

# Jaiṡa Dharma

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# Chapter Eleven

## Nitya-dharma and Deity Worship

“Some thinkers consider that one should endeavour to realize the Absolute Truth by the process of discarding all that is not Truth.”

This phenomenon they describe as, ‘Discarding all objectives unrelated to actual truth—the self,’ and ‘Endavouring to realize the self.’

Speaking this kind of word-jugglery indicates that one has adopted the impotent process of dry empirical knowledge.

Jñāna.

From where will the captivated jīva acquire the strength and discrimination to remove the ultimately unreal illusion that powerfully covers his very self?

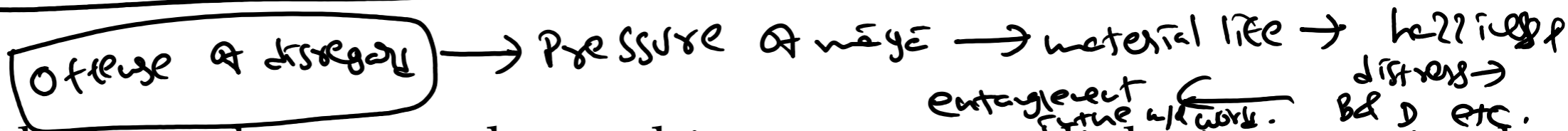
Can a prisoner confined to a cell be set free merely by desiring freedom?

The primary purpose of imprisonment is to evoke self-improvement in the offender.

By nature, the jīva is an eternal servant of Bhagavān and in disregarding and thus forgetting this eternal truth he has committed a cardinal offence, thus causing his own imprisonment.

Removal of this offence is therefore the prerequisite for his release from the material imprisonment.

Since time immemorial, the jīva has been entangled in the birth and death, happiness and distress, of material life by the insurmountable pressure of Māyā as a result of maintaining this offence of disregard of Īśvara.



“Nevertheless, if he somehow or other cultivates even a slight interest in the spiritual activity of devotional service to the Īśvara by regularly taking darśana of His Deity form and hearing līlā-kathā, narrations of Īśvara’s pastimes, then he can very soon perceive the transcendental form of the Deity.

The devotional process of hearing and chanting steadily revives his original spiritual nature, which gradually becomes firm and steady.

The more the sādḥaka grows in purity and spirituality, the more he progresses along the path of realising his innate bhāva, true spiritual mood and identity in relationship to the Lord.

Consequently, the sole recourse open to the absolute novice and neophyte in spiritual life is to serve the Deity with faith and to hear and chant the Deity's transcendental glories and pastimes.

This is the prime reason why our mahājanas have established the process of devotional service to the Deity.”

Mullah Sahīb, “Is it not better to meditate in the mind upon the Supreme Being rather than to model a form from the inert