devotees.

#### Qualification of Hari-dāsa

In the ecstasy of love Hari-dāsa Ṭhākura wept, and in ecstasy, Lord Gaurāṅga embraced him. The Lord said, “Where else is there such a devotee as you, Hari-dāsa? You are fully conversant with all spiritual topics and are at all times transcendental to material desire. Taking birth in a low family, you have shown the world that Kṛṣṇa is not obtained by wealth, reputation, family or social refinement, and that any person who has deep faith in the process of unalloyed worship of Kṛṣṇa is more exalted than the devatās.

“You know that the Holy Name is the highest truth. This is evident in your personal activities: you are the ideal example (*ācārya*) by your performance of devotional activities (*ācāra*), and you are skilled and learned in teaching those activities to others (*pracāra*). Therefore, Hari-dāsa, you are fit to describe the unlimited glories of the name. I become blissful when I hear those glories from your lips.”

#### Three Types of Vaiṣṇavas who accept the Holy Name

“Whoever says the Holy Name purely even once is considered a Vaiṣṇava, and the householder should be very attentive to respect such a person. But one who is constantly chanting the Holy name of Kṛṣṇa purely is even a better Vaiṣṇava, being endowed with all good qualities. And the person who can influence another person to take up the chanting of the name of Kṛṣṇa with pure devotion is the highest Vaiṣṇava. Please describe to me the details of how the living entities take up this wonderful name of Kṛṣṇa.”



Folding his hands in reverence, with choked up throat and tears in his eyes, Hari-dāsa began to speak.

### **Nature of the Holy Name**

The name of Kṛṣṇa is cintāmaṇi, which can yield all that one may desire. Thus to the materialists, the name gives dharma, kāma, artha, and mokṣa, and to the unmotivated devotees it gives pure, unalloyed love of Kṛṣṇa. The name is without beginning and fully spiritual, being identical to Kṛṣṇa. The Holy Name is a conscious personality (*caitanya-vigraha*) eternally free from material imperfection (*nitya-mukta*), eternally and completely free from the material modes of passion and ignorance, or situated in pure goodness (*śuddha-sattva*). The name of Kṛṣṇa (*nāma*) and who is denoted by the Holy Name (*nāmī*) are thus identical (*abhinna*). This name descends into the material world in its pure spiritual form and, being identical to the sweetness of Kṛṣṇa, it is the means by which the devotee can relish Kṛṣṇa's sweetness (*rasa*).

Kṛṣṇa is the Absolute Truth and is known by four attributes: name, form, qualities and activities. Actually all objects are known by these four attributes; without these four attributes an object cannot be considered to be real. Kṛṣṇa, who is the supreme truth, the eternal fountainhead of all enjoyment (*rasa*), is also known by these four attributes. They exist in eternity, unaffected by the material world, through the agency of the Lord's sandhinī-śakti (energy of existence).

Just as Kṛṣṇa attracts all the people of the universe, his name, which is his eternal attribute, serves the same purpose. Just as Kṛṣṇa is non-different from his form, his form and his name cannot be separated. When one remembers Kṛṣṇa's name, one simultaneously perceives Kṛṣṇa's form. The form and the name cannot be differentiated. They are like inseparable dancing partners.

Kṛṣṇa possesses sixty-four remarkable spiritual qualities in full. All other living entities are his partial expansions.

Ordinary living entities possess fifty qualities in small portion; Brahmā, Śiva and other devatās possess up to fifty-five qualities to a greater degree; and Nārāyaṇa and the full avatāras possess sixty of those qualities. But Kṛṣṇa's

eternal, transcendental names, uncountable in number, have all the eternal qualities.

The pastimes of the Lord take place on the waves of these transcendental qualities, in the Lord's abodes in Goloka, Vaikuṇṭha and Vraja. These pastimes are fully spiritual. In spiritual existence, name, form, quality and activity are not differentiated from the person's identity. But by association with dull material elements, which are not conscious, the living entity knows only names, qualities, forms and activities that are separate from one another and from his real self. For the pure living entities, name, form, qualities and activities are one with the self.

Only on taking shelter of a material body does the jīva distinguish differences. In the case of Kṛṣṇa, who is beyond all material existence, these attributes are naturally and eternally one inseparable principle.

However, among these four attributes by which one can know Kṛṣṇa, the Holy Name is the primary element, for, by this one attribute, all attributes can be experienced. Since one can realize the form, qualities and activities of the Lord by taking shelter of the name of the Lord, the chanting of the Lord's name is accepted as the Vaiṣṇava dharma. Since all the Lord's transcendental pastimes are present in the name, the name is the highest truth and the highest principle. This is the verdict of Lord Caitanya.

But though the Name is absolute, different people take it up in different ways. The conditioned living entity who takes up chanting of the name with faith and purity is called a Vaiṣṇava and the person who takes up chanting the name in the mode called nāmābhāsa is called Vaiṣṇava-prāya, or semi-Vaiṣṇava. This semi-Vaiṣṇava can, however, by the mercy of Kṛṣṇa, gradually attain a pure state.

Truly, there is nothing comparable to the Holy Name in this material world; it is the ultimate jewel amongst all of Kṛṣṇa's treasures. In the whole material world the only spiritual elements are the jīva and the Holy Name. The jīva is a covered spiritual element in the material world, and Kṛṣṇa, the principal spiritual element, makes his appearance in the world in the form of his name.

### **Types of names**

Kṛṣṇa's names are of two types: primary and secondary. Those names which take shelter of the transcendental pastimes of the Lord are his primary names. By taking shelter of the primary names the living entity gets the ultimate goal of life. Thus, names such as Govinda, Gopāla, Rāma, Rādhānātha, Hari, revealing the eternal pastimes of the Lord, allow the living entity who chants them to enter into the spiritual world.

The secondary names are those which describe the Lord's functions in relation to the material world. Names such as sṛṣṭi-kartā (creator), Paramātmā, Brahman, jagat-saṁhartā (destroyer of the universe), yajñeśvara (master of sacrifice), are names for use in karma and jñāna-kāṇḍa, and give material elevation and liberation. The devotees accept only the principal names, since only the principal names yield Kṛṣṇa prema.

### **Types of chanting**

Concerning the names of Kṛṣṇa (primary names), according to the method of chanting, there will be different results. The scriptures declare that if one chants the name of Kṛṣṇa only once or hears the name of Kṛṣṇa only once, whether that name is pure or impure, it is sufficient to deliver that person from the ocean of material existence. That name will purify the person of all his sinful activities. But one must here note that if the name is chanted in nāmābhāsa the ultimate benefit will come slowly.[\[6\]](#)

However, in the case of extreme impurity, or great distance from the pure name, progress to prema is completely blocked. This state of chanting is called aparādhā or offensive chanting. One such obstacle which separates a person from the pure name is the conception that the name of Kṛṣṇa and Kṛṣṇa himself are different, or that the name of Kṛṣṇa is actually a material sound, separate from the Absolute Truth. As long as this conception continues, it is impossible to attain prema.[\[7\]](#)

Of the two types of separation, philosophical and syllabic, the philosophical misconception is more serious. It is a contamination by māyāvāda ideas, unapproved by scripture, and is a great disturbance in Kali Yuga.

In summary one should understand the real nature of the Holy Name: it is non-different from Kṛṣṇa himself. One should chant a principal name of Kṛṣṇa and one should chant the name devoid of nāmābhāsa or aparādhā.

The person who takes these considerations to heart and chants the Holy Name even once is considered a Vaiṣṇava, and should be served with devotion.

### **Overcoming nāmābhāsa and attaining prema**

In order to overcome nāmābhāsa and obtain the pure name, the living entity must serve the genuine guru with great attention. By doing this the anarthas or impurities in the heart will disappear and the pure name, endowed with all spiritual potency, will dance on the devotee's tongue. At that time, the devotee will not be able to separate himself from the stream of sweet nectar emanating from the Holy Name, and he will dance constantly, mad with the sweetness of the name. In great joy, the name will dance, the jīva will dance, and prema itself will dance with the jīva. This will make the whole universe dance, and will force māyā to flee.

### **Qualification for the name**

Who actually accepts the name? The Lord has endowed the name with all his energy, and offered it as a means of deliverance for all human beings. There is no restriction among human beings for taking up the chanting of the Holy Name. Factually, however, only those human beings who have developed faith or śraddhā will begin chanting the name. He is called a qualified person (adhikārī) or possessor of the name. Taking shelter of the name and chanting the name, he is known as a practitioner of the Holy Name.

In other spiritual practices there are restrictions in performance according to consideration of place, time, and cleanliness, but in taking up the name, there is no consideration of this, for the name overcomes all these restrictions by its invested power. Whereas in acts of charity, sacrifice, bathing, japa of mantras etc., there is always consideration of place, time and cleanliness, in chanting the Holy Name of Kṛṣṇa, faith is the only necessity. Whoever takes shelter of the Holy Name in Kali Yuga with great faith achieves the highest perfection in life.

Therefore, the living entity living in Kali Yuga should constantly and sincerely chant the Holy Name, in the association of Vaiṣṇavas. Though living in the material world, he should spend his life in constant

remembrance and chanting of the Holy Name in the association of devotees, while engaging in all actions favorable to spiritual development and avoiding all actions which are detrimental to spiritual progress. By constant service to the name of Kṛṣṇa and the devotees of Kṛṣṇa, avoiding any other path of action or the worship of any devatā independently of Kṛṣṇa, he is guaranteed to attain Kṛṣṇa-prema.

Concluding his explanation of how the jīvas accept the Holy Name, Hari-dāsa began weeping. Falling at the Lord's feet, he held them and begged for attraction to the Holy Name. The Holy Name, transcendental touchstone, yielding all fulfillment (Kṛṣṇa-prema), will become the very life and soul of that person who performs devotional service at the lotus feet of the greatest Vaiṣṇava, Hari-dāsa Ṭhākura.

## Chapter Three

### Nāmābhāsa

All glories to Gadādhara Puṇḍit and Lord Gaurāṅga.  
All glories to Lord Nityānanda, the life of Jāhnavā Devī.  
All glories to Sītā and Advaita Ācārya.  
All glories to Śrīvāsa and the devotees.

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, being compassionate to Hari-dāsa, lifted him up. The Lord, spreading his lotus hands, spoke as follows.

“O Hari-dāsa, now explain the meaning of nāmābhāsa, for by understanding clearly the nature of nāmābhāsa, one can attain pure chanting of the Holy Name (śuddha-nāma). By the power of that pure chanting a person can easily cross over material existence.

“As the brilliance of the sun extinguishes the darkness, the Holy Name extinguishes the darkness of illusion (māyā). However, clouds or mist may cover the sun from the viewer, so that only a portion of light is perceived. In the same way, when ignorance (ajñāna) and material tendencies (anarthas) are prominent in the living entity, they obstruct the sun of the Holy Name, so that the devotee experiences only a portion of the full effect of the name.

“Though one may speak of the Holy Name being covered by the clouds of anarthas, in reality the sun of the Holy Name can never be covered--rather, the senses of the materially conditioned individual are covered. For this reason, in some cases the Holy Name will appear in full force in the heart of the chanter, but in other cases, due to abundance of ignorance and anarthas, the effects of the name on the chanter will be minimal.

#### The Mist of Ignorance

“Ignorance is comparable to mist and anarthas are comparable to clouds. Ignorance is of three types:

1. Concerning the Holy Name: the person who does not know the true spiritual position of the Holy Name enters into the darkness of ignorance.
2. Concerning the position of the Lord: the person who does not understand that Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Lord will take to the worship of the devatās and turn to the path of material piety (karma).
3. Concerning the nature of the individual spirit soul: the person who is ignorant of the spiritual nature of his own self, jīvatmā, as an infinitesimal part of Kṛṣṇa, takes shelter of the world of impermanence and illusion and remains eternally in ignorance.”[8]

At this point, Hari-dāsa said, “Today I am fortunate, for from my mouth the Supreme Lord himself, Sri Caitanya, will hear about the Holy Name.”

Hari-dāsa continued to explain about ignorance.

Knowledge means knowing that Kṛṣṇa is the Lord, that the living entities are his servants, and that the material world is a non-conscious gross manifestation or by-product of the Lord. The person who does not know clearly the nature of these principles and their relationship lives under the shadow of ignorance. This is one cause of nāmābhāsa, or covering of the sun of the pure Holy Name.

### **The clouds of anarthas**

Anarthas (material obstacles), which are compared to clouds, are classified into three types: thirst for material objects, weakness of heart, and offense (aparādha).[9]

These clouds or anarthas block the rays of the transcendental, independent sun of the Holy Name. The result is nāmābhāsa or the faint image of the name.

### **Remedy for Ignorance and Anarthas**

The living entity will continue under the shadow of nāmābhāsa as long as he remains ignorant of the basic facts concerning the jīva, the Lord, material nature, and their mutual relationships (sambandha-jñāna). However, when the serious practitioner takes shelter of a genuine guru and learns from the guru how to execute spiritual practices and chant the Holy

Name with an understanding sambandha-jñāna, he can remove all of the obstructions blocking the sun of the Holy Name. When the clouds and mist are dissipated, the brilliant sun of the name becomes manifest and bestows upon the devotee the treasure of love of God.

The function of the genuine guru is to instruct the disciple concerning the relationships of the Lord, jīva, and material nature (sambandha) and to make the disciple cultivate the name as a method of sādhana-bhakti to realize those relationships. This is called abhidheya or the process. By this specific process, the sun of the name will soon show its strong influence and drive out ignorance and anarthas. Finally, the name will give the goal of life (prayojana), love of God

(Kṛṣṇa-prema), and in that position of prema the living entity will continue his performance of chanting the Holy Name.

### **Sambandha**

Qualified with genuine faith, the living entity first takes shelter at the lotus feet of the guru and receives correct knowledge about Kṛṣṇa, the spirit soul, material nature, and the relationship of those three, according to scriptural evidence. Kṛṣṇa is the eternal Lord, and the living entities are his eternal servants, linked to the Lord by the bond of prema. This relationship of jīva to God in prema-bhakti is eternal, and manifest as his nature.

Forgetting he is the eternal servant of Kṛṣṇa, jīva enters the material world searching for happiness. The material universe is the prison house for the jīva, a place of remedy or reform to rectify the living entity for his mistake of turning away from Kṛṣṇa. If the jīva, by the mercy of Vaiṣṇava devotees of the Lord, takes up Kṛṣṇa's name with correct knowledge of sambandha, he will attain the most valuable treasure, Kṛṣṇa-prema, and the highest perfection for the living entity. Possessing that realization, even the liberation of merging into the Lord's effulgence becomes detestable.

Yet, as long as the knowledge of sambandha is not understood, the anarthas and ignorance must remain, and the person will continue his existence on the platform of nāmābhāsa.

### **Effects of nāmābhāsa**



However, even chanting in the nāmābhāsa stage is considered to be very auspicious; it is considered to be the chief among all pious activities (such as yoga, dharma, vrata, yajña), for by the accumulation of nāmābhāsa one eventually gains sufficient faith to accept pure devotional service. Other pious activities, however, do not give rise to bhakti, unless mixed with some activities of bhakti.

By chanting in nāmābhāsa, all sinful effects are destroyed and one can attain liberation from the material world. All the effects of Kali Yuga are overcome. By nāmābhāsa even the lowest man can be delivered, and all diseases can be destroyed. By chanting in nāmābhāsa all anxieties will vanish and peace can be obtained. Evil influences of ghosts, demons, spirits and unfavorable planets are nullified. Even the residents of hellish planets can achieve liberation by chanting in nāmābhāsa, for nāmābhāsa destroys the effects of sinful activities already committed (prārabdhakarma). The effects from nāmābhāsa are more powerful than the effects from reading the Vedas or visiting all holy places. It is the best śubhakarman.

Because the Holy Name is invested with all Kṛṣṇa's energies, even by chanting in nāmābhāsa one can attain the goals of dharma, artha, kāma and mokṣa. This chanting can give one the highest position of happiness in the material universe. It is the only resort for the helpless and the best resort for all. One can even proceed to the Vaikuṇṭha planet by this nāmābhāsa chanting in Kali Yuga.[\[10\]](#) That is the version of the scriptures.

### **Four types of nāmābhāsa for the faithless**

Nāmābhāsa is sometimes classified into four types, according to the type of activity one is performing while chanting. *San̥keta* means chanting the name of Viṣṇu or Kṛṣṇa with a material object in mind, or chanting the Holy Name unintentionally while thinking of some other object with the same sound. An example of the first type is Ajāmila, who called the name of his son, who happened to be named Nārāyaṇa. Though he chanted the name of Viṣṇu with the intention of calling his son, he was saved from the punishment of the servants of death, and eventually attained Vaikuṇṭha. An example of the second type of *san̥keta* is the yāvana who chants “haram” when dying. Because the syllables “ha” and “ra” form the name of

Viṣṇu accidentally, that person may attain liberation. Because this type of nāmābhāsa is the least offensive, the power of the Holy Name is intact to a large degree.

One who utters the name of the Lord in *parihāsa* or joking mood, such as Jarasandha, also crosses over the material world. Uttering the name in *stobha* or in derision, as Śiśupāla did, can also cut the chains of material existence. Uttering the name in *helā*, with slight disrespect, also brings benefit. The mlecchas attain liberation by these types of nāmābhāsa. These types of nāmābhāsa are the paths of liberation for the materialistic, lazy people. Of these, *saṅketa* is the least faulty, and in order of increasing fault are *parihāsa*, *stobha* and *helā*.

### Śraddhā-Nāmābhāsa

The holy name chanted by coincidence, in jest, derision or disregard, not being accompanied by real faith in Kṛṣṇa, is considered as a crude kind of nāmābhāsa of which *helā* is the lower limit. If, in contrast, one has genuine faith in Kṛṣṇa and takes to the Holy Name while anarthas and ignorance are still present, that stage is called śraddhā-nāmābhāsa. Since even by chanting in nāmābhāsa without faith one can attain liberation, how can one describe the results of chanting in nāmābhāsa with faith? Very quickly the anarthas will be dissipated, for sambandha jñāna and positive attraction for the name will grow with the advent of faith and practice.

By chanting in nāmābhāsa one can get everything except prema. If one chants the Holy Name in śraddhā-nāmābhāsa, one can eventually attain śuddha-nāma. Attaining and chanting the pure name, without anarthas, one is certain to achieve prema very quickly. Thus, chanting in nāmābhāsa cannot itself give Kṛṣṇa prema but by progressing from this stage to the stage of śuddha-nāma through following the rules of sādhana as directed by the spiritual master, one can eventually achieve prema.

Nāmābhāsa is therefore beneficial, provided that one avoids aparādha. Nāmābhāsa is considered infinitely superior to karma or jñāna, because a person with such nāmābhāsa will eventually develop faith, and that seed of faith will then develop into attraction and taste for Kṛṣṇa, which will lead to the stage of śuddha-nāma and finally to prema.

## Ābhāsa and aparādha

Ābhāsa refers to a faint light or an indirect image. It is of two types: reflected light (pratibimba), which gives rise to a distorted image, and obstructed light (chāyā), which gives rise to a dim, but true image. Similarly, there are two types of faint reflected or distorted faith, and obstructed or partial faith. From partial faith (chāyā-śraddhābhāsa) comes chāyā-nāmābhāsa, which develops into the pure name and prema. This is considered real nāmābhāsa. Just as the clouds obstruct the full brilliance of the sun, so the clouds of anarthas and the mist of ignorance in the jīva's heart allow only a faint light of the name to enter. By such nāmābhāsa the jīvas derive great benefit.

If the name is reflected in the heart of a māyāvādī however, it becomes distorted; thus, though one may attain sayujya-mukti, one cannot obtain the ultimate goal of Kṛṣṇa-prema. This type of ābhāsa is actually aparādha. Chāyā-nāmābhāsa is real nāmābhāsa and it is greatly praised in all the scriptures. Chāyā-nāmābhāsa comes from anarthas based on ignorance; reflected nāmābhāsa comes from anarthas based on perverted, envious knowledge, which obstructs devotion and therefore is called aparādha. Though a person chanting in nāmābhāsa may not be considered a true Vaiṣṇava, as long as he is not contaminated with māyāvāda philosophy, he is respected as a neophyte devotee, for he will quickly progress with good association.

The pure devotees bestow their mercy on such innocent persons, whom they treat in a friendly manner, and not indifferently, as they treat the māyāvādīs. The pure devotees cultivate the new devotee's materialistic faith until it transforms to a tendency to worship the Lord sincerely, by giving bhakti along with sambandha-jñāna, which brings about service to the Lord. If, however, the pure devotees see that a person has strong faith in the māyāvāda philosophy, they will certainly avoid him altogether.

Seeing persons with pure faith, some people pretend to have faith. However, because their so-called faith is completely distorted by persistent desire for material enjoyment and impersonal liberation, which obsesses their minds day and night, they do not have actual faith, though they may have that appearance. This distorted faith is compared to the light

reflected from water. The reflected light is broken and the image is distorted. When people with warped faith receive the Holy Name, the name that they chant is similarly distorted. Because such people may chant the name, they may appear to have faith in the name, but this is not actual faith.

If one takes to the name with such distorted faith, one will not progress to purification, no matter how long one continues chanting. One will instead remain at the same perverted stage forever. Such practice usually leads to unhealthy māyāvāda mentality, and finally one becomes a cheater. Such a person thinks that the Holy Name is simply a means to a higher end, and by such mentality the glory and power of the name become lost. The result is offense or aparādha.

In real nāmābhāsa, the effects of the name are felt, but in a weakened state, due to obstructions. From ignorance and weakness of heart, many anarthas may be generated, but steady chanting clears all these anarthas. However, in distorted nāmābhāsa, born from the cheating mentality, the offensive attitudes do not decrease but rather increase.

### **Offensive Māyāvadi Mentality, nāma aparādha**

The māyāvādīs consider Kṛṣṇa, his name, form, pastimes and qualities to be false and perishable. On this ground they can never acknowledge prema as the highest spiritual goal. Their path leads in the opposite direction from the path of bhakti. Thus there can be no real compromise between the two paths. The māyāvāda philosophy is considered the enemy of bhakti and its followers are considered as the greatest offenders. Actually, the Holy Name never comes from the mouths of these people, for though syllables may be heard and the external appearance of the name may be there, the Holy Name with all its potency does not reside there. The Māyāvadi who chants the name in this way simply goes to hell, because he thinks that the name is temporary and material. In his chanting of the name the Māyāvadi desires only material enjoyment and liberation. By being so deceptive and cheating in motive, he reaps only suffering.

### **Deliverance of the Māyāvādī**

But if the Māyāvādī can chant the Holy Name while giving up the aspiration for bhukti and mukti and while accepting his position as the servant of Kṛṣṇa, and while giving up the Māyāvādī conceptions, he will be able to faithfully chant the true name. By hearing and chanting the name in the association of devotees, he will realize actual knowledge of sambandha, and by constant chanting of the name, tears will come to his eyes. He will receive the mercy of the name, and his heart will become strong.

### **Destination of the Māyāvādī**

However, the Māyāvadi conception which maintains that both Kṛṣṇa and the position of jīva as Kṛṣṇa's servant are temporary and imaginary is a great offense to the name and is the cause of all calamity. Since the name is a desire tree, it gives the Māyāvādī his desire of merging into the Lord's effulgence (sāyujya-mukti). Since all powers are invested in the Holy Name, even distorted nāmābhāsa (pratibimba-nāmābhāsa) yields a low type of liberation (mukti ābhāsa). Amongst the five types of liberation, sayujya-mukti or merging gives relief from the pains of the material world, but in the process it extinguishes one's own identity as well. Deluded men, thinking happiness is the attainment of sāyujya, actually receive only a faint image of happiness (sukhābhāsa), for in that state, forgetting Kṛṣṇa completely, they can never obtain service in eternal bliss and knowledge to the Lord, the perfection of life.

If one has no bhakti, no love of Kṛṣṇa, no constant faith and conviction in Kṛṣṇa, how is it possible to attain real eternal happiness?

### **Overcoming Nāmābhāsa**

A person at the stage of real nāmābhāsa (chāyā-nāmābhāsa) does not accept the māyāvādī philosophy, nor is his heart contaminated or weakened by different speculative theories. Though the person at nāmābhāsa stage does not know the full glory of the Holy Name, realization will come, for the very nature of the name is that it gives realization of itself. Though the full glory of the sun is not visible when covered by clouds, the sun gradually dissolves the clouds and finally shines in full glory. In this very way, a person who chants the Holy Name in chāyā-nāmābhāsa is able to eliminate very quickly all the clouds of anarthas and

ignorance, especially by the powerful influence of the spiritual master. Having attained śuddha-nāma, he can easily achieve Kṛṣṇa-prema.

One who chants in nāmābhāsa should carefully avoid the company and influence of māyāvādīs, and should serve and satisfy devotees who chant the pure name. That is the Lord's instruction. Whoever accepts this instruction is a fortunate soul and whoever rejects it is an unfortunate wretch who cannot be delivered for a hundred million births.

Hari-dāsa, concluding his explanation of nāmābhāsa, prayed, "Rescue me from all bad association and keep me at your lotus feet. I do not see any alternative to your lotus feet."

One who takes shelter at the feet of Hari-dāsa will incessantly chant the Holy Name and find the real satisfaction of life.

## Chapter Four

### The First Nāma Aparādha: Blasphemy of Vaiṣṇava<sup>[11]</sup>

*satāṃ nindā nāmaḥ paramam aparādham vitanute*

*yataḥ khyātiṃ yātaṃ katham u sahate tad-vigarhām*

Criticism or harmful intent (ninda) to a person qualified as a devotee (sādhū) is considered a serious offense to the Holy Name. How can the Lord tolerate criticism of those who spread the glories of the Name?

All glories to Lord Caitanya, the life and soul of Gadādhara Paṇḍita.

All glories to Lord Nityānanda, the life and soul of Jāhnavā Devī.

All glories to the husband of Sītā, Advaita Ācārya.

All glories to Śrīvāsa and the devotees.

Lord Caitanya said, “O Hari-dāsa! Now describe in detail the offenses to the Holy Name (nāma aparādha).”

Hari-dāsa answered, “Under your inspiration, I will say whatever you make me say.”

Offenses to the Holy Name, which should always be held in great fear, are analyzed as ten according to the scriptures. They are as follows:

1. Blasphemy or criticism of Vaiṣṇava.
2. Considering that other living entities such as devatās are independent of Kṛṣṇa.
3. Disrespecting the spiritual master.
4. Disrespecting scriptural authority.
5. Interpreting the meaning of the name and thinking that the glories of the name are imaginary.
6. Committing sinful activity on the strength of the Holy Name.

7. Giving the Holy Name to the unfaithful who are not ready to accept.
8. Comparing the Holy Name to karma or material pious activity
9. Inattention while chanting the Holy Name.
10. Remaining without attraction to the Holy Name even though one knows the greatness of the name, due to attachment to the material identity of “me and mine”.

These I shall describe one after another. May the Lord give me strength to avoid these offenses!

The first offense, known as sādhu-ninda, or criticism of Vaiṣṇava, is extremely destructive for those who desire progress in spiritual life.

### **Symptoms of a Sādhu or Vaiṣṇava**

In the Eleventh Canto of Śrīmad Bhāgavatam, Kṛṣṇa, speaking to Uddhava, enumerates the characteristics of the devotee:

1. Doyālu : merciful
2. sahiṣṇu : tolerant
3. sama : equal minded
4. droha-śūnya-vrata : performing penance without injury to the body,
5. satyasāra : truthful
6. visuddhātmā : pure
7. parahita-rata : engaged in helping all humanity
8. kame akṣubhita-buddhi : having intelligence free from lust
9. danta : controlling the senses
10. akiñcana : devoid of the concept of ownership
11. mṛdu : mild
12. śuci : clean
13. parimita-bhoji : regulated in eating and other habits



14. śantaman : peaceful
15. anīha : disinterested in material affairs
16. dhṛtimān : patient
17. sthira : steady
18. kṛṣṇaika-śaraṇa : surrendered exclusively to Kṛṣṇa
19. apramatta : not negligent of his duties
20. sugambhīra : very grave
21. vijita-ṣaḍ-guṇa : conquering over the six guṇas
22. amanī : not demanding honour from others
23. manada : respecting other living entities
24. dakṣa : skilful
25. avañcaka : without the cheating propensity or hypocrisy
26. jñāni : knowledgeable of scripture

One can know who is a sādhu or devotee by the presence of these symptoms. However, here there are two types of characteristics: principal and marginal. The principal characteristic is exclusive surrender to Kṛṣṇa, and all the other characteristics are considered dependent upon that symptom. By good fortune, if one gets the association of Vaiṣṇava, one may become attracted to the name, take up chanting the name and take shelter of Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet. This becomes the chief characteristic, and by continuing to chant the name all the other characteristics make their appearance. Therefore they are called marginal or accompanying. Though secondary to the principal characteristic, they will certainly appear in the body of a true Vaiṣṇava as an effect of proper chanting of the Holy Name.

The positions of gr̥hastha, brahmacārī, vānaprastha and sannyāsī, the social classes of śūdra, vaiśya, kṣatriya and brāhmaṇa of the varṇāśrama system, and their respective habits and qualities are external distinctions, which in no way determine who is a devotee. The chief characteristic of a devotee is

his complete surrender to Kṛṣṇa. This surrender is not dependent on varṇa or āśrama.

### **Conduct of the gr̥hastha Vaiṣṇava**

Through the example of Raghunātha dāsa, Sri Caitanya taught how the gr̥hastha Vaiṣṇava should behave.

The married man should regard his household with detachment and fix his mind steadily on service to Kṛṣṇa. He should not be enamored by sense gratification. By behaving in this manner the householder can gradually cross the ocean of material existence. Instead of acting as a false sannyāsī who enjoys material life while wearing the cloth of a sannyāsī, one should take those things necessary for survival in the material world and at the same time cultivate detachment. One should always be internally fixed on Kṛṣṇa, though acting externally according to one's social custom in varṇa and āśrama. Quickly Kṛṣṇa delivers such gr̥hastha Vaiṣṇavas.

### **Conduct of the renounced sādhu**

When Raghunātha dāsa gave up householder life, the Lord gave instructions on the conduct of the renunciate.

The sannyāsī Vaiṣṇava should neither listen to materialistic conversations nor speak materialistic topics to others. He should not eat fancy food, nor wear fancy clothing. He should always chant the Holy Name, while giving respect to all and not demanding respect for his own body. He should always meditate on eternal service to Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa in Vraja.

The principle characteristic is one: surrender to Kṛṣṇa's name. This symptom will prevail in all devotees whether gr̥hastha or sannyāsī, śūdra or brāhmaṇa by caste. However, according to āśrama or varṇa, the secondary characteristics may differ to some degree.

### **Traces of sin in the devotee**

And even if there appears some bad element or fault in a person, if he has the chief characteristic-- surrender to Kṛṣṇa-- he must be considered a devotee, and should be respected and served by all. This is Kṛṣṇa's

statement in Bhagavad Gītā and Śrīmad Bhāgavatam. I give that statement full respect.

There is a profound conclusion here, which you have revealed to me. It is said that when a person has developed a taste for chanting the pure name, his chanting of just one name of the Lord is sufficient to destroy the influence of all sins. Sin cannot remain in a person who has developed a taste (ruci). Though some remnants of those sins may still be evident in a person, they will eventually vanish by the influence of the Holy Name. Since the traces of sin will quickly vanish, the person must still be regarded as the most righteous person (dharmātmā).

Of course, if the materialist sees those traces of sin in a Vaiṣṇava devotee or takes into account his previous sinful actions, he may consider that person on the same level as a materialistic sinner and consequently he may (inappropriately) criticize or find fault with that sādhu. That is called sādhu-ninda. Such a criticizer is called a rascal. Because of his nāmāparādha of criticizing a Vaiṣṇava, he must directly suffer the anger of Kṛṣṇa.

### **Distinguishing the real sādhu**

One who is solely devoted to Kṛṣṇa and sings Kṛṣṇa's name is known as a sādhu. No one else is considered a sādhu. Thus, one who is not a real devotee of Kṛṣṇa but who claims himself to be a sādhu is actually a pretender. The person who humbly takes shelter of Kṛṣṇa, humbly sings Kṛṣṇa's name, and thinks himself to be the lowest rascal, is the real sādhu. Knowing himself to be lower than a blade of grass, considering himself like a tree of tolerance, not expecting honor for himself, and giving honor to all other living entities, he chants the name and attains attraction for Kṛṣṇa.

If I hear the Holy Name even once from such a person, I will call him a Vaiṣṇava and will offer him all respect. This Vaiṣṇava is the friend and spiritual leader of the universe; he is an ocean of mercy to all living entities. It is due to his mercy that one obtains bhakti. Consequently, whoever criticizes such a Vaiṣṇava goes to hell for countless births.

### **Spiritual influence of the sādhu**

Kṛṣṇa's spiritual energy of bhakti, composed of hlādinī and samvit śaktis, resides in the pure Vaiṣṇava devotee. For this reason, by contacting a Vaiṣṇava one can receive Kṛṣṇa-bhakti, and for this reason also, the food remnants, foot water and foot dust of the pure Vaiṣṇava are powerful means to nurture devotion. If one stays near a pure Vaiṣṇava for some time, one can receive the bhakti energy flowing from his body. If one can bind that energy in one's heart, after having developed strong faith, bhakti will develop and one's body will begin to tremble in ecstasy.

Living in proximity to a Vaiṣṇava, one will soon develop bhakti in one's heart. One will begin chanting the Holy Name, and then, by the influence of the Name, one will receive all the good qualities, which are the symptoms of a real Vaiṣṇava.[\[12\]](#)

### **Four varieties of sādhu-ninda**

A Vaiṣṇava may be criticized on four counts: his caste by birth, previous sins or faults committed in this life, an unpremeditated act of sin, and slight traces of previous sinful habits.

Though all these conditions may be present in a particular Vaiṣṇava, they are in themselves insubstantial grounds for criticism of a Vaiṣṇava. Yamarāja will punish one who blasphemes a Vaiṣṇava on these grounds. Because the Vaiṣṇava is spreading the glories of the Lord's name, the Lord will not tolerate such criticism of a Vaiṣṇava. These faults will not appear however in a pure Vaiṣṇava at all.

### **Respecting the sādhu**

Having given up dharma, yoga, sacrifice and jñāna for the name of Kṛṣṇa, the Vaiṣṇava is the topmost person. Not criticizing devatās or other scriptures, the pure devotee simply takes shelter of the Holy Name. One should eagerly take the dust from the feet of such a Vaiṣṇava, regardless of whether he is a gr̥hastha or sannyāsī. One should treat him according to his status as a Vaiṣṇava, which is based upon his degree of attraction to the Holy Name. Caste, āśrama, wealth, learning, youthfulness, beauty, strength, or number of followers are not factors for consideration in this matter.

## **The true Vaiṣṇava avoids sādhu-ninda**

Therefore, the symptom of the person who has actually taken shelter of the name is that he never indulges in sādhu-ninda, but rather respects the sādhus. The Holy Name takes shelter of pure bhakti, which resides in the real devotee. Since bhakti does not reside with sādhu-ninda, the person who commits sādhu-ninda has no bhakti and cannot be called a devotee. The tendency to criticize Vaiṣṇavas matures into aparādhā, a serious crime that acts as an impediment to the progress of bhakti. Thus a serious devotee does not indulge in criticism of the Vaiṣṇava, but instead associates with, hears from, and serves the sādhu.

## **Cause of sādhu ninda**

Because association with non-devotees produces disrespect for devotees, the devotee should carefully avoid non-devotees.

Materialistic association or asat-saṅga is of two types: association with women and association with those devoid of devotion to the Lord. Association with women means association with women without regard for the Vedic tradition, and as well, association with persons who are themselves associating with women in an unapproved manner. The first category may be divided into association with women which is against scriptural directives; and association with woman within a lawful marriage, where the husband falls under the woman's control. Association is approved only if the relationship is sealed by proper marriage and if the husband acts according to the rules of married life. According to the rules, the wife should be submissive to the husband, and the husband should act as a Vaiṣṇava. Any other association with women is called asat or material.

Association with non-devotees is of three types: association with māyāvādīs, association with pretenders, and association with atheists. Māyāvādīs believe that the Lord and the jīvas are both temporary entities and that the Lord's form is material. The pretenders, though without genuine devotion or renunciation, pretend to be devotees to make a living. The atheists do not believe in any form of the Lord. These people may claim to be devotees and may be accepted as such by the public, but if one rejects such people, it is not considered sādhu-ninda. One who criticizes a

person who gives up such asat people should also be rejected and avoided. The serious devotee, giving up asat-saṅga, the cause of sādhu-ninda, should take shelter of the Holy Name and will certainly receive the treasure of Kṛṣṇa-prema.

### **Types of devotees**

Thus, in order to proceed properly to the goal of prema, one must be able to distinguish the devotee from the non-devotee, for one must avoid criticism of the actions or character of a devotee and should seek his association, and simultaneously one must avoid the non-devotees completely.

One must also be able to distinguish the different types of Vaiṣṇavas according to their spiritual advancement and treat them accordingly.

Vaiṣṇavas are of three types. The materialistic Vaiṣṇava or vaiṣṇava-prāya (semi-vaiṣṇava) is a person who has slight faith in Kṛṣṇa but has no service attitude towards devotees. Such a person is not a real Vaiṣṇava but a Vaiṣṇava ābhāsa, a faint likeness of a Vaiṣṇava. He is however classed as a Vaiṣṇava in order that real Vaiṣṇavas, who avoid non-Vaiṣṇavas, may give him association. He is called a kaniṣṭha-vaiṣṇava, upon whom the advanced Vaiṣṇava bestows mercy so that he may become purified and elevated to a higher status.

The madhyama devotee recognizes the important position of the Lord's devotees and thus always associates with the Lord's devotees. He is convinced of Kṛṣṇa's position as the Lord, the jīvas as his eternal servants, the process of advancement as bhakti and the goal as prema. He shows mercy to the innocent (those with a little faith, kaniṣṭha devotees) and avoids the non-devotees or asat-saṅga.

The madhyama devotee can understand the different effects of different types of association. The madhyama devotee is considered a pure devotee (śuddha-vaiṣṇava) because he is qualified by taking up the pure Holy Name rather than nāmābhāsa. He is qualified to distinguish the real Vaiṣṇava from the non-vaiṣṇava, and does so, since avoiding asat-saṅga and sādhu-ninda as well as serving the advanced devotees is a necessity for his

advancement. If he fails to distinguish the Vaiṣṇava from the non-vaiṣṇava, he is bound to commit Vaiṣṇava aparādhā

The uttama Vaiṣṇava, the highest type of Vaiṣṇava, experiences Kṛṣṇa as the life and soul of everything. Consequently he sees Kṛṣṇa situated in everything and does not make distinctions between Vaiṣṇavas and non-vaiṣṇavas. Since he makes no distinctions of friend or enemy, Vaiṣṇava and non-vaiṣṇava, for him there is no regulation to serve Vaiṣṇavas. Simply he engages in relishing the nectar of the Holy Name.

The kaniṣṭha devotee performs his devotional service in nāmābhāsa and is thus ignorant of correct attitudes towards Kṛṣṇa, the devotees, and the Holy Name. The madhyama devotee is qualified with the real (śuddha) nāma, and in chanting the Holy Name can understand the symptoms and significance of the nāmāparādhā. The uttama devotee is above committing offense as he factually realizes and respects Kṛṣṇa everywhere.

Among the various kinds of devotees (kaniṣṭha, madhyama and uttama), it is the madhyama devotee who must distinguish the different types of devotees and takes full advantage of associating with and serving the sādhu.

It is therefore very important to come to the stage of the madhyama-bhakta, for in that state one can examine one's personality, understand one's position and necessities in devotional service, and then perform activities necessary for continued advancement. Understanding his own level, he will avoid sādhu-ninda, associate with equal Vaiṣṇavas, serve superior Vaiṣṇavas, avoid non-devotees (asat-saṅga), give spiritual instruction to the innocent, and chant the Holy Name. By this activity he can advance.

### **Remedy for sādhu-ninda**

If by accident one commits the offense of blasphemy of a devotee, one should sincerely feel repentant, and cry at the feet of that devotee, "Oh prabhu, please forgive my offense and give the mercy of the Vaiṣṇava to this evil minded blasphemer."

Since the devotee is by nature very merciful, with softened heart and merciful embrace, he will forgive the offender.

Hari-dāsa Ṭhākura concluded, “According to your order, Lord, I have discussed the first offense. This I offer to your lotus feet.”

The person, who, like a bee in search of honey, serves the lotus feet of Hari-dāsa, will receive the touchstone of the Holy Name as his life and soul.



## Chapter Five

### Worshipping the devatā as independent of Kṛṣṇa

*śivasya śrī-viṣṇor ya iha guṇa-nāmādi-sakalaṃ  
dhiyā bhinnaṃ paśyet sa khalu hari-nāmāhita-karaḥ*

He who equates Viṣṇu with Śiva and the rest of the devatās is an offender to the Holy Name.

All glories to Lord Caitanya, the life of Gadādhara Paṇḍita.  
All glories to Lord Nityānanda, the life Jāhnavā Devī.  
All glories to Advaita Ācārya, the husband of Sītā Devī.  
All glories to the devotees of the Lord.

Hari-dāsa spoke with folded hands. “Now hear about the second offense, O Lord of the universe.”

#### The Position of Viṣṇu

Viṣṇu is the supreme absolute truth, not subject to the duality of the material world. He is a form full of consciousness and knowledge, existing eternally beyond the imperfections of material nature, though being the absolute controller of the material world. Kṛṣṇa in Goloka is the supreme tattva, being ornamented with sixty-four transcendental qualities to enhance his blissful activities. Manifesting himself as Nārāyāna he displays sixty of these qualities. The puruṣa avatāras and other full avatāras (sva aṁśa) all possess these sixty qualities in order to carry out their functions.

[\[13\]](#)

#### Devatās and Ordinary Jīvas

Kṛṣṇa expands as two types of conscious particles (vibhinna aṁśa). The first are the ordinary jīvas, who have fifty qualities in small portions. The second are the devatās, who have the same fifty qualities but to a greater degree. In addition, they sometimes possess five more qualities in part

(total 55). Viṣṇu has all these qualities in full, plus five more, which are not found in other living entities (total 60).

In this way we can see that Viṣṇu or Nārāyaṇa, with sixty qualities, is the Lord, and that Śiva and the devatās are his servants. Greater than the ordinary jīvas are the devatās and Śiva, and greater than Śiva is Viṣṇu, who is the Lord of the jīvas and the Lord of the devatās. Therefore, whoever considers Viṣṇu to be on the same level as the devatās must be called extremely ignorant, totally lacking the correct conception of the Lord. Viṣṇu is supreme and transcendental to material nature; the devatās are his servants.

### **False Conceptions**

In spite of these facts, some philosophers claim that the impersonal Brahman without qualities (nirguṇa) is supreme, and that through the material guṇas of goodness, passion and ignorance, Viṣṇu, Brahmā and Śiva all become manifest with material qualities. However, the conclusion of scripture is that Nārāyaṇa is beyond the guṇas of matter whereas Brahmā and Śiva become manifest for the function of creation and destruction of the material universe. Whoever rejects the supreme position of Lord Viṣṇu and instead takes to worship of the devatās simply prolongs his term of imprisonment in the world of illusion.

Other people claim that since Viṣṇu, according to scripture, pervades the whole universe and is present in the devatās as well, worship of the devatās is as good as worshipping Viṣṇu. But this is not the conclusion of scripture. Rather, this type of activity is forbidden. Instead, by worshipping Viṣṇu, all other worship is accomplished. Just as by giving water to the root of a tree the branches become satisfied, by worshipping Viṣṇu exclusively, all worship of the devatās is satisfied.

This is the Vedic conclusion, but unfortunately, fools reject this. Under the influence of māyāvāda philosophy, the living entities of Kali Yuga place Viṣṇu on the same level as the devatās. Actually each devatā gives limited results, whereas Viṣṇu yields all results. If the materialists can understand this difference, they can give up the worship of the devatās, take to the worship of Viṣṇu, and achieve all perfection.

## Daily Behavior of the Gṛhastha

The householder devotee of the Lord should without worry of committing offense simply worship Kṛṣṇa in all his activities. For example, in all the saṁskāras from insemination (garbhādhāna-samsāra) to funeral rites (antyeṣṭi), he should worship Kṛṣṇa through the Vedic mantras. According to the Vedas, one should worship the Vaiṣṇavas and Viṣṇu directly and worship the forefathers and devatās by giving them the remnants (prasāda) from the worship of Viṣṇu.

If a person directly worships the devatās or forefathers as the māyāvādīs do, he commits the second offense to the Holy Name and terminates his spiritual life. To think that the devatās are independent of or equal to Viṣṇu is an offense, and by that, one stops his devotional progress. If one compromises and thinks that Śiva or any other devatā is also the Supreme Lord, or that devatās have some power which is not dependent on Viṣṇu, one commits serious aparādha. According to the Vedas, all the devatās arise from the energy of Viṣṇu and do not have separate power. Brahmā, Ganeśa, Sūrya, and the lords of the directions have their positions of lordship in the material world only by the will of Kṛṣṇa. They do not have independent power. If one worships the devatās accepting them as the empowered servants of Viṣṇu or as guṇāvatāras (Brahmā and Śiva) then there is no offense.

Therefore the gṛhastha Vaiṣṇava should recognize the one supreme Lord Viṣṇu and regard the devatās as his dependent energies. The gṛhastha, though following the rules and customs prescribed by his caste, should give up all those rules which direct him to devatā worship for achieving sense gratification. He should instead hold firmly to the path of bhakti, worshipping the Lord in all circumstances.

In this way the gṛhastha, his mind fixed on devotion to Kṛṣṇa, will satisfy the ancestors and devatās by recognizing them as the devotees of Viṣṇu and offering them Viṣṇu prasāda. The devotee should be convinced that by worshipping Kṛṣṇa and the Vaiṣṇavas all results will be attained. In this way he will avoid committing offense and will be able to chant the Holy Name continuously.

## **Acting According to Varṇāśrama**

Everyone who has accepted the human body must follow the duties of varṇas as far as maintaining his physical body is concerned but must at the same time worship Viṣṇu. By this scientific arrangement of society, the general mass of people can obtain material satisfaction according to their individual nature, and simultaneously, by degrees, attain devotion to Kṛṣṇa. Those who are of low birth or qualities or are outside the varṇāśrama system should give up their bad habits and begin practicing the duties of śūdra as far as family life is concerned. Without situating oneself in one of the four varṇas or castes and performing varṇa duties, there is no question of dharma or religious life. To maintain himself and his family in a manner favorable to devotional service, a person should act according to the rules of his particular varṇa.[\[14\]](#)

One must remember however that the worship of Kṛṣṇa is also an essential part of the varṇāśrama system. If the four varṇas carry out life according to the rules of their particular caste but do not worship Kṛṣṇa, then they simply go to hell. Particularly the gṛhastha must follow the rules of his varṇa in performing his worldly activities, raising family, and relating with the rest of society; but at the same time, according to his means, he must worship Kṛṣṇa. Living according to the rules of varṇa, he should accept enough to maintain his life and also perform worship of Kṛṣṇa.

## **Beyond the Rules of Varṇāśrama**

He must respect and follow these rules of varṇāśrama until he has come to the platform where those rules hamper his worship of Kṛṣṇa. This is the stage known as the beginning of bhāva—that pure state of the jīva, which develops by serious performance of sādhana-bhakti. By performing bhakti-yoga and chanting the Holy Name, one can gradually realize the true goal of life and reach the stage just prior to bhāva-bhakti. At this stage the taste for rules is absent and one becomes qualified to perform his activities free from the restrictions of rules. This stage will be achieved by the gṛhastha Vaiṣṇava who accepts Viṣṇu as supreme.

## **Material Conception of Viṣṇu**

There is one other offense derived from not accepting Viṣṇu as the supreme absolute truth. Being supreme, Viṣṇu, by his inconceivable energies, possesses name, form and qualities, which cannot be considered separate from himself. To consider the name, form and qualities to be different from the Lord is to consider both the Lord and the name to be limited material objects. If one maintains this false conception in ignorance he remains at the level of nāmābhāsa, in which state prema is impossible to achieve. This anartha can be removed by the mercy of a genuine guru who will guide the practitioner in sādhana-bhakti so that the pure name will become revealed.

### **Impersonal Brahman and Viṣṇu**

The concept of material duality in the Lord propagated by speculators becomes a serious offense which is difficult to rectify. The māyāvādīs claim that the impersonal Brahman without variety, character or energies, without form or beauty-- simply pure existence without change or activity-- is the supreme truth. For them, the name and form of Viṣṇu (duality) are creations of the illusory energy. According to them, when a person overcomes illusion, his conception of Viṣṇu simply merges into the Brahman. This is faulty reasoning motivated by voidism. To claim that the Supreme Truth is without all inconceivable energies or is unable to possess qualities is madness. Brahman in a form possessing variegated energies is none other than Viṣṇu. The highest realization must be the Lord with energies and personality. That is the Vedic conclusion.

Actually Viṣṇu has both features in himself: he is nirviśeṣa and saviśeṣa, without variety and with variety. This is possible by the inconceivable power of the Lord, the supreme power. All opposites are assimilated and adjusted without difficulty. By this inconceivable power the Supreme Lord can exist with variety, beauty and pastimes. All opposing arguments cease and the theory of impersonal Brahman loses its position.

Of course, the jīva, being by nature of small intelligence as a particle of the Lord, cannot fully understand the nature of the Lord's inconceivable power. In an attempt to establish a concept of the Supreme Truth by relying on his own intelligence, the jīva takes shelter of material logic and accepts the secondary feature of the Lord, the impersonal Brahman, a state of unity

and peace, as the Supreme. By rejecting the lotus feet of Viṣṇu, who is worshipped by the devatās, he becomes bound up in the state of Brahman and cannot distinguish what is beneficial or harmful for his own welfare.

### **Spiritual Position of Viṣṇu**

But a person who can understand that the Absolute Truth can exist with form and variety in a pure spiritual state can properly see that Viṣṇu, his name and qualities are all one, inseparable from the Lord. This concept of Kṛṣṇa with personality is real knowledge. With this understanding one can chant the Holy Name and see it as the wonderful form of Kṛṣṇa himself. Whereas a material object is different from its name, form and qualities, Viṣṇu is non-different from his name, form and qualities. With this understanding, one should worship Kṛṣṇa in his name. Therefore, thinking that Viṣṇu is materially limited and that other living entities, such as the devatās, have existence separate or independent of Viṣṇu are both great offenses.

### **Avoiding Offense to Devatās**

The person solely devoted to the Holy Name worships Kṛṣṇa and gives up worship of any other person. At the same time, he does not criticize the devatās or those scriptures which glorify devatās as supreme. He realizes that different scriptural paths are prescribed for people of different qualification and that all the scriptural paths attempt to lead the people gradually to devotional service, by training them to have proper respect. Criticizing the devatās and the scriptures glorifying them comes from a material speculative mentality. Thus the devotee avoids this, as it is also an offense, and worships the devatās as the servants of Kṛṣṇa.

### **Respect for Devatās**

Since the householder is obliged to worship devatās according to his caste, he will perform this worship by offering to the devatās, forefathers and other living entities the prasāda of Kṛṣṇa. Similarly, when that devotee sees the mūrti of a devatā, he will pay respects to the devatā, seeing the devatā as a worshipable servant of Kṛṣṇa. The devotee should not accept the Viṣṇu prasāda coming from a deity worshipped by a māyāvādī, because the māyāvādī is an offender to the Holy Name. Viṣṇu never accepts his

offerings. Also, to accept offerings made directly to the devatās is an offense to Viṣṇu and obstructs the path of pure devotional service.

The real devotee first worships Kṛṣṇa and then worships the devatās by giving them the Lord's prasāda. Receiving Kṛṣṇa's prasāda offered later to the devatās is not offensive for the devotee. In this way the devotee can respect the devatās without committing an offense to the Holy Name. The devotee thus carefully avoids the second offense in chanting the Holy Name and, by continuing his chanting of the Holy Name, achieves prema.

### **Remedy for the Second Nāma Aparādhā**

If by accident one happens to deviate from accepting Viṣṇu as Supreme, one repents the offense and concentrates the mind on understanding the true position of Viṣṇu. Constant remembrance of Viṣṇu (through constant chanting of the Holy Name) is the best means of obtaining relief from this offense. But one should be very careful not to commit the same offense again. The Lord is an ocean of mercy, an ocean of forgiveness, and a dear friend who forgives one's previous mistakes.

Hari-dāsa concluded, "I will always avoid association with persons who worship devatās as supreme and I will always worship the Supreme Lord Viṣṇu."

The touchstone of the Holy Name becomes the very life and soul of that person who performs his devotional activities at the feet of Hari-dāsa Ṭhākura.

## Chapter Six

### Disrespect to the Spiritual Master

*guror avajāñā* - Disrespect to the guru

All glories to Pañca-tattva.

All glories to Rādhā-mādhava.

All glories to Navadvīpa, Vraja, Yamunā and the Vaiṣṇavas.

Hari dāsa continued, “Lord, now I will offer to you an explanation of how the third offense occurs. According to your order, I will describe in detail how all sorts of offenses arise from disrespecting the spiritual master.”

#### Function of the Guru

The living entity, having wandered through body after body in 8,400,000 species of life, obtains a human body. The human body is a rare opportunity because only in this body can the living entity perform devotional service properly. As a devatā, one has the tendency to enjoy and as a lower animal one has no capacity for knowledge. But in the human form the living entity can cultivate spiritual life. But since the human body is temporary, one must take advantage and make endeavor for the highest goal, otherwise one will die and be reborn again.

The intelligent person while in the human form will take shelter of the guru who is the helmsman of the ship to cross over the ocean of material existence by engaging one favorably in Kṛṣṇa's service. He will satisfy the guru (whose chief quality is being a devotee of Kṛṣṇa) with humble words, and receiving initiation from him, he will cross the ocean of saṁsāra. The jīva has a natural tendency to worship Kṛṣṇa, but by argument and mental speculation this disappears. Giving up this mentality, and assuming a submissive mind, he receives mantra (that which liberates the mind) from the spiritual master.[\[15\]](#)

#### Suitable Guru



One who is a householder should accept guru while continuing his performance of duties according to his varṇa and āśrāma. If a brāhmaṇa is a Kṛṣṇa devotee, he can serve as the guru for all varṇas, but if there is no suitable person of brahmana birth, one can take initiation from a person of another caste. If there is a choice, the gr̥hastha should choose the bona fide guru of a higher caste.

However, above all, the main qualification by which to judge suitability is the extent that the guru knows Kṛṣṇa. He may be brāhmaṇa, śūdra, gr̥hastha or sannyāsī, but this makes no difference in the ability of the guru to deliver the jīva. If one desires to progress to pure attraction (śuddha-rati) to Kṛṣṇa, one should look for the major symptoms in choosing guru. Consideration of caste when judging the qualification of Vaiṣṇava guru is insignificant from the spiritual perspective.

If there is a qualified guru of higher caste, there is no necessity of seeking a guru of lower caste, but if the high caste guru is not qualified as a Kṛṣṇa bhakta, one should not in any circumstance take initiation from him simply on consideration of caste. One should instead take a qualified guru who is a devotee of Kṛṣṇa from a lower caste. The important consideration for the devotee aspiring for service to Kṛṣṇa is that the guru has realization of Kṛṣṇa. If the guru is qualified by both realization of Kṛṣṇa and by high birth, then that also is a very good combination.

If a householder for some reason gives up household life without having pursued spiritual life, and then begins looking for a guru, he should choose a guru who is a renunciate. The spiritual aspirant who renounces household life should take shelter of an acarya who has also renounced household life. He should take initiation (dīkṣā) and instruction (śikṣā) from that guru and will then develop a taste for the nectar of the Holy Name.

If the householder had a qualified guru during his householder life, he should not disrespect or reject that guru for the rest of his life. That guru should always be honored. It is recommended that the householder takes a householder guru, but if a bona fide guru of the renounced order is available, the householder may take him as guru.

Accepting a spiritual master and chanting the Holy Name, the householder will eventually feel the approach of the stage of bhāva. At that time his attraction for family life and sense gratification will cease. He will then naturally give up household life and enter the renounced order. In order to accept the renounced order, that person should seek out an ācārya in the renounced order, surrender to his lotus feet and take his instruction on renunciation.

### **Śikṣā and Dīkṣā Guru**

Guru may be of two types: dīkṣā-guru, or the person who gives Kṛṣṇa mantra; and śikṣa-guru, the person or persons who gives significant spiritual instructions. The devotee who desires quick advancement will give both gurus equal respect. A person can accept only one dīkṣā-guru but may have many śikṣā-gurus who give sambandha-jñāna. All the pure devotees who are generating suspiciousness by distribution of the Holy Name may be regarded as śikṣā-gurus.

### **Śikṣā**

In the vaiṣṇava-sampradāyas, the founding ācāryas (Rāmānuja, Madhva, Nimbarka, Viṣṇu Svāmī), who established the sambandha-jñāna or the philosophical teachings, are regarded as the principal śikṣa-gurus of the respective sampradāyas. The founder ācārya of the sampradāya, being the topmost guru, should be given all respect proper to his position. The devotee belonging to the sampradāya should be loyal to those conclusions and teachings, and not take up philosophies which contradict those conclusions. One should carefully follow his orders and take up his mission, and not take dīkṣā outside the sampradāya. One should recognize the spiritual authorities of one's own sampradāya as śikṣā-gurus and not accept the teachings from others personalities, though they may appear to be learned.

One should take as dīkṣā-guru only a person who is well versed in the teachings of that founder-acarya and is of ideal conduct and character. To take initiation from a māyāvādī is useless. Whoever accepts such unauthorized teachings does not attain the ultimate goal of life.

Both the person who accepts false teachings and the guru who gives false teachings go to hell. If a person rejects śuddha-bhakti and learns some other philosophy, his whole life becomes a catastrophe. How can such a person, not being able to achieve perfection himself, deliver others from the material world? Therefore the pure devotee of Kṛṣṇa, whoever he may be, is suitable to be a guru. This is the verdict of scripture.

### **Worship of Guru**

One should not think of the spiritual master as an ordinary jīva. Both śikṣā and dīkṣā-guru are the servants of Kṛṣṇa, especially empowered by Kṛṣṇa, with a special service in Kṛṣṇa's pastimes. One should serve the guru with great devotion, knowing him to be directly empowered by Kṛṣṇa, the dearest servant of Kṛṣṇa, and one's own eternal spiritual guide. By such sincere service to guru, one can cross over the material ocean.[\[16\]](#)

One should first worship the guru (offering āsana, foot wash, arghya, bath, cloth, ornament etc.); then, taking his permission one should worship the Lord. One should then offer Kṛṣṇa's prasādam to the guru, to the Vaiṣṇavas, the devatās and the forefathers. In this way, taking the permission of the guru, one should then perform worship of Kṛṣṇa; and remembering guru, one should chant the name of Kṛṣṇa.

### **Disrespect for Guru**

If one disobeys or disrespects the guru, it is offensive and will block one's progress in bhakti. One should respect guru, Kṛṣṇa and the Vaiṣṇavas. Then, taking shelter of the Name, the devotee quickly crosses over the material ocean. That person who has unflinching faith in the spiritual master will certainly receive prema by the strength of the pure Holy Name.

### **Rejection of Guru**

It may happen that, through asat-saṅga, (bad association) a guru may lose his qualifications. Though initially he was a famous, exalted guru, by committing nāma aparādha, he loses his power of discrimination. Becoming hostile to real Vaiṣṇavas (committing the first aparādha), he then loses a taste for the Name, and step by step falls under the control of desire, craving wealth and sexual enjoyment. Such a guru should be

rejected. By the mercy of Kṛṣṇa, that disciple will obtain a new bona fide guru and take up pure chanting of the Name.

If a guru takes unsuitable people as disciples he will have to suffer the consequences, and if a disciple takes an unqualified guru, he will accordingly suffer. If the disciple becomes corrupt, the guru should reject him. If the guru becomes corrupt, the disciple should reject him. Otherwise both will fall.

However, as long as both guru and disciple are qualified the relationship should not be rejected. This relation is eternal. The person who disrespects the bona fide spiritual master is the worst sinner and offender in the whole universe.

From the very beginning, one should be careful to choose an actual devotee of Kṛṣṇa as guru. In order to prevent the pain of having to reject an unqualified guru, one should first carefully examine him to see if the guru has pure bhakti. Even in receiving a material article, one examines it for quality. If a guru is without devotion to Kṛṣṇa, the disciple will receive the same. Once having accepted a qualified guru, if one disrespects him, one commits grave offense. By that, even the devatās can drop to hell.[\[17\]](#)

### **Service to Guru**

One should not step on the guru's bed and seat, his shoes, vehicle, the water that washes his feet, or his shadow. One should not worship another person in the presence of the guru. All this minimizes the position of the bona fide guru. One should regard the guru as one's lord and master, obey his words, and utter the name of the guru with great devotion. One should never disregard the order of guru. One should take his prasādam remnants, and not discuss anything that the guru dislikes. Surrendering oneself humbly at the guru's feet, one should always act so that he is pleased. If one acts in this way and chants the Holy Name, one will attain the perfection of life. That is the statement of the Vedas.

### **Remedy for Guru Avajānā**

If, by bad association or contact with false literature, one happens to reject such a bona fide spiritual master (nāma-guru) who has imparted the

glories of the Holy Name and taught the chanting of the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra, one should immediately give up the bad association and literature, and in sorrow approach the feet of one's guru. The guru, being all-merciful, will reinstate the disciple, and through the Holy Name will bestow prema.

[\[18\]](#)

The author, a low rascal, lower than a blade of grass, whose only hope is the dust from the feet of Hari dāsa, thus sings the glories of the Holy Name.

## Chapter Seven

### Criticism of Authorized Scripture

*Śruti-śāstra-nindanam* – Criticism of Authorized Scripture

All glories to Gadādhara Paṇḍita, Lord Gaurāṅga and Lord Nityānanda.

All glories to Advaita Ācārya and the devotees of Gaurāṅga.

Hari-dāsa spoke. “Lord, the fourth offense is criticism of scripture. This offense is an obstruction on the path of devotion.”

#### Function of Scripture

Scripture means the four Vedas, the Upaniṣads and the Puruṣas. These have emanated from the breathing of Kṛṣṇa and constitute perfect, final knowledge and authority. Knowledge of spiritual matters is especially found in these traditional works, called āmnāya (Vedic knowledge coming through an authorized sampradāya). Therefore the devotee should engage in studying these works.

#### Necessity of scripture

The material senses of man are characterized by four faults: karaṇāpāṭava (limited capacity in his senses), bhrama (mistaken perception), vipralipsā (desire to report something other than that which is perceived, i.e. cheating), and pramāda (inattention of the senses, or omission of perception).

Furthermore, the senses cannot possibly perceive anything beyond the material level of unconscious matter. The spiritual realm would thus be unapproachable, were it not for the intervention of Kṛṣṇa’s mercy. Kṛṣṇa has mercifully given the four Vedas, which are beyond the four faults of the senses. By these alone can man progress towards the spiritual goal. Kṛṣṇa, being very merciful to the bound up jīvas, has given the Puruṣas and Vedas through the realization of sages for this purpose.

#### Subject of scripture

According to these authoritative scriptures, karma and jñāna are indirect and dependent paths. Only the path of bhakti directly yields the highest goal. The Lord first gives karma and jñāna for preliminary purification of the jīvas, and then gives pure bhakti.

The Vedas stand as the authoritative guide and reference (pramāṇa or proof), and they uphold nine different truths (prameya), which cover the three topics of sambandha, abhidheya and prayojana. By these ten principles—the Vedic authority and the nine truths—ignorance is destroyed and transcendental knowledge is revealed.

#### **A. The authority (pramāṇa):**

The Vedas and pursuant literatures are the source of spiritual information.

#### **B. The nine principles (prameya) proved by the Vedas (pramāṇa)**

##### **1. Sambandha (relationships):**

- a. There is one supreme Lord, Viṣṇu.
- b. The Lord is the possessor of all energies (saktimān).
- c. Kṛṣṇa is the source of all pleasures (rasa) and is situated in his abode eternally to give joy to the jīvas.
- d. The jīvas are particles of the Lord, unlimited in number, infinitesimal in size but conscious.
- e. Some jīvas, attracted by illusory pleasure, are eternally bound in the material universes (nitya-baddha).
- f. Some jīvas are eternally liberated, worshipping Kṛṣṇa, residing with him as associates in the spiritual sky and experiencing prema (nitya-mukta)
- g. Kṛṣṇa exists with his energies—the material energy, jīva energy, and the spiritual energy consisting of his abode, form, name qualities and pastimes—in a state of simultaneous identity and difference. He permeates all yet remains aloof. This is possible through his inconceivable power, acintya-bhedābheda-śakti, approved in all the scriptures.

With this knowledge, the jīva thinks, “I am the servant of Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa is my eternal master. We are related as a particle of light is related to the sun.” The Vedas speak of transformation of the energies of the Lord (śakti- pariṇāma), not of transformation of the Lord himself or Brahman (vivarta-vāda), which is against the Vedic teachings.

## 2. Abhidheya (process):

The process specifically mentioned (abhidheya) for the jīva in the Vedas is devotional service (bhakti) consisting of nine activities: śravaṇa, kīrtana, smṛti, pūjana, vandana, pāda-sevana, dāśya, sakhya and ātmā-nivedana. Of these, hearing, chanting and remembering the Holy Name are the most important. For this reason the Vedas glorify chanting the syllable “om”. Bhakti is divided into vaidhi and rāga bhakti.

## 3. Prayojana (goal):

The final goal (prayojana) of the jīva, after taking shelter of pure bhakti is prema.[\[19\]](#)

These basic principles for the guidance of the jīvas are the subject of the Vedas. In order to understand these topics, one should seek out a person (guru) who is fully knowledgeable of these Vedic conclusions.

One who criticizes the Vedas, which are the very source of spiritual knowledge, commits a serious offense to the Holy Name and is considered the lowest amongst mankind.

## Offensive Philosophies

In the history of India, there are six personalities who invented useless speculative theories. Jaimini, though formally claiming to respect the Vedas, did not recognize the Supreme Lord and proclaimed fruitive rituals of the Vedas (karma kāṇḍa), independent of worship of God, as the highest activity. Kapila speculated that the Lord is unproven, and recommended the process of yoga, without understanding its real goal—realization of Paramātmā.[\[20\]](#) Nagna (Jain doctrine), taking shelter of philosophy in the mode of ignorance, spread teachings completely contradictory to the Vedas. Similarly the atheistic materialist Cārvāka and the Buddhists had no respect for the Vedic knowledge. Gautama, a proponent of logic (nyāya),



[21] did not recognize worship of the Lord, and consequently dealt only with the human condition.

The intelligent person understands that all these theories, either directly or indirectly, defame the śruti (Vedic literatures) and understands that having faith in these theories makes one an offender. Therefore the devotee completely avoids them.

### **Māyāvāda**

One other philosophy to be avoided is that of the māyāvādīs. Their scriptures are not genuine, but are distortions of the meaning of the Vedas. Actually the philosophy is Buddhism in disguise, to mislead the foolish people in Kali Yuga. Śiva, on the order of the Lord, appeared in a brāhmaṇa family and became an ācārya. Like Jaimini, he claimed obedience to the authority of the Vedas, but twisted the philosophy and taught a different meaning to the world. The māyāvādī teachers Aṣṭāvakra, Dattātreya, Govinda, Gaurāpada, and Śaṅkara and his followers, accepted the Buddhist doctrine of merging of the soul into the impersonal nirvāṇa as the final state and tried to establish it in terms of the Vedic teachings (impersonal Brahman). (Though the Buddhists do not recognize the Brahman, the state of śūnya is equivalent to the nirviśeṣa state of the māyāvādīs.) By doing this, the real conclusion, the direct meaning of the Vedas— devotional service—became covered. All these philosophies are in direct contradiction to bhakti, and therefore if one subscribes to any of these theories while chanting the Holy Name, he simply commits offense against the Holy Name.

### **Direct meaning (abhidhā) of the Vedas: nāma-kīrtana**

If the jīva can take the direct meaning of the words of the Vedas (abhidhā), he will perform the process of pure bhakti and will be rewarded with the sweetness of prema. But if he insists, without justification, that the indirect meaning or metaphorical interpretations (lakṣaṇā) are the real meaning, he cannot come to the truth and simply perishes on account of his offense to Kṛṣṇa. This is the mistake of Śaṅkara and his followers. In order to prove the supremacy of the impersonal Brahman, Śaṅkara must take indirect

meanings of the scriptures because the direct meanings can only indicate the personal Lord and bhakti.

The principal, all pervading sound in the Vedas is “om.” This is a name of Kṛṣṇa and by chanting the name the living entities can achieve the Lord’s eternal abode. The Vaiṣṇavas of the Śrī-sampradāya chant “om” as a name of Kṛṣṇa. The Vedas state that the Holy Name is the spiritual form of the Lord in the material world and that it is so powerful that even the faint influence of the name can bring about perfection.[\[22\]](#)

Thus, though glorification of the Lord’s name is the direct teaching of the Vedas, unfortunate souls cannot accept this. Belittling the position and instruction of the Vedas, they commit offense to the Holy Name. In contrast, the devotee who takes shelter of the pure name accepts the absolute authority and direction of the Vedas and attains the nectar of the name, Kṛṣṇa- prema.

All of the Vedas proclaim, “Just chant the name of Hari and by that you will receive the highest form of love and bliss.” They proclaim, “All the great liberated devotees in the spiritual sky are continuously chanting the Holy Name.”

### **Present day Śruti-ninda**

It is unfortunate that in Kali Yuga even so-called great devotees avoid the sweet name of the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa and instead worship his energy of illusion, Māyā Devī. By propounding the authority of the tamasic tantra (teachings for those in the mode of ignorance) they undermine the position of the Vedas. Lustful for meat and intoxication, these people bring themselves to misfortune by taking to a corrupt life against all principles of dharma. These blasphemers of scripture neither accept the name of Kṛṣṇa, nor do they attain the eternal abode of Vṛndāvana.

The Lord’s energy of illusion, Māyā Devī (Durgā, Kali), casts these offenders of scripture further into the material world. Manifesting one form of mercy, she gives them worldly happiness or punishment according to their activities, but never gives them an attraction for the nectar of the Holy Name. Being Kṛṣṇa’s servant, she punishes these erring jīvas, and gives illusory happiness to the hypocrites who make a show of devotion to her.

This same Maya Devi, however, manifests her true mercy when she sees a person worshiping the Lord's devotees. At that time she helps the person attain Kṛṣṇa. Māyā Devī helps the person who sincerely accepts the Holy Name in order to cross over the material ocean.[\[23\]](#)

One should therefore give up the offense of śruti-ninda in its various aspects as described above and be engaged day and night in chanting the name of Kṛṣṇa.

### **Remedy for Śruti Ninda**

If one commits śruti-ninda, one should be repentant and offer his respects to the scriptures. With devotion one should offer flowers and tulasī leaves to the Śrīmad Bhāgavatam and the Vedas. The Śrīmad Bhāgavatam, being the essence of the Vedas and the incarnation of Kṛṣṇa, is certain to give its boundless mercy.

That person who aspires for the dust from the feet of Hari-dāsa is qualified to wear on his neck the touchstone jewel of the Holy Name.

## Chapter Eight

### Interpreting the Holy Name

*Tathārthavādo hari-nāmni kalpanam*

Thinking the praises of the Holy Name to be imaginary

All glories to Lord Gaurāṅga and Gadādhara Pundit.

All glories to Sri Rādhā-Mādhava.

All glories to the land of Gaurāṅga's pastimes, to the Gaṅgā and the  
Vaiṣṇavas.

Hari dāsa spoke. "Oh son of Śacī, the fifth offense is to think that the praises of the Holy Name are simply imaginary."

#### Meaning of Arthavāda

To think that the glories of the Holy Name are imaginary is against all scriptures. To think, "Everything written about the holy name is not actually true, just exaggerated praises to encourage a person to develop a taste for the name" is called arthavāda. Everything glorifying karma and jñāna-kāṇḍa is certainly just to inspire people to take up those practices, but this is not true concerning the Holy Name. Therefore to think like that is considered to be an offense.

#### Praise of the Holy Name

The smṛti scriptures are filled with glorification of the name of Kṛṣṇa. Chanting the Holy Name either in negligence or in faith is enough to obtain the mercy of Kṛṣṇa. There is no knowledge as pure as the name; there is no vow as powerful as the name. There is no meditation more effective than the name, nor is there any fruit greater than that attained by the name. There is no greater renunciation than chanting the name; there is no greater peace than that obtained through the name.

In this world there is no greater pious activity than chanting the name, nor is there any goal greater than that achieved by the name, for the name

gives the highest liberation, the highest destination, the highest peace, the highest abode. The name is the highest form of devotion; the name is the purest inclination of the jīva; the name is the expression of the highest love; the name is the supreme method of remembrance of the Lord. The name is the cause of all causes, non-different from the Supreme Lord, and is thus most worshipable, being the ultimate spiritual guide and deliverer.

It is stated that one thousand names of Viṣṇu are equivalent to one name of Rāma; and three names of Rāma are equivalent to one name of Kṛṣṇa. In this way, the supremacy of Kṛṣṇa's name is glorified.

### **Considering these Glories as Imagination**

The Vedas always glorify the name and establish that the name is purely spiritual. The person who discredits the statements of the Vedic literatures, which profusely glorify the name, is a serious offender. The rascal who commits this offense against the name is doomed to rot away in hell. The offenders say that the results of the Holy Name stated in scripture are not true and are merely exaggerations meant to attract people to the name. Due to lack of devotional sukṛti, due to lack of faith, such offenders cannot understand the real purport of the scriptures or what is beneficial for the soul. Instead they misunderstand everything.

If one does not have bhakti-sukṛti then one will not have faith in the principles of bhakti. Among the processes of bhakti, chanting the name is the best. Therefore, without bhakti-sukṛti one cannot develop taste for the name, nor does one have faith in the scriptural descriptions of the results of the chanting. Those who are attached to only one part of the scriptures cannot understand the real purport of the scriptures.

### **Comparison with praises of Karma-kāṇḍa**

Because the karma-kāṇḍa section of the Vedas is meant to satisfy selfish desires for material gain, the scriptures mention many exaggerated effects of karma as a lure in order to inspire this type of person. However the process of pure bhakti and chanting the name are to be performed without material motive, and therefore all the scriptural statements regarding the wonderful effects of the name are facts (not exaggeration to lure the person).

In the glorifying the name there is no room for cheating, false pretence, or exaggeration. In giving the name to another person, one does not expect material results for oneself or the person receiving the name: in giving the name to a faithful person one simply makes him the servant of Kṛṣṇa. This is without personal motivation and only for the pleasure of Kṛṣṇa. And though the scriptures mention so many attractive results from chanting the name, the devotee has no interest in enjoying these results for himself. Being beyond self-interest, the devotee does not pay heed to the material results of the name which are mentioned in the scriptures.

But in performing pious activity such as sacrifices prescribed in karma-kāṇḍa, the sponsor explicitly expects some material gain. There is explicit selfishness. The sponsor of the sacrifice asks for material results.

If one can execute these pious activities without interest in the material results, one's heart will become purified. That is the actual purpose of the karma-kāṇḍa. When one's heart is purified, one develops an interest in the soul and this interest gradually becomes stronger. A taste for cultivating the name eventually develops and matures as prema. Thus, it can be seen that the end result of karma-kāṇḍa, if performed properly, is to taste the Holy Name.

### **Results of Chanting the Name**

The results one can obtain from chanting the name are far beyond anything one can obtain by wandering in any of the fourteen planetary systems. The results from the Holy Name are incomparable. Though the followers of karma and jñāna may try to discredit the glorious position of the name, that action has no effect on the name's powers. Just by nāmābhāsa one can get all the results obtained by the processes of karma and jñāna. If such results can be obtained by nāmābhāsa, is there need to doubt that a greater result can be obtained by chanting the pure name?

The devotee who takes shelter of the pure name will certainly obtain all the effects of the name that are recited in the scriptures. Any person who doubts this is the lowest of men and, by his doubting, commits offense to the name. This leads him to certain ruin.

From the beginning to the end of the Vedas, in the Rāmāyaṇa, in the Mahābhārata and in the Purāṇas, the name is glorified. What result can come from minimizing and interpreting the glories of the name which are clearly stated by the authority of the Vedas?

Since the Lord and the Lord's name are one, and since the name is invested with all the Lord's energies, chanting the Holy Name is superior to karma, jñāna and any other process of advancement. As the Lord is completely independent and full of all energies (saktimān), he has, by his will, invested his material energy in karma-kāṇḍa activities, and has invested his impersonal energy in process of brahma-jñāna. But in the syllables of his Holy Name, the Lord, by his independent will, has invested all energies and all results. In this way, the name, like the Lord, is the possessor of all energies (saktimān). The intelligent person will not discredit the powers of name.

### **Remedy for the offense**

If one happens to commit the offense of minimizing the glory of the Holy Name, with straw in his mouth he should humbly go before the assembly of Vaiṣṇavas and reveal his offense at their feet, begging sincerely for forgiveness. The devotees of the Lord, conversant with all the glories of the name, will mercifully forgive him and embrace him. The offense of thinking that the glories of the name are exaggeration or the offense of concocting one's own material meaning in the Holy Name, which arise from the deceptions of material consciousness, will not occur again.

If one happens to talk with one of these offenders, one should immediately, with one's clothes on, bathe in the Gaṅgā. If Gaṅgā water is not available, one should bathe fully clothed in any other body of water. If no water is available, one should perform mental bath for purification.

That person who takes shelter of the mercy of the flute, Kṛṣṇa's dear companion, wears the touchstone jewel of the Holy Name as his ornament.

## Chapter Nine

### Committing sin on the Strength of the Name

*nāmno balād yasya hi papa-buddhir  
na vidyate tasya yamair hi śuddhih*

A person who has the intention of committing sin on the strength of chanting the Holy Name cannot be purified by observance of rules and regulations

All glories to Lord Gaurāṅga and Gadādhara Paṇḍita.  
All glories to Lord Nityānanda and Jāhnavā Devī.  
All glories to Sītā and Advaita Ācārya.  
All glories to the devotees.

Hari-dāsa continued.

#### **Power of the Name to eradicate sinful activity**

If the jīva takes shelter of the Holy Name, which is śuddha-sattva, quickly all the anarthas, such as weakness of the heart (hṛdaya-daurbalya) will dissolve. If one becomes fixed in the Holy Name, one will no longer have the tendency to commit sin, the effects of past sins will no longer have influence, and the mind will maintain purity.

The cause of suffering of the jīvas may be analyzed into three stages. Commission of a sinful act is the final stage. A seed of sin, a desire to commit sin, causes this. That desire or seed originates from ignorance (*avidyā*), the root cause of all suffering. Though the whole world is thus a place of ignorance and suffering, the Lord manifests mercy to all the jīvas and always tries to direct the welfare of his parts and parcels. Not being able to bear the sufferings of the jīvas, he always tries to help them. Thus he gives the process of bhakti, by which the thirst for material stimulation or the lust of the senses is driven from the heart.



By performance of bhakti, one is able to look with contempt on the endeavor to acquire beautiful women or wealth. One is satisfied with one's constitutional service to the Lord. Showing the symptoms of surrender, the devotee accepts everything favorable to the development of bhakti and rejects everything unfavorable to bhakti. He regards Kṛṣṇa alone as his protector and as his maintainer and gives up all ideas of the selfish concept of "me and mine". Thinking himself very low and worthless, the devotee will continuously chant the Holy Name. Whoever is fixed in the shelter of the Holy Name in this way can neither think nor do any sinful act.

### **Pāpa-gandha, trace of sin**

It is guaranteed that one's previous sinful tendencies will quickly be destroyed and the purity which is natural to the soul will be established. However, in the interim period between sinful life and the pure state, there may be some trace of attachment to that previous sinful activity (pāpa-gandha). Since the person does not commit new sin in the interim period and is constantly engaged in devotional service, the past sinful tendencies become quickly dissipated. The more one engages in the name, the quicker will that sinful trace vanish.

### **Personal protection by Kṛṣṇa**

Kṛṣṇa promised Arjuna that he would never let his devotee fall into difficulty. As difficulties are caused by sin, Kṛṣṇa mercifully takes away all sin from the devotee. The jñāni is able to stop sin only with great difficulty and, because he does not take shelter of Kṛṣṇa, quickly falls again into sinful activity. But, as the scriptures testify, the devotee who takes shelter of the Lord is guaranteed freedom from sin and its concomitant suffering.

### **Accidental sin**

If a devotee, by accident, happens to commit a sin, he does not resort to prayāścitta (karma-kāṇḍa purificatory rites). That sin is temporary and will not stay with the devotee. He will not go to hell, but will in the end enjoy the nectar of the pure name.

### **Deliberate sin**

However, there is another type of sin. If someone, taking advantage of the great power of the name to destroy sins, intentionally commits a new sin out of lust, thinking that the name will protect him from the reaction, that person is not a devotee but a cheater. By committing this offense against the name he will reap lamentation, fear and death.

Two types of sinful activity may be distinguished: unpremeditated or accidental sin due to bewilderment and premeditated or deliberate sin. There is a vast difference between the two, according to scripture. In the case of committing an ordinary sin, a person is relieved of the effects by certain acts of penance (*prayaścitta*) and a repentant attitude. But if one even thinks of committing sin on the strength of the name (deliberate sin), there is no remedial measure, so serious is the offense. That person has no choice but to accept intense suffering. Even if he receives countless tortures by the servants of Yamarāja he cannot be delivered from that offense. If thinking of committing this offense to the name brings such suffering, how much more will be the suffering if the sin is actually committed?

In scripture one hears that the name removes the effects of more sins than one can commit in ten million lifetimes. In countless places, the scriptures testify that even by *nāmābhāsa* all five types of sin, even the greatest sin, can be removed. Hearing this information, a person of a cheating mentality may, with ill motive, start chanting the name. In this way, he may give up regular work as difficult, and, taking up the cloth of a renunciate, wander here and there looking for women and wealth to satisfy his senses. Though he has formally given up household life, by taking advantage of the name and his *sannyāsī* dress, he goes about associating with women. He is called a *markaṭa-vairāgī* or monkey *sannyāsī*. He takes the position of an advanced renunciate but conducts himself as a householder. If one takes up the formal position as a renunciate, one should not associate with women. To do so is a great disturbance to the social order and the whole universe.

There is, of course, no inherent fault in being either a householder or a renunciate. One should accept whichever *āśrama* is favorable for one's advancement in *bhakti* and then chant the name without committing sin.

But to harbor the idea of committing sin under the shelter of the name is a great offense. This will block the path of bhakti.

### **Power of Nāmābhāsa and Śuddha-nāma**

One who is at the nāmābhāsa stage is always in danger of committing this offense through the influence of bad association, but one who has śuddha-nāma does not commit this aparādha. Those who have taken shelter of the pure name do not at any time, in any form, come near to committing any of the ten aparādhās, because such a devotee's very nature is to be always alert to maintain the purity of the name. However, as long as one does not have the pure name, there is every danger of the onslaught of offenses. Therefore, the person in nāmābhāsa, for the sake of his own progress, must beware of the mentality of committing sin on the strength of the name.

Those who have the shelter of the pure name are careful to avoid all offenses by always living in the association of advanced Vaiṣṇavas. They do not let their minds move from the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa at any time. But one whose mind is not fixed in the pure name should make every effort to avoid offenses, particularly the offense of committing sin on the strength of the name. This person should constantly chant the Lord's name. By the grace of guru, by receiving sambandha-jñāna, he will clear the clouds of anarthas and ignorance from his heart and attain the pure name and pure bhakti.

### **Remedy for the offense**

If, by inadvertence, one falls into this mentality, one should purify oneself by association with pure Vaiṣṇavas. Sinful desires are like thieves on the road of bhakti and the pure Vaiṣṇavas are the protectors of the road. When one loudly calls out the name of the protectors of the road, the Vaiṣṇavas will come and the thieves (desires for sinful activity) will flee.

In affection, the Vaiṣṇava will say, "Do not fear. I am your protector."

He who has vowed to serve the feet of the Vaiṣṇava exclusively, thinking himself the lowest of the low, sings the wish-fulfilling Holy Name.

## Chapter Ten

### Giving the Name to the faithless

*aśraddadhāne vimukhe'py asṛṇvati  
yaś copadeśaḥ śiva-nāmāparādhah*

Giving the instructions of the Holy Name to those without faith and with no interest in the Lord or the name, who actually do not hear the name, is an offense to the Lord's name.

All glories to Gadādhara Paṇḍita and Lord Gaurāṅga.  
All glories to Jāhnavā Devī and Lord Nityānanda.  
All glories to Sītā Devī and Advaita Ācārya.  
All glories to Śrīvāsa and all the devotees.

Hari-dāsa, with folded hands, said, “Now hear of the next aparādhah.”

#### Qualification for the Name

The gross materialist, who is engrossed only in personal sense gratification and has not developed faith in Kṛṣṇa, does not even hear the name. Faith in the Lord is the qualification for the name. Good birth, good family, knowledge, strength, and educational qualifications do not give qualification for receiving the Holy Name. The only qualification is faith. Faith means to have unflinching conviction in the glories and powers of the name. That is the statement of scripture. One should think that by taking shelter of the name all auspicious activities are performed, and nothing else remains to be done. That is called faith. One who does not have such faith does not have qualification for the name.

A real Vaiṣṇava will not give instructions about the name to those who have no faith, for if the faithless man chants the name he will simply offend it. For instance if one casts pearls to swine they will simply grind them to dust, or if one gives fine cloth to a monkey he will tear it to pieces. If the faithless take the name they will kill themselves from the offenses and,

simultaneously, he who gives the name to the faithless will quickly lose all his devotional credit.

Sometimes a faithless man, with material motivations, will beg the name from a Vaiṣṇava. This cheater is thinking that by taking the name he no longer has to fear reaction for committing sinful activities; by becoming a Vaiṣṇava he thinks that everyone will give him respect and that he can get all sorts of services from others. Whatever material position he lost by previous sinful activities he will try to retrieve by chanting japa. By this process, he is thinking that he can become very happy in material enjoyment. This is the cheater's mentality. The Vaiṣṇava should understand that this person is a cheater and should refuse to give him the name.

The Vaiṣṇava will instead urge that cheater to give up his devious mentality, to reject the longing for position, and to cultivate faith in the name. When that person develops faith in the name, the guru will offer him the name. Then, by the name's influence, he will cross the ocean of material existence. But as long as he does not have faith, he has no qualification or right to receive the name.

The Vaiṣṇava will direct the cheater to give up his desire for position in the material world and to become humble. He will explain that this is stated scriptures and by the Vaiṣṇavas and that when he has faith in the name, a guru will give the name.[\[24\]](#)

However, if the guru gives the Holy Name to a faithless person for his personal acquisition of money or position, he commits offense to the name and must suffer in hell. If on the other hand the Vaiṣṇava thinks a person is sincere and faithful and gives him the Holy Name and later discovers the person is cheater, he must still take action to remedy the situation.

### **Remedy for the Offense**

If by misfortune or accident a guru gives the name and instructions to a faithless person, he should have great fear. He should confess in front of the Vaiṣṇavas and give up that bad disciple. If the guru does not do this, by the influence the offense, he himself will fall under illusion and become a worthless fool, devoid of bhakti.

## **Proper Procedure for Giving the Name**

Lord Caitanya gave instruction on how to preach the Holy Name. He instructed that one should make the whole world Kṛṣṇa conscious by giving the teachings of the name to the faithful men. By loud saṅkīrtana, one can produce faith in the jīvas, and when a jīva attains faith, he will seek out a genuine guru. From the guru he will take the Holy Name and then easily achieve prema. First one should make sinful people such as thieves, prostitutes and rogues give up their sinful tendencies and give them faith in the Lord. When faith becomes strong, one can give them the instructions on the Holy Name. In this way, by first establishing faith, then giving the instructions, one can deliver the whole world by the Holy Name.

One who does not follow this procedure and gives out the treasure of the Holy Name indiscriminately, commits offense and must suffer in hell. The unqualified disciple is bound to commit offense and the guru who is responsible for this will produce obstacles to his own spiritual advancement. So great is the offense that both guru and disciple go to hell.

Lord Caitanya, being very merciful, first created faith in the Holy Name in the hearts of Jagāi and Mādhāi, two greatly sinful brāhmaṇas, and then gave them the name. May all the people of the world follow in the footsteps of the Lord by manifesting a similar wonderful character!

He who engages in serving the devotees and derives his pleasure from serving the Lord in devotion is entitled to wear the ornament of the wish-fulfilling jewel, the Holy Name.

## Chapter Eleven

### Considering the Name to be equivalent to material pious activity

*Dharma-vrata-tyāga-hūtādi sarva-śubha-kriyā-sāmanyam api*

It is an offense to consider the Holy Name to be on the same level as material pious activities (śubha-karma), such as occupational duties, vows of austerity, renunciation, and sacrifices.

All glories to Lord Gauracandra, the avatāra who bestows the Holy Name.

All glories to the Holy Name, the topmost truth.

Hari-dāsa said, “Oh Lord, please listen to the next offense. The Holy Name is not the same as other pious religious activities (śubha-karma).”

#### Spiritual Identity of the Name

Kṛṣṇa is like the sun. As the qualities of the sun pervade all its aspects, the Lord’s spiritual nature pervades all his aspects. Thus all the Lord’s diverse forms, names, abodes and pastimes are all completely spiritual and conscious. Unlike material names, which are different from material objects, the Lord’s principal names are non-different from the Lord. When the devotee chants the Lord’s name, that name comes directly from the spiritual level, from Goloka, to the spiritual ātmā; and from the ātmā the name spreads throughout the body and dances on the devotee’s tongue and in his mind. If one takes the name with this conception, then it is the real name of the Lord with its full potency. If one takes the name to be a material thing, a product of material energy, one gains only grief. Seeing such a person, one should bath and purify oneself by remembering the Lord.

#### Indirect Function of Śubha-Karma

Of course, in the authorized scriptures there are a variety of methods mentioned for approaching the Lord. Various methods are given to suit

people of various qualifications.[\[25\]](#) For those who are deeply engrossed in material consciousness, the path of karma is given. Men who can think only in material terms take to religious activity only out of fear of death. Their activities are all under the shelter of material objects and material time. Actually the Supreme Lord is the only relief from fear, for only by taking his lotus feet one can cross over the material ocean.

To bring people to accept the Lord's feet, the Lord has created different material methods which take shelter of material conditions: for example, fire sacrifice, bathing, charity, yoga, varṇāśrama conduct, visiting holy places, worship of forefathers, meditation, culture of knowledge, worship of devatās, austerities, and prayaścitta (atonement for sin). These are performed as pious activities with the intention of ensuring a pleasant future. Taking shelter of material things, these śubha-karmas are a means by which one may eventually come to the end goal, the bliss of bhakti. Upon receiving bhakti, one gives up the temporary material means and engages exclusively and blissfully in devotional service to Kṛṣṇa. This is the ultimate goal of the jīva.

Here we can see the difference between bhakti and pious activities. Material objects and time are essentially without spiritual bliss. A person achieves gradual success in this material process by skilful effort. And though all the śubha-karmas are a means (though indirect) to achieve the goal of spiritual bliss or prema, reaching that perfection is a slow process. There is a great distance between the means (karma, which is material) and the end (prema, which is spiritual).

Being merciful, the Lord has now given the Holy Name, by which the intelligent jīvas can directly attain perfection (prema). Because the Holy Name is also a means or method, materialists consider it in the same category as pious material activities, with the same potency. In the same way, materialists think that Viṣṇu can be classed as a material devatā like Brahmā and Śiva. Though the name is transcendental, without material tinge, the jīva, covered by material consciousness, gives the name a material conception, counting it as a material pious activity. This is an offense to the name, originating from māyāvāda mentality. It is an obstacle to bhakti.



## **Name as means and end**

In truth, the name is the end, the goal, full of spiritual bliss. However, that same name has mercifully appeared in the material world as the means (upāya) for the jīva to come to the end (upeya). Thus the name is simultaneously the means of purification and the end, prema. In an inconceivable way, for the person who does not have spontaneous attraction to Kṛṣṇa, the name acts as means (upāya), and for the person who is fully Kṛṣṇa conscious, the name acts as the end (upeya).

Therefore in the material world there are two distinct means of achieving the goal of life: the secondary or indirect means of purification, called pious activities (śubha-karma) and the principal or direct means, the Holy Name (which is actually the end). The scriptures clearly state that one should not equate the pious activities mentioned in the scriptures with the Holy Name.

## **Effect of chanting the Holy Name**

When one sings the name of Kṛṣṇa with a sincere heart, transcendental bliss will come automatically and make the heart dance. The happiness experienced in prema, the essential character of the name, which is full of the unsurpassable joy of the Lord and his pastimes, is the ultimate goal of the jīva.

Though the happiness achieved by impersonal jñāna and yoga may seem great in comparison to the intermittent shadow of happiness available in the gross material world, in comparison to the bliss of the Holy Name, the happiness of merging in the Brahman is scant indeed.

## **Comparison of Śubha Karma and Nāma as Means and End**

At the stage of sādhana or the purificatory stage, the name is the means, but upon attaining purity, the name is the end, the highest bliss. By the name as means, the name as the end is achieved. This is not the case with śubha-karmas, pious activities. They cannot compare with the Holy Name. Śubha-karmas take shelter of the material world, depending upon material objects, but the name is eternally non-material, existing in itself, independently. Even at the stage of sādhana-bhakti, the name remains

pure. The anarthas of the practitioner only make it look impure. But by association with Vaiṣṇavas, the material mentality and anarthas will disappear and then the pure name will become manifested. If one takes shelter of pious activities, one must eventually reject them and take shelter of the Holy Name; but one who takes shelter of the name never rejects the name. In the beginning stage it is covered; in the final stage it is pure. This is what distinguishes the name from śubha-karmas.

## **Offense**

When performing sādhana-bhakti, the spiritual master should teach the difference between śubha-karma and the Holy Name. If this knowledge is lacking when performing sādhana, then one will become an offender to the name. First comes faith, then association, then devotional activities, under the direction of the spiritual master, which will dissipate the anarthas. Proportionate to the dissipation of anarthas will arise purity of the name (anartha-nivṛtti). Steadiness and attraction for the name follow this.

But while practicing one's devotional activities, one must know and have faith in the difference between śubha-karma and the Holy Name, otherwise offense may occur, and this will increase rather than decrease the anarthas, and thus block one's progress. But if one has firm faith that the name is supreme, without equal, then quickly the pure name will be manifested. The person will at last taste full bliss inherent in the name.

## **Remedy for the Offense**

If one should commit this offense[\[26\]](#) and desires relief, he should first desire to purify himself. By good association and chanting of the name, his intelligence will be purified and he can progress to prema. The offender should give up all external considerations and smear his body with the dust from the feet of a householder devotee of very low birth who is fully surrendered to the pure name; he should eat the devotees' food remnants; he should drink water which has washed the devotees' feet; and he should chant the pure name. This will purify the intelligence. An example of this is Kāli-dāsa.[\[27\]](#) One should purify himself of offense and again become the recipient of the Lord's mercy.

Hari-dāsa said, “I am materially minded, and I just sing the name, but I have never obtained the actual touchstone of the name. Please, constantly reside on my tongue in the form of the Holy Name. Keep me in the material realm, or keep me in the spiritual sky, but wherever you put me, give me the nectar of the name. You have appeared in the world to give the Holy Name to all the people. Please accept me as one amongst those people.

“True, I am a low fool, but you are the deliverer of the low. O deliverer of the fallen! This is our relation: the fallen and the merciful deliverer. This is the eternal relation between you and me. On the strength of this, I am begging for the nectar of the name. In Kali Yuga the path of pious activities is very difficult to execute. Therefore, the name has appeared here as the special means for the age (yuga-dharma).”[\[28\]](#)

That person who devotedly serves the feet of Hari-dāsa, who thinks who himself the most unqualified person, and who relishes service to Kṛṣṇa, is qualified to sing the Holy Name, fulfiller of all desires.

# Chapter Twelve

## Inattention

*pramādah* - negligence

All glories to Mahāprabhu,  
All glories to the devotees, by whose mercy I chant the Holy Name.

Hari-dāsa continued to speak.

O Lord! Here in Puri, you taught the importance of performing chanting of the name without negligence to Sanātana Gosvāmī, and in South India, to Gopāla Bhaṭṭa. You have counted inattention (*pramāda*) as one of the *aparādh*as. If inattention is present in one's chanting of the name, one cannot attain *niṣṭhā* or steadiness; and without steadiness one cannot attain *prema*. Therefore inattention must be given up.

Even if one successfully overcomes all the other offenses in chanting, and even if one chants the name continuously, *prema* may still not appear. The reason for this is that one commits the offense known as *pramāda* or inattention. This offense will block the progress to *prema*.

*Pramāda* means inattention or carelessness. It is from this offense that all *anarth*as arise. The wise men recognize three types of inattention: indifference, inertia or laziness and restlessness of the mind.

### **Indifference (*audasīnya*)**

By good fortune, a *jīva*, after attaining faith, receives the name. By chanting regularly (counting on *tulasī* beads), he should develop attraction for the name and gradually increase his chanting. One must continuously chant the Holy Name with great attention (with no *pramāda*) to reach the state of attraction (*anurāga*) to the name.

The common man, however, is strongly attracted to material things for his own pleasure. Thus, even when he chants the Holy Name, his mind is attracted to other objects. Though he may chant *japa* daily, because he has

a strong taste for material things, his mind will not relish the name. This lack of taste for the name is called indifference (audasīnya). How can one derive any benefit if one's mind goes in the opposite direction from the Holy Name? Thus, with this mentality, one may even chant 64 rounds, but without tasting one drop of nectar in that name. This apathy towards the name is found in the heart of a person who has strong attraction for material pleasures.

### **Remedy for Indifference**

If one is guilty of the offense of indifference or lack of attraction for the name, one should remove this by taking association of a Vaiṣṇava who chants properly. In a secluded place, one should chant the Holy Name in his company for a short time (a few hours) each day. By seeing that Vaiṣṇava's attraction for the name, one will become inspired to give up indifference. Gradually the mind will become fixed on the name and will always be anxious for the nectar of the name. One will gradually and naturally increase from chanting short periods (24 minutes) to twice and four times that, till one is easily able to chant 300,000 names daily.

According to the opinion of the advanced devotees, chanting the Holy Name is most effective in a place where Kṛṣṇa had his pastimes, near tulasī, and in the company of Vaiṣṇavas. Gradually one should increase the daily period of such chanting. By following this prescription, very quickly one will overcome the desire for material enjoyment.

Another remedy customarily used by the devotees is to isolate oneself and cover all the senses. One may attentively chant in a room by oneself with the door locked (to avoid interruption from others), or cover the eyes, ears and nose with a cloth or anything serving that function (in order to prevent exterior stimuli from distracting the mind). Making the mind concentrate on the name in this way, one will quickly develop steadiness (niṣṭhā) and then attraction (ruci) for the name. In this way the fault of indifference will be destroyed.

### **Inertia or laziness (jāḍya)**

If one chants with a lazy attitude (slow to start, slow to chant) that is called inertia. If one chants the name in this state, one's taste for the name will

not develop. In this state of mind, even when one manages to chant the Holy Name, one always seeks respite or opportunities to interrupt the chanting.

### **Remedy for laziness**

The remedy for laziness is to take association of Vaiṣṇavas. The Vaiṣṇava always thinks that he should not waste his time on other activities. With this in his mind, he constantly chants japa of the Holy Name, experiences the nectar of the Name, and desires nothing else. One should seek out such Vaiṣṇavas, and seeing the example of such diligent Kṛṣṇa consciousness, one will be inspired to follow in their footsteps and give up the lethargic mentality. One will develop admiration for their quality of not wasting time.

In his mind he will think, “When will I be fortunate enough to chant and sing that Holy Name as these Vaiṣṇavas do?” By this inspiration, enthusiasm will replace laziness, and the person will overcome the offense of inertia in chanting the Holy Name. He will become determined to increase his number of rounds from 100,000 names to 300,000 names. By the mercy of the Vaiṣṇavas, his mind will become extremely eager to chant and the offense of inertia will soon be gone.

### **Restlessness**

By great effort one eliminates the third type of inattention, restlessness of mind. Restlessness resides where there is desire for women and wealth, attachment to material success and failure, desire for position or recognition, and the cheating propensity. If one has attraction for any of these items, one will certainly manifest this type of inattention to the name.

### **Remedy for restlessness**

The fortunate person attempts to eliminate restlessness of mind by following proper Vaiṣṇava behavior. On Ekādaśī and appearance days of the Lord, one should stop thinking of eating and enjoying, and all day and night should chant in the association of devotees. In the association of the Lord’s servants, in the Lord’s dhāma, listening to scriptures concerning the Lord,

one will begin to experience contentment, joy, and confidence. Gradually, as topics about the Lord begin to immerse the mind in great bliss, the mind will increase its time spent on devotional activities. Gradually, the higher taste will come and the lower taste will go. Upon hearing songs about Kṛṣṇa from the mouths of the pure devotees, one's mind and ears will relish real nectar. In this way the desire for low material objects will disappear and the mind will become constantly fixed and attracted to singing the name.

One should put great effort into curbing restlessness or fickleness of the mind, because by attaining a steady mind, one can begin to relish the nectar of the name in no time at all.

### **Eagerness for the Name, the opposite of inattention**

One should be constantly on guard against negligence in completing one's prescribed rounds of japa. Even if one completes one's rounds, if one does it very carelessly[\[29\]](#) that is also a fault. Therefore one should always be careful to see not only that the rounds are chanted, but that they are chanted properly. One should give up the desire to increase the number of rounds for show, at the sacrifice of quality. In performing both nāma-saṅkīrtana and japa, one should always be attentive.

One must constantly chant the Holy Name with mind fully concentrated. Feeling dependent on the mercy of the Lord for advancement, one should pray, "Be merciful, Lord, and help me prevent inattention, so that I may develop a taste for the nectar of the name."

The devotee practices japa of the Holy Name, sitting in a solitary place, for a short period in the beginning, with mind in full concentration. He continually prays to the Lord to be able to chant the clear Holy Name with a fully devotional mind.

Since it is impossible to overcome the offense of inattention without the mercy of the Lord, the devotee prays, "In great anxiety, I beg for your mercy, O Lord. Being full of compassion, show your mercy. If I do not make endeavor to attain your mercy I am very unfortunate, son of Śacī, for the mercy of the Lord is the root of success in devotional service. Material motivation and individual intelligence can never yield results."[\[30\]](#)

The person who has attained the ornament of the touchstone of the Holy Name aspires to serve the two feet of Hari-dāsa.



## Chapter Thirteen

### Attachment to Me and Mine

*śrute 'pi nāma-māhātmye yaḥ prīti-rahito naraḥ  
ahaṁ-mamādi-paramo nāmni so 'py aparādha-kṛt*

That low person obsessed with the conception of self and ownership, who, even though hearing the glories of the Holy Name, does not have any attraction for the name, is an offender to the name.

All glories to Gadādhara Paṇḍita and Gaurāṅga.  
All glories to Jāhnavā Devī and Lord Nityānanda.  
All glories to Sītā and Advaita Ācārya.  
All glories to the devotees of Gaurāṅga.

Choked up with the ecstasy of prema, Hari-dāsa recited the last offense in chanting the Holy Name at the lotus feet of the Lord.

This is the worst offense. Thinking in the bodily conception that one is a brāhmaṇa, a Vaiṣṇava, a king, a rich man, possessing a wonderful body, house and family, the materialists sometimes take initiation, but eventually they fall from the path of devotional service because of this offense. By committing this offense, one cannot get prema. And, on the other hand, if one has complete surrender to the Holy Name, this offense does not occur.

#### **Character of śaraṇa-patti, complete surrender**

Having given up the first nine offenses, the devotee should cultivate full surrender to the name. According to scripture, there are six types of surrender, which are impossible to explain in detail here. In brief they are as follows.

1. Accepting everything favorable for service to the Lord: in order to carry out devotional practices one must maintain one's physical body. To maintain one's life, however, one should accept only as much as is absolutely necessary, and accept only what is favorable for the

development of devotion. By this method one can pass one's life in a pure state.

2. Decisively rejecting everything which is unfavorable for service to the Lord with disgust.
3. Thinking that Kṛṣṇa is always one's only protector.
4. Becoming completely dependent on Kṛṣṇa.
5. Thinking oneself as low, unqualified and insignificant.
6. Surrendering the self: as eternal servant of Kṛṣṇa one will be willing to do anything that Kṛṣṇa desires.

To believe that one is the doer, the giver, the protector, that one owns his body, house, and offspring; to believe that one is worshipable, to think oneself to be a brāhmaṇa, or śūdra, husband or wife, king, citizen—these conceptions should all be rejected. Instead, centering one's thoughts on Kṛṣṇa, one should think of Kṛṣṇa as the controller and doer and think that Kṛṣṇa's desire is most important. One should do as Kṛṣṇa desires, not as one wants to do, independently. One should think that, by Kṛṣṇa's desire, one will remain in this world, and by Kṛṣṇa's wish, one will cross over it. In spite of pain and even when rejoicing, one will still regard oneself as Kṛṣṇa's servant. By his will, Kṛṣṇa will give his mercy to the jīvas. One should think that one's material enjoyment and renunciation are all dependent on Kṛṣṇa's will. When this attitude is actually present it is called ātmā-nivedana or self-surrender.

### **Character of Non-surrender**

When these six types of śaraṇa-gati or full surrender are not present in an individual, he is understood to be possessed of "me and mine" intelligence. Such a person is considered to be abominable because he believes that he is the doer; that the world is his; that he is the creator of his destiny and the enjoyer of the fruits of his activities; that he is his own protector and maintainer; that he possesses a wife, brothers, sons and daughters; and that by his own endeavor he can achieve all perfection and glory.

Such a person is proud of the prowess of his own knowledge. Not considering the Lord's control, he thinks that by his own brain he can increase and extend arts and science and thus increase material happiness; he forgets that actually everything is under Kṛṣṇa's will. Such a person, even if he hears the glories of the name, does not believe them; and if he chants Kṛṣṇa's name, it is only out of social custom. This is the life style of a pretender or cheater. He may chant the name carelessly but will never get prema. Rather, he will receive some material puṇya. This is the verdict of the scriptures.

### **Remedy**

This offense arises from being bound up tightly in material illusion. Deliverance from this offense is very difficult. One can find some people in the world who, by taking the process of pure bhakti, have developed an aversion to material life. Rejecting the material world, they have completely surrendered to the Holy Name. Thinking themselves insignificant and unqualified, they humbly worship Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet and without material motive sing the Lord's name. One who is guilty of the tenth offense should seek out this type of person and, with the desire to give up his material attachments, he should take that devotee's association and serve him. Gradually, he will become fixed in the name. Concepts of "me and mine" will disappear and he will cross over the world of māyā.

One should thus listen to the glories of the Holy Name while completely giving up the false mentality of "me and mine." This proper attitude is called surrendering to the will of Kṛṣṇa and the Holy Name (śaraṇa-gati) and is the natural propensity of the devotee. That devotee who surrenders completely to the name (completely giving up attachment to me and mine) will receive Kṛṣṇa-prema by chanting the Holy Name.

### **Positive Action to avoid the Ten Offenses**

One should not only avoid the ten offenses but one should positively cultivate the opposite attitude through one's actions.

Therefore, the real devotee always avoids criticism of the devotees and avoid harming the devotees and, conversely, serves them; he regards only Viṣṇu as the Supreme Lord; he gives the utmost regard to the person who

gives the Holy Name and its teachings; he gives great regard to the scriptures because they glorify the Holy Name; he understands the exalted position of the Holy Name, which is purely spiritual, completely different from material means; he seriously attempts to give up the desire for sinful activity and the root of sin; he preaches the glories of the pure name to those people who have faith; he distinguishes the Holy Name from material pious activities; he chants with attention; and he surrenders completely to the will of Kṛṣṇa.

One who gives up the ten offenses and performs devotional service as mentioned above is the most fortunate soul in the three worlds. He is full of all good qualities and is qualified to obtain Kṛṣṇa's mercy. Very soon, that person will come to the level of bhāva by seriously chanting the Holy Name and will finally attain the treasure of prema. By the will of the Lord, very quickly that person will perfect the stage of sādhana-bhakti, progress to bhāva and then to prema, which is the final perfection.

O Lord! You yourself have stated that whoever accepts the name without offenses will attain prema; and whoever accepts the name without giving up the offenses will never attain pure bhakti in spite of a thousand attempts. Practice of jñāna gives liberation; practice of karma gives material enjoyment; and correct practice of bhakti sādhana gives pure Kṛṣṇa-bhakti and prema. Liberation and material enjoyment are like the oyster, whereas bhakti is the pearl. Thus, the glory of the jīva is the attainment of pure bhakti. If the devotee performs sādhana-bhakti skillfully (i.e. while avoiding the ten offenses), the creeper of bhakti will yield the fruit of prema in no time at all.

Therefore, whoever is desirous of obtaining bhakti should take shelter of the name while being attentive to avoid each of the ten offenses. Being conscious of each offense, the devotee should make all effort to give them up, and, lamenting in the heart, he should fervently beg the lotus feet of the Holy Name to give mercy to help destroy the offenses. It is mercy of the name that destroys the offenses. One can never be released from offenses of the name by prayāścitta or pious activity. Rather, continuous chanting of the name while laboring only as much as is absolutely necessary for bodily needs destroys the effects of offenses. By śubha-

karma or prayaścitta offenses cannot be dissipated. If one chants day and night, while feeling repentant, the offenses will dissipate and one will grasp the tangible effects from the name. With the disappearance of aparādhā, the devotee will obtain the pure name, which will manifest its effect in the form of bhāva, and finally, prema, love of God.

Hari-dāsa concluded his discussion of the ten offenses to the Holy Name by praying to the Lord. “Be merciful, Mahāprabhu, so that the ten offenses do not enter my heart. Then I will be able to enjoy the nectar of the Name.”

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda, the servant of the devotees, by the grace of Hari-dāsa Ṭhākura, thus sings the glories of the Holy Name, a transcendental touchstone, in great delight.

## Chapter Fourteen

### Sevā aparādha - Deity offenses

All glories to Lord Gaurāṅga and Gadādhara Paṇḍita.  
All glories to Lord Nityānanda, the life of Jāhnavā Devī.  
All glories to the husband of Sītā, Śrī Advaita.  
All glories to Śrīvāsa and all the devotees.

‘Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu spoke. “Listen, Hari-dāsa! You have revealed the truth about the offenses to the Holy Name. By this, the jīvas of Kali Yuga will become fortunate. Not only are you completely conversant with everything concerning the Holy Name, but also you teach this by practicing it. Thus, you are the ācārya of the Holy Name. Therefore, when I hear the description of the name from your lips, I feel great joy. You teach both by your conduct (ācāra) and by your learned words (pracāra). Your character is decorated with the jewel of the name. Rāmānanda Rāya taught me the transcendental mellows and you have taught me the glories of the name. Now, discuss the different offenses in serving the deity, sevā aparādha. Hearing this, the darkness in the heart of the jīvas will be dissipated.”

