

Śrī Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta

by Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī

- ① Vairāgye
- ② Jñāna
- ③ bhajane.
- ④ Vaikunthe.

Part 4

Vaikuntha- The Spiritual Kingdom

TEXTS 207–209

śrī-nārada uvāca

pratimā yā mayoddiṣṭāḥ sākṣād-bhagavatā samāḥ
tāsām arcana-māhātmyam tāvad āstām su-dūrataḥ

ādyām ādhunikīm vārcām sva-dharmādy-anapekṣayā
sākṣāc-chrī-bhagavad-buddhyā bhajatām kṛtrimām api

na pātityādi-doṣaḥ syād guṇa eva mahān mataḥ
sevottamā matā bhaktiḥ phalam yā paramam mahat

Śrī Nārada said: The Deity forms (**yā pratimā**) I have mentioned (**mayā uddiṣṭāḥ**) are all equal to the original Personality of Godhead (**sākṣād-bhagavatā samāḥ**). There is no need to even mention (**tāvad āstām su-dūrataḥ**) the glories of worshiping Them (**tāsām arcana-māhātmyam**). Persons who worship the Lord's Deity (**arcām bhajatām**)—be it ancient, new, or even concocted (**ādyām ādhunikīm vā kṛtrimām api**)—provided they worship the Deity as being directly the Lord Himself (**sākṣāc-chrī-bhagavad-buddhyā bhajatām**), will not fall down from their religious status or be otherwise at fault (**na pātityādi-doṣaḥ syād**), even if they neglect their prescribed duties and other such principles (**sva-dharmādy-anapekṣayā**). Rather, their behavior should be considered exemplary (**guṇa eva mahān mataḥ**), and such Deity worship (**sevā**) should be regarded (**matāḥ**) as exalted devotional service (**uttamā bhaktiḥ**), yielding the best of fruits (**phalam yā paramam mahat**).

The deity forms
are all equal to the Lord.
↓
Persons who worship the deity →
provided they consider the deity
directly as the Lord → will not fall from
his status
↓
Their worship should be considered
as P.D.S

Even irregular worship of the Supreme Lord in His Deity form is all-auspicious.

Because of the strength of bhakti, worshipers who fail to observe all the prescribed varṇāśrama duties are not to be considered fallen from the standards of civilized behavior.

Nor should they be considered unqualified for material reasons, nor faulted for imperfect knowledge of the methods of worship.

Ordinarily, offenses committed in ritual Deity worship bring infamy in this life and hellish punishment in the next.

But worship of the Lord's Deity performed with faith and devotion is transcendental.

Persons who practice devotional service are excused for their lack of material qualification:

mat-karma kurvatām puṁsām
kriyā-lopo bhaved yadi
teṣām karmāṇi kurvanti
tisraḥ koṭyo maharṣayah

“If (**yadi**) persons doing devotional service to Me (**mat-karma kurvatām puṁsām**) happen to fail to execute some of their karmic duties (**kriyā-lopo bhaved**), thirty million exalted sages (**tisraḥ koṭyo maharṣayah**) carry out those obligations on their behalf (**teṣām karmāṇi kurvanti**).” (Padma Purāṇa)

The general opinion of saintly persons is that devotional worship of the Supreme Lord's Deity is always praiseworthy.

And exalted Vaiṣṇava ācāryas consider Deity worship a principal activity of pure devotional service.

The primary meaning of the word bhakti is sevā (“service”), and service to the Lord in the form of Deity worship includes elements of all the methods of bhakti-yoga.

This worship leads to the highest perfection of life, far beyond accomplishments in the four ordinary categories of human endeavor.

TEXT 210

siddhiḥ syād bhagavad-dṛṣṭyā
trṇa-sammānanād api
sakṛd uccāraṇān nāmā-
bhāsasya śravaṇāt tathā

One can reach
perfection by honoring
even a blade of grass →
provided one sees the presence of
supreme lord in it (or)
even uttering or hearing by

One can reach perfection (**siddhiḥ syād**) by honoring even a blade of grass (**trṇa-sammānanād api**)—provided one sees within it the presence of the Supreme Lord (**bhagavad-dṛṣṭyā**)—or by just once uttering (**sakṛd uccāraṇād**) or hearing (**śravaṇāt tathā**) even a faint semblance of the Lord's name (**nāma ābhāsasya**).

One who understands that in a blade of grass the Supersoul is present along with the jīva soul, and who therefore honors the grass by watering it and bowing down, is in fact performing devotional service to the Supreme Lord.

Such a person easily attains liberation or whatever else he desires.

And the same results are obtainable from just once pronouncing or hearing even a dim reflection of the Lord's holy name.

TEXT 211

kutas tat-smārake tasyā-
dhiṣṭhāne mantra-saṁskṛte
sarva-bhakti-pade pūjya-
māne doṣādi-tarkaṇam

How then can
one find fault in
worshipping the deity
a) IN whom the Lord is
personally present
b) who evokes the remembrance
of the Lord
c) Consecrated by the mantras
d) who is the receiver
of all kinds of D.S

How then (kutaḥ) can one find fault (doṣādi-tarkaṇam) in
worshipping (pūjyamāne) the Deity, in whom the Lord personally
appears (tasya adhiṣṭhāne), who evokes remembrance of the Lord
(tat-smārake), who has been consecrated by mantras (mantra-
saṁskṛte), and who is the receiver of all kinds of devotional service
(sarva-bhakti-pade)?

When the Deity of Lord Viṣṇu has been properly installed with the āvāhana
(“invitation”) mantras and is worshiped by devotees who have put aside all
misconceptions that He is a statue of wood or stone, such worship is faultless.

Even logicians have to admit the existence of inconceivable potencies in
special worldly things—gems, mantras, potent medicines, and so on.

If even material objects act in ways undetectable by mundane senses and
intelligence, then why can't the Supreme Lord, in His own creation, appear as
He wants?

The Lord's Deity helps the conditioned souls in their meditation by allowing them to see the Lord's form.

Those who visit the Deity see the beauty of all His limbs simultaneously and are effortlessly transported to the ocean of devotional ecstasy.

Simply by worshiping the Deity one performs all nine processes of bhakti-yoga—hearing, chanting, remembering, serving the Lord's lotus feet, worshiping, offering prayers, becoming the Lord's servant, becoming His friend, and surrendering everything.

TEXT 212

Persons who
worship the
deities never
disrespect the
Vaiṣṇaves
And, if because of
absorption in worship, they
appear to disrespect, if they
Vaiṣṇaves take it lightly
& rather praise the worshipers.

kadāpi kṛṣṇa-pratimārcanāvātām
na sambhavet kṛṣṇa-pareṣv anādarah
ghaṭeta cet karhy api tad-viṣaktito
grṇanti nāgas tad amī stuvanty atha

Persons who properly worship Kṛṣṇa in His Deity form (kṛṣṇa-pratimā arcanāvātām) never disrespect (na kadāpi anādarah sambhavet) Kṛṣṇa's devotees (kṛṣṇa-pareṣu). And if (cet) because of being absorbed in worship (tad-viṣaktitah) they accidentally do so (karhy api ghaṭeta), the devotees (amī) make light of such offenses (na tad agah grṇanti) and praise the worshipers (atha stuvanty).

Although worship of the Supreme Lord's Deity is a powerful means of devotional service, its good effects can be completely nullified by offenses against Vaiṣṇavas.

Nārada here assures Gopa-kumāra that serious worshipers of the Deity are spiritually mature enough to know that they must carefully avoid displeasing any Vaiṣṇava.

Moreover, if a careless neophyte absorbed in Deity worship neglects or disrespects Vaiṣṇavas, the Vaiṣṇavas mercifully overlook the trespass and instead see only the worshiper's sincere attachment to the Lord.