Hari-dāsa said, “Those who are serving the deity know about this. I have simply taken shelter of the name, so how can I know? However, not to violate your order, I will now discuss what you make me say.”

Concerning service to the mūrti of the Lord, there are many offenses listed in the scriptures. In one place thirty-two offenses are mentioned and elsewhere, fifty.

The learned have divided these offenses into four types: offenses of those serving the deity daily; offenses of those establishing a deity; offenses of those taking darśana of the deity; and offenses committed by all types of people.

The thirty-two offenses listed in the Śrīmad Bhāgavatam are as follows:

1. Entering the Lord’s temple in a vehicle or with shoes

2. Not observing the festivals
3. Not paying obeisances
4. Clasping the hands on the knees in front of the deity
5. Reciting prayers in an unclean state
6. Bowing with one hand
7. Circumambulating in front of the deity
8. Spreading one's legs before the deity
9. Sleeping before the deity
10. Eating before the deity
11. Speaking lies before the deity
12. Speaking loudly before the deity
13. Gossiping about material things before the deity
14. Quarrelling in front of the deity
15. Thanking others before the deity
16. Fighting before the deity
17. Crying before the deity
18. Saying cruel words before the deity
19. Scolding someone before the deity
20. Covering oneself with a blanket before the deity
21. Praising others before the deity
22. Using obscene language before the deity
23. Passing air before the deity
24. Not offering the best possible articles
25. Eating unoffered food
26. Not offering seasonal fruits

27. Offering already enjoyed food
28. Turning one's back to the deity
29. Paying respects to or worshipping others in front of the deity
30. Not glorifying the guru
31. Praising oneself before the deity
32. Criticizing the deity

According to other scriptures, the offenses in deity worship are:

1. Eating the food of materialists
2. Touching the deity in a dark room
3. Approaching the deity in unclean state
4. Opening the deity doors without musical accompaniment
5. Offering food to the Lord which has been seen by a dog
6. Speaking unnecessarily during pūjā
7. Going outside the deity room during the course of pūjā
8. Offering incense without a garland and gandha
9. Offering unsuitable flowers
10. Commencing pūjā with unwashed mouth
11. Worshipping the deity after having sexual relation
12. Touching a woman during her period
13. Touching a lamp
14. Touching a dead body
15. Wearing unsuitable cloth
16. Seeing a dead body
17. Passing air
18. Becoming angry



19. Coming from a cremation
20. Doing pūjā with yet undigested food in the stomach
21. Eating hing or kusumbha
22. Chewing betel nuts
23. Touching the deity after taking an oil massage
24. Offering flowers on a leaf of the castor oil plant
25. Doing pūjā at inauspicious times
26. Sitting directly on the floor while worshipping
27. Touching the deity with the left hand while bathing him
28. Offering old flowers
29. Boasting or showing pride during pūjā
30. Spitting
31. Wearing horizontal tilaka
32. Not washing the feet
33. Offering food cooked by non-vaiṣṇavas
34. Having non-vaiṣṇavas present during the pūjā
35. Not worshipping Viśvakṣena (in place of Gaṇeśa) before the pūjā
36. Seeing a Śiva or Durgā worshipper
37. Bathing the deity with water touched by the fingernails
38. Using water in which perspiration has fallen
39. Making oaths before Kṛṣṇa
40. Stepping over prasāda articles such as flowers

All these offenses in serving the deity will obstruct one's bhakti. Anyone worshiping the deity should avoid these offenses. The devotees avoid both sevā and nāma aparādhās and by doing this are able to taste the nectar of

devotional service. If a devotee happens to commit any aparādha (nāma or sevā) he should rectify it immediately.

All Vaiṣṇavas must always avoid committing nāmāparādhās, but depending on one's circumstances, sevā aparādha (offenses to the mūrti) may or may not occur. For example, one who is on the path of bhāva lives in a solitary place, in separation from the mūrti, and chants day and night, always conscientious to avoid all offenses to the name (nāmāparādha). Since his worship of the Lord is all in the mind (mānasa-pūjā) there is no question of sevā aparādha. When he is completely free of nāmāparādha, he attains service in bhāva. For one who has attained bhāva, there is no question of offense at all.[\[31\]](#)

By the mercy of Kṛṣṇa, the jīva attains his good fortune, and by chanting the Holy Name he reaches the stage of service in bhāva. In sādhana-bhakti there are many types of activities, but they all lead to chanting the name in prema. Therefore, the living entity should simply take to chanting the name and become addicted to its nectar, to the exclusion of all else.

On the strength of the order of Hari-dāsa, the most worthless person has glorified the touchstone of the Holy Name.

## Chapter 15

### Bhajana-praṇālī - Procedure for chanting the Holy Name

All glories to Gadādhara Paṇḍita and Lord Gaurāṅga.

All glories to Lord Nityānanda.

All glories to Sītā and Advaita Ācārya .

All glories to the devotees of Gaurāṅga.

All glories to the fortunate person who gives up everything to worship the Holy Name.

The Lord said, “Hari-dāsa, by the strength of your devotion you have received all knowledge available in the universe. All the Vedas are dancing on your tongue. All its conclusions (concerning the Lord, the jīva, the material world, the Holy Name, nāmābhāsa, nāmāparādha and sevā aparādha) are in your speech. Therefore please continue, and describe clearly the sweet relationships (rasa) inherent in the Holy Name and how the jīva obtains qualification for tasting that rasa.”

Hari-dāsa, overcome with intense prema, said, “By inspiration from you, I will describe it.”

The Supreme Pure, the Supreme Lord, the Supreme Person, is called *rasa* in the Vedas. This *rasa* is completely pure. It is not the same as the emotions or sentiments of the material world, also called *rasa*, which are analyzed by material scholars. It is the śuddha-sattva variety transcending the twenty-four material elements, which even those who become liberated from the material energy (ātmārāmas) cannot taste. The para-brahma or Supreme Lord is Absolute Rasa. He is the unlimited fountainhead of bliss and supremely glorious. Though he is one, he exists in two aspects, śakti (energy) and saktimān (source of energy). The Lord is imperceptible but is manifest through his śakti. Thus, the Absolute Truth reveals his variegated character through his energies, which are

inseparable from his very existence. The actions of three types of energy manifest the spiritual and material universes.

### **Cit-śakti, Spiritual Energy**

By the action of his spiritual energy (cit-śakti), the Supreme reveals his form (rūpa), name (nāma), abode (dhāma) and activities (līlā). That Supreme Truth is called Kṛṣṇa, who possesses a beautiful blackish form, who resides in Goloka Dhāma, and who performs sweet pastimes with his devotees. The Lord's name, abode, form, qualities and pastimes cannot be separated from him. They are absolute like the Lord. This variety in forms, qualities, and actions is the result of the Lord's spiritual energy (cit-śakti) which is also inseparable from the Lord. Kṛṣṇa is the possessor of attributes (dharmī) and his superior energy is his attribute (dharma). In the Absolute Truth, these are non-different. Nonetheless, in the spiritual world variation becomes apparent with the manifestation of abode, form, qualities and pastimes.

### **Acit-śakti or Māyā-Śakti, the Illusory Energy**

The shadow of the Lord's spiritual energy is called māyā. By the will of Kṛṣṇa, this māyā-śakti creates the material world outside of the spiritual dimension.

### **Jīva-śakti**

Jīva-śakti or marginal energy, different and non-different from the Lord, manifests the innumerable souls (jīvas). The jīvas are manifested to serve Kṛṣṇa. Because of this borderline quality, the jīvas are of two types: eternally bound jīvas and eternally liberated jīvas. Those who are eternally liberated are qualified as Kṛṣṇa's eternal servants in the spiritual sky, and those who are eternally bound by the ropes of māyā engage themselves in the material shadow far away from Kṛṣṇa. The jīvas dwelling in the material world are of two types: those inclined to Kṛṣṇa, by the mercy and association of devotees, take to chanting Kṛṣṇa's name and will go to the spiritual world of rasa by the power of the Name; those who ignore Kṛṣṇa toil hopelessly for enjoyment in relation to inert matter.

### **Development of Rasa**

The gradual realization of rasa in the Holy Name is compared to the blossoming of a flower. The name that is preached to the general public throughout the world is similar in state to a flower bud. By cultivation, the flower bud of the Holy Name begins to open a little and one realizes the beautiful form (rūpa) of Kṛṣṇa in Goloka Vṛndāvana. As the devotee continues sādhana further, the flower of the name begins to emanate sweet fragrance in the form of Kṛṣṇa's sixty-four qualities (guṇa).

The flower of the Holy Name then opens fully, to reveal the eternal pastimes (līlā) of Kṛṣṇa in Goloka Vṛndāvana. Then, by the great mercy of the name, a mixture of the hlādinī and samvit śaktis from the spiritual world, combined as Bhakti Devī herself, descends upon the small jīva, who possesses only a small portion of happiness. Bhakti Devī reveals to the jīva the ingredients of rasa in the full blossomed flower of the Holy Name. By her mercy, the pure jīva attains his svarūpa and enters into an appropriate rasa.

### **Ingredients of Rasa**

There are four ingredients of rasa: vibhāva, anubhāva, sattvika-bhāva and vyabhicārī-bhāva. The mixture of these ingredients produces rasa. Vibhāva, the general cause for rasa, is divided into ālambana and uddīpana. Ālambana means the root cause, that upon which the rasa depends. It is divided into āśraya, the recipient, who is the devotee, and viṣaya, the object, who is Kṛṣṇa. Uddīpana, the instigation, is composed of the form and qualities of Kṛṣṇa, which are realized through constant chanting. Thus, where there is ālambana (devotee and Kṛṣṇa) and uddīpana (relaxation of Kansa's form and qualities), līlā and rasa can occur.

When the conditions of vibhāva (ālambana and uddīpana) are perfected, anubhāva (external symptoms of the internal emotions) appears. These symptoms are all transformations of pure spiritual love (prema) and can in no way be compared to the symptoms of love in the material world.

Gradually, as emotions deepen, sattvika and vyabhicārī bhāvas (additional symptoms) appear. By the combination of these ingredients, the sthāyī-bhāva (primary mood) of the devotee transforms into rasa, full spiritual flavor.

The experience of rasas in the spiritual world is the highest perfection, the ultimate goal of the jīva, according to scripture. There are four goals for man mentioned in the Vedas: artha, dharma, kāma and mokṣa. These, however, lead to the supreme goal—rasa. One who is truly liberated is qualified for rasa.

### **Progressive Stages for Attaining Rasa**

The living entity who has attained faith in bhakti receives a pure Vaiṣṇava guru. By the mercy of that guru, the person receives the mahā-mantra containing the names of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. Though the jīva has faith, in the beginning there will be obstacles in the form of material endeavors. In order to overcome these and establish the strength of the name, the spiritual master gives a method of practice. The jīva should cultivate the name by either chanting japa of the name (nāma smaraṇa), regulating himself by counting on tulasī beads, or by loudly chanting the name with great reverence (kīrtana). Such chanting is the root of all attainments.

In the beginning, he should perform smaraṇa for short periods of time in an undisturbed place with fully concentrated mind. Gradually as his craving for the name increases, he should increase his japa from 4 rounds to 3 x 64 rounds. He will chant constantly, and all material obstacles will vanish. There are two tendencies in devotees on the path of practicing bhakti. One is the path of arcana or deity worship and the other is remembering and chanting the name. The latter is predominant amongst the unalloyed devotees.

While practicing remembrance of the Holy Name (japa), the devotee should sometimes also perform kīrtana, for by the process of kīrtana, all the senses of the jīva will dance in joy. Though there are nine major processes of bhakti, they all take shelter of the name. Of all those processes, kīrtana and smaraṇa (japa) are the best; and kīrtana is the most powerful of all, for in that process śravaṇa, kīrtana and smaraṇa are combined.

For this reason, those who have attraction for deity worship will reach perfection only by also engaging in hearing and chanting the name, whereas those who are qualified with exclusive attraction for the name

need only engage in hearing, chanting, and remembering the name. When one cultivates the Holy Name, the processes of serving the lotus feet, bowing down, servitude, friendship and self-surrender are automatically included.

### **Realization of Form of Kṛṣṇa in the Name**

Qualified with the conviction that the name and Kṛṣṇa are not different (*madhyama adhikārī*), avoiding the ten offenses, and living far from material association, the devotee who receives the mercy of the name will realize the form of Kṛṣṇa in the name within a very short period.[\[32\]](#)

One should perform japa and kīrtana constantly avoiding the ten offenses, taking care to clearly pronounce Kṛṣṇa's name. When the chanting of the name becomes clear, steady and delightfully performed, one should then begin meditating on the form of Kṛṣṇa. Or one may constantly take darśana of his mūrti along with the chanting, delving deeper and deeper into the name. When one attains steadiness at this stage, the form will always come into the mind at the time of chanting.

### **Realization of Qualities**

When one has succeeded in realizing the form of Kṛṣṇa and the name as non-different, one should then meditate on Kṛṣṇa's qualities contained in that form while chanting. Very soon, whenever one chants the name, the beautiful form and qualities of Kṛṣṇa will immediately be present.

### **Realization of Pastimes**

When Kṛṣṇa's name, form and qualities become one in chanting, the devotee should meditate on certain pastimes of Kṛṣṇa which are fixed in one location. This is the preliminary type of worship (*mantra-dhyāna-mayī upāsanā*). When one chants the name, filled with delight, one will see Kṛṣṇa surrounded by gopas and gopīs under a desire tree at the yoga-piṭha.

At this time the symptoms of *sattvika-bhāva*, including standing of hair on end, will all begin to manifest themselves in the devotee. Eventually when chanting the name, one will perceive Kṛṣṇa's form, qualities, and pastimes simultaneously. At this time the *rasa* will begin to appear.

### **Realization of Rasa**

Gradually, when the name blossoms fully and exhibits its own fragrance, Kṛṣṇa's pastimes connected with the eight parts of the day will become manifest. If one concentrates on these pastimes, rasa will reach perfection.

### **Individual Rasa**

Though there are five principal rasas (śānta, dāsyā, sakhyā vātsalya and sṛṅgāra) sṛṅgāra-rasa is the supreme rasa. Those qualified for this rasa have attained the great mercy of Caitanya Mahāprabhu. At this time one's individual relationship and rasa appears, and one sees Kṛṣṇa at various piṭhas suitable for one's service to him. The setting is not fixed. This is the second type of worship (svārasikī upāsanā). By the mercy of guru, gaining one's spiritual body, one will enter into the pastimes in the company of the servants of Rādhārāṇī. Rādhārāṇī is the manifestation of mahābhāva personified.

One must enter into the group of her followers (sakhis) in order to taste the full rasa. Without serving the gopīs one cannot attain service to Kṛṣṇa in Vraja. Thus, following the directions of the sakhis, who are filled with love and obedience to Rādhā, one will serve Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. At this time the devotee, tasting the rasa in full, will be inundated in the deepest waves of prema.

### **Sādhana of Rasa**

The sādhana (practice) of rasa and the siddhi (perfection) lie very close together. Very soon, by sādhana of the rasa, one will attain one's spiritual body. By the mercy of Rādhā one receives the mercy of Kṛṣṇa, and thus quickly one's material body will dissolve. One will attain pure spiritual body in Vraja.

There are even higher stages than this, but these are not possible to describe by mere words. These things will be revealed by the mercy of Kṛṣṇa. Cultivating the loving relation in conjugal rasa (sṛṅgāra-rasa), called the ujjala-rasa, is the highest practice, by which one will experience full Kṛṣṇa prema.

In order to perfect the experience in conjugal rasa one must accept a body of a gopī. A jīva thinking himself a male cannot enter sṛṅgāra-rasa. To



receive a spiritual body in conjugal rasa one must internally cultivate eleven specific items of one's identity: one's relationship, one's age, name, form, membership in a particular group (yūtha), one's dress, one's order, one's service, highest aspiration and pālya-dāsī (identifying as a dependent of one of the sakhis).

These items are perfected through practice in five stages: śravaṇa-daśā, varaṇa-daśā, smaraṇa-daśā, āpana-daśā and sampatti-daśā.[\[33\]](#)

### **Śravaṇa Daśā, the stage of hearing**

Hearing the pastimes of Kṛṣṇa, one develops an attraction for them. One then approaches a guru who has realized Kṛṣṇa's eternal pastimes and the eleven items in eternal service. From the guru, the devotee hears (śravaṇa) the intricacies of the rasas (bhāva-tattva), which consists of the pastimes and the eleven elements of identity. On hearing the eight fold pastimes, the person will develop eagerness and inquire from the guru how to enter into those pastimes.

### **Varaṇa Daśā, the stage of acceptance**

The guru, after perceiving the nature of the person, will then describe to him the eleven elements of his identity. He will give him his name, form, qualities and service, and his part in the pastimes, and tell him to enter into the pastimes.[\[34\]](#)

If the disciple finds that his natural taste coincides with this identity, he should approach the guru and inform him that it suits him. He will then vow to cultivate that identity as his life and soul. If the disciple does not have a natural taste for the selected identity, he should frankly reveal this to the guru. The guru will consider and give another identity. If the person has a taste for the new identity, he should accept it. His nature will then manifest itself.

If one does not fix the proper identity, then the teachings become ineffective. Taste refers to the natural inclination of the jīva, which may develop either through long or short practice of purification. If one does not have a taste for sṛṅgara-rasa but rather, dāsya or sakhya, then one should enter that rasa. Otherwise trouble will arise. An example is

Syāmānanda Dāsa, who was first placed in sakhya-rasa, but by the mercy of Jīva Gosvāmī attained his real rasa. In the system of Caitanya, suitability and qualification play a large role.

In this way, after the identity has been fixed by mutual discussion, the disciple should fall at the feet of the guru and fervently beg for mercy to perfect his relationship with Kṛṣṇa. Full of mercy, the guru will give permission for the disciple to enter into the pastimes of the Lord. Falling at the feet of the guru the disciple should vow his acceptance of the identity eternally.[\[35\]](#)

### **Smarāṇa-daśā, stage of remembering**

The disciple will then practice remembering his given identity with determination. He should always remember with diligence and should never be lax, for by laxity one can practice for many yugas without attaining perfection. Outwardly one may appear inactive but inwardly one should have continuous taste of the rasa. Putting on a great outward show but not actually fixing the rasa within is an obstacle for advancement.

If one does not practice smarāṇa-daśā to prepare for āpana-daśā, one cannot gain perfection. There is no room for show here. If one puts on a show externally but does not take care to practice properly, then he does not qualify for āpana-daśā. Many births of practice may not give perfection. This type of worship is an easy path, but if one introduces material identity, it is not a practice for entering Vraja. Understanding the pure and the material conceptions of this path from the guru, one should practice with a sincere heart.

### **Āpana-daśā, stage of assimilation**

If the devotee follows the practice of smarāṇa with determination, he will quickly come to the stage of āpana (possession). By continued remembrance of his identity, the incompatible material conceptions in the mind will quickly disappear.

The reason for this is that material identity is simply an unnatural designation. The jīva, having forgotten his perfected condition, and taking on material conception of identity, has accepted a material body and

become completely illusioned. But the jīva has a spiritual nature. When he understands this by the mercy of guru, attaining that body becomes easy. The jīva, by hearing the pastimes of Kṛṣṇa, becomes desirous of attaining his eternal identity and then follows the process of constant remembrance of the pastimes of the Lord. As his spiritual love increases, naturally his material identity and illusion diminish.

### **Approach to āpana-daśā**

There are two types of smaraṇa: vaidha and rāgānuga. By either of these one can reach āpana- daśā. By following the rules and rituals of scripture the path of vaidha arises. This is more common. Rāgānuga arises from a greed for participating in the activities of Vraja. Rāgānuga-smṛti is beyond the injunctions of scripture. This path is rarer. The devotee practices remembrance while being strongly attracted to the sweetness of the Lord and his pastimes. Very quickly he will attain āpana-daśā.

The devotee following vaidhi-bhakti always considers suitable action in the light of scriptural injunctions. However, when that devotee reaches the position of bhāva and attains āpana-daśā, he gives up the scriptural directives as an obstacle. The stage of bhāva, which is reached by passing progressively through faith (śraddhā), steadiness (niṣṭhā), taste (ruci), and attachment (āśakti), appears during āpana-daśā. At the stage of āpana-daśā the differences between devotees following rāgānuga and vaidhi dissolve.

Āpana-daśā may also be explained in terms of remembrance. Smaraṇa-daśā (stage of remembering) is divided into five levels. First one tries to remember the eight fold pastimes, but the mind wanders. This is smaraṇa. When one's practice becomes steady, it is called dharaṇā. When one can meditate on all aspects of the desired object, it is called dhyāna. When this dhyāna becomes continuous it is called anusmṛti. When anusmṛti becomes perfect it is called samādhi. When one attains this fifth stage of remembrance, samādhi, āpana-daśā appears. It will take the unskillful person many yugas to surpass the five stages in remembrance, but the skillful person can attain āpana-daśā in a very short time.

In āpana-daśā, identification with the material body ceases and identification with the spiritual body will take its place. In that spiritual body one will always see Vṛndāvana and serve Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa.

### **Sampatti-daśā, stage of accomplishment**

In āpana-daśā the fortunate soul attains his spiritual form (svarūpa-siddhi). At the stage of sampatti-daśā, one gives up the material body and attains to the spiritual world with that spiritual body (vastu-siddhi). By Kṛṣṇa's mercy suddenly one's subtle body of mind, intelligence and false ego as well as one's gross body will vanish and one will appear in a pure spiritual body, serving Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa along with their eternal associates in the spiritual world. In this way the person who achieves perfection through practice (sādhana-siddha) achieves the same planet as the eternal associates (nitya-siddha) and there serves Kṛṣṇa day and night. Being constantly intoxicated with the nectar of the conjugal affairs of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, the devotee serves without interruption.

In conclusion, the Holy Name is the supreme treasure, for, by taking shelter of the Holy Name, the living entity becomes purified and attains this highest state of perfection. Therefore, the jīva who has faith should take up chanting of the name seriously and steadily, in association of advanced devotees, in a place sheltered from the material energy. By the strength of these three items, in a short time, stage by stage, he will achieve his position of real glory. Of all the aṅgas of bhakti, chanting the name is foremost and easiest. In a short time the living entity can attain his perfection, provided he takes proper association.

One must be very careful to avoid bad association and to take good association. Prema being a particular aspect of the spiritual realm, the devotee's heart is suitable and inclined to hold it, whereas the non-devotee's heart is uncongenial. Therefore without the association of a real devotee, prema will not enter a person's heart. Good and bad association has a very strong effect in relation to prema, as conductors and non-conductors have in relation to electricity.

Hari-dāsa said, "By association, solitary practice and determined effort in chanting- -by these three items--I can attain the glorious goal of my eternal

service to Kṛṣṇa. But I am the lowest of the low. I am depraved in mind. I am intoxicated with material enjoyment. I cheat myself by avoiding the association of devotees. Still, I am begging you to distribute causeless mercy, for there is no reason to give mercy to a person like me. I pray that you give me a refuge in the nectar of devotional life.”

Saying this in great humility (the ornament of prema), Hari-dāsa, who is actually an eternal associate of the Lord, fell unconscious at the lotus feet of Lord Caitanya.

Filled with love and choked with ecstasy, the Lord lifted Hari-dāsa, embraced him and spoke to him confidentially.[\[36\]](#)

“Listen, Hari-dāsa, to this secret pastime. Sinful people will contaminate the whole world, and the pure Holy Name will be covered by the corrupt teachings of the sahajiyas and others. But at that time, those who are real devotees will understand the ultimate instruction that you have given (beyond which there is nothing else): chanting the Holy Name in the association of devotees. Taking shelter of this knowledge and taking shelter of the name, selfless devotees will worship Kṛṣṇa far away from the materialistic world.

“The individual jīva attains faith in bhakti through his past accumulated sukṛti (unintentional devotional activity), and thus begins his progress to Kṛṣṇa. All jīvas are not capable of immediately taking up this process of bhakti. To fix bhakti in those persons who have attained faith, I have come to preach the Holy Name as the yuga-dharma. And you are here to help me accomplish this purpose. For that reason I have heard the instructions on the Holy Name from your lips.”

The fortunate devotee, who, by the mercy of Kṛṣṇa, attains the full nectar of the wish-fulfilling Holy Name, attains the success of life: he worships Śrī Kṛṣṇa with spontaneous love, full of perfect bliss.

A worthless rascal, with tears in my eyes, I hold that person’s feet and beg him to distribute the supreme bliss, so that I may finally drink just one drop of that sweet rasa.

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[1] Here Hari-dāsa Ṭhākura begins by explaining the sambandha or relationship between the Lord, the living entities and matter, called sambandha-jñāna, which is essential for proper cultivation of the Holy Name.

[2] When Kṛṣṇa is separated from his energies and will by the process of jñāna, he becomes the nirviśeṣa, impersonal Brahman, which is actually the Lord's effulgence. By the process of aṣṭāṅga-yoga the all-pervading, subtle consciousness that resides in all states of existence is realized as Paramātmā. This also is but a portion of Kṛṣṇa in the form of consciousness. Thus Brahman and Paramātmā are two incomplete states within the whole who is Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa is complete consciousness endowed with will and energies.

[3] From the sandhinī potency of the cit-śakti comes all existence; from the samvit potency comes all knowledge and from the hlādinī potency comes all the emotions, relationships and rasas which develop into bliss. All the transformations of this cit-śakti or yogamāyā, being pure bliss, are transcendental to the time, place and qualities of the material world.

[4] Sattva is of two types: pure and mixed. All the existence in the cit manifestation of the Lord is śuddha or pure sattva. All existence in the material world is mixed sattva. In pure sattva there is no passion or ignorance. Birth is passion. In the spiritual world there is no passion which brings about birth, nor is there any ignorance to bring about destruction. Everything there is eternal. Though the parts of the Lord are by nature pure sattva, by association with avidyā, that sattva becomes mixed with passion and ignorance. Though Śiva and the devatās are by far superior to the ordinary jīvas, they are also considered mixed with passion and ignorance by connection with material conception. But the Supreme Lord, by his inconceivable energy, though he appears in the material world, still remains pure sattva, the Lord of the material energy. Māyā is his servant.

[5] Being indirect processes however Rāmānanda Rāya did not give much credit to them in his discussions with Lord Caitanya.

[6] Nāmābhāsa is an indirect approach to prema, for by chanting in the mode of nāmābhāsa one first becomes gradually purified of sin; and being

purified of sin, one can chant śuddha-nāma (pure name), which will directly give Kṛṣṇa prema.

[7] Separation may also refer to separation of syllables of the Holy Name, such as the syllables “ha” and “ri” separated from each other by some other syllables. By such syllabic separation the effect of the Holy Name is also hindered. This however is different from the utterance of the word “haram” by the Yāvana when he is dying, for in that case there is no separation of syllables. It is classed as nāmābhāsa, the result of which may be very great in some cases.

[8] In Bhajana Rahasya Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura enumerates four topics of philosophical error (tattva-vibhrama):

1. ignorance of the position of jīva (sva-tattva)
2. ignorance of the position of the Lord (para-tattva)
3. ignorance of the process of bhakti (sādhana-tattva)
4. ignorance of the goal of bhakti (sādhya-tattva)

[9] Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura subdivides these anarthas as follows in Bhajana Rahasya:

1. Thirst for material objects:  
craving for material objects in this world,  
craving for heavenly sense pleasures in the next life,  
desire for mystic yoga powers,  
desire for liberation in Brahman.
2. Weakness of heart:  
attachment to trifling things unrelated to Kṛṣṇa,  
deceit  
envy of someone else’s progress  
longing for position and fame.
3. Aparādhā:  
offense to the Holy Name (namāparādhā),  
offense to Kṛṣṇa himself (sevāparādhā),  
offense to Kṛṣṇa’s devotees (vaiṣṇavāparādhā),  
offense to other living entities (jīvāparādhā).

[10] One can attain sarūpya, sālōkya and sārṣṭi but not a fully developed rasa with the Lord.

[11] The previous chapter described nāmābhāsa. The next ten chapters discuss the ten offenses to the Holy Name (nāma aparādha), and Chapter Fifteen discusses offenses to the mūrti form of the Lord (sevā aparādha). As mentioned in the previous chapter, the nāma and sevā aparādhas may be counted as anarthas, which cause nāmābhāsa. If, however, the aparādhas are not corrected, and become intentional, they have a serious effect, not only impeding one's spiritual progress, but also taking one from devotional service to hell.

[12] The process of acquiring bhakti is as follows: one devotee having achieved bhakti distributes bhakti to another practicing devotee. Bhakti, being the spiritual function of the jīva, supports the jīva and perfects his existence. When the opposing elements (anarthas) disappear in the soul and it becomes full of bhakti, then from the devotee's soul the bhakti naturally flows to another person.

[13] Viṣṇu and Nārāyaṇa are the vilāsa-vigrahas of Kṛṣṇa situated in Goloka. Saṅkarṣaṇa is the first puruṣa avatāra situated in the Kāraṇa waters. The portion of MahāViṣṇu situated in the universe is Garbodakaśāyī, Lord of the samaṣṭi. The expansion of the Lord in each jīva is Kṣīrodaśāyī Viṣṇu. The avatāras such as Matsya are expansions of Kṣīrodaśāyī Viṣṇu. All of these forms are endowed with sixty qualities as Viṣṇu-tattva. The saktyaveśa avatāras such as Paraśurāma, Buddha and Pṛthu, are however jīvas.

[14] To carry out one's life following the rules of varṇāśrama is sanātana-dharma. This social system has appeared and has been established by the sages in India in complete form. Although the pure form does not exist in other countries it exists in some form or other. Man cannot achieve perfection except by divisions of varṇa. Even the outcastes, mixed castes etc, by good fortune can, by avoiding sinful activities, enter and become devotees of Kṛṣṇa.

[15] The guru is the only helmsman for delivering the fallen jīva from the ocean of material existence. Those who do not take shelter of the lotus feet of the guru and try to cross by the strength of their limited intellect are but fools. Nothing in this world is perfected but by the instruction of



guru. Thus, how can the highest goal be perfected except by the instruction of guru? That person who is expert in spiritual matters is suitable to be guru.

[16] One should not think of the guru as an ordinary jīva. One should be devoted to him, as he is a servant of Kṛṣṇa, nourished by Kṛṣṇa's svarūpa-śakti. Thinking of the guru as Kṛṣṇa is māyāvāda philosophy. The devotees should be careful in this matter. If the māyāvāda philosophy enters, the whole practice of devotion is spoiled.

[17] Before acceptance of a guru, there should be test of guru and disciple. This is prescribed in scripture. Here one does not consider the kūla-guru or family guru, unless of course he is also a devotee of Kṛṣṇa. Otherwise one should seek out a devotee and accept him as guru. It is unfortunate if one does not take care to investigate and test properly when taking a guru, the ultimate friend in one's life, for even in material matters one necessarily tests before accepting. Giving the kūla-guru proper respect and proper reward, one should take his leave and search for a real guru.

[18] Nāma-guru is one who gives teachings about the name and after establishing the supremacy of the name, gives the Holy Name or a mantra equivalent to the Holy Name. Dīksā-guru is thus nāma-guru, for the mantra should be seen as nothing but the name in another form. If one distinguishes the name from the mantra (thinking that the mantra is superior) the mantra itself loses its efficacy.

[19] Pure bhakti is defined as serving Kṛṣṇa with a favorable attitude, without any other desire, without desire for material results, liberation, or mystic powers. On the path of pure bhakti, one must chant the Holy Name. All the scriptures approve this method.

[20] Sāṅkhya philosophy is often paired with Patañjali's yoga.

[21] Vaiśeṣika philosophy is often paired with Gautama's nyāya philosophy.

[22] Śaṅkara rejected "om" as the principal sound of the Vedas and substituted impersonal slogans called mahā-vakyas.

[23] The cit-śakti is Kṛṣṇa's internal energy. Māyā is her shadow. Māyā's purpose is to purify the jīvas and gradually bring them to Kṛṣṇa. She has

two types of mercy: real and deceptive. When she gives real mercy, she gives Kṛṣṇa bhakti through her function of knowledge. When she gives deceptive mercy, she gives them temporary material happiness. When she is very unmerciful she throws the jīva into impersonal Brahman, which is the greatest misfortune for the jīva.

[24] “Giving the name” means accepting a person as a disciple and a Vaiṣṇava and giving him instructions on chanting and bhakti.

[25] There are purifying activities for gross materialists, Advaita-jñāna for those extremely attached to the concept of illusion, and bhakti for all jīvas.

[26] This offense is caused by Vaiṣṇava aparādhā, which gives rise to a taste for the māyāvāda interpretation of the name.

[27] Kāli-dāsa would go from house to house and secretly take the remnants of Vaiṣṇavas food.

[28] Though the name is the supreme dharma at all times, because there is no hope in performing other dharmas, the name appears in Kali as yuga-dharma and liberates the fallen souls from their suffering.

[29] An example is chanting as quickly as possible at the sacrifice of quality, in order to finish all the rounds. This is a symptom of restlessness of mind.

[30] In Caitanya-bhagavat Mahāprabhu says, “With joy hear the mahā-mantra: hare kṛṣṇa hare kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa hare hare, hare rāma hare rāma rāma rāma hare hare. The name of the Lord is this mahā-mantra. Chanting japa of this mantra with great diligence (nirbandha) you will attain all perfection. Chant the mantra at all times. There is no other rule.” Here the word *nirbandha* (perseverance) means that the devotee should chant the full mantra on 108 tulasī beads. Four times around makes one grantha. From that one should increase to 16 granthas or 64 rounds (100,000 names). Gradually one should increase to 300,000 names and spend all ones time chanting. All the previous pure devotees followed this order of the Lord and attained perfection. Even now it is possible for all people to attain perfection by chanting japa of the Holy Name. The liberated, those aspiring for liberation, and those caught up in the material world are all qualified for the name. The conception of the name differs slightly among

those who are liberated: some chant in a mood of separation and some chant in the mood of meeting the Lord.

[31] Here a passage from Caitanya Caritāmṛta is quoted which describes the instructions given by Mahāprabhu to Raghunātha das for worshiping his Govardhana śīla, to illustrate simple worship permeated with bhāva.

[32] The materialist, the karmī and the jñānī are all turned away from Kṛṣṇa, since they are endeavoring for personal happiness. The materialist attempts bodily gratification. The karmī attempts sense gratification in future life. The jñānī tries to avoid all miseries. Overcoming all these phases, the jīva turns towards Kṛṣṇa. Such jīvas are of three types: kaniṣṭha, madhyama and uttama. The kaniṣṭha gives up worshipping devatās but worships Kṛṣṇa with material desires, while being ignorant of his own, Kṛṣṇa's and bhakti's true position. Though ignorant, he is not offensive. Because he is concerned with himself, he is not considered a pure Vaiṣṇava, but a semi-vaiṣṇava. The madhyama devotee is considered a pure devotee and perfected in his activities. The uttama devotee is without desire for the material world. Those who are Kṛṣṇa devotees must see the name and Kṛṣṇa as non-different. Having unalloyed faith in the Lord, they are qualified for the name. Thus though one may begin as kaniṣṭha, with chanting in nāmābhāsa, very soon, through association with good devotees, he will become a madhyama devotee, his anarthas will be dissipated. This is the qualification for the pure name and service to Vaiṣṇavas. Finally he will become an uttama devotee.

[33] Quoted from Rāmānanda Rāya: "Whoever has hankering for nectar of gopī-bhāva gives up Vedic dharma and worships Kṛṣṇa. Taking the mood of the inhabitants of Vraja and worshipping Kṛṣṇa, he will receive a body suitable to that mood in Vraja." This shows that by cultivating the ujvala-rasa, one will attain a body as a gopī.

[34] After examining the disciple's natural tendencies, when the guru sees that disciple is qualified for sṅgara-rasa, he reveals to the disciple his form as a mañjarī under Lalitā and her followers in Rādhā's group. The guru will reveal the eleven bhāvas as sādhana and the aṣṭa-kālīya-līlā as the goal to be achieved, and establish their relation. He will reveal everything concerning that gopī--the name, form, qualities and service in the aṣṭa-

kālīya-līlā, what house she was born in, to whom she is married. The guru will reveal his pālya-dāsī-bhāva and his daily service in the eightfold pastimes. From that point the disciple progresses to smaraṇa-daśā. This is one's birth as a gopī.

[35] Without pārakīya, rasa is not complete. The greatness of Lord Caitanya's teachings is the eternal nature of this pārakīya mood in sṛṅgara-rasa, both in the Lord's earthly and transcendental pastimes. One cannot place material conceptions on this rasa. The spiritual jīva becomes a spiritual gopī performing spiritual service to spiritual Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa in the spiritual world of Vṛndāvana. It is not a material relationship of man and woman, but the pure spiritual essence of that relationship, which is revealed one's own spiritual nature. This must be revealed through a guru. Without his mercy, this indescribable topic cannot be discovered. It is beyond material logic and extremely rare.

[36] The Lord showed the most mercy to Hari-dāṣa, and therefore Hari-dasā's conclusions about the Holy Name and attainment of rasa are very special teachings. When the Lord along with Rāmānanda Rāya and Sarvabhauma tasted the nectar of Lalita-mādhava and Vidagdha-mādhava at Hari-dāsa's place, the glories of the rasa in the name flowed from Hari-dāsa's mouth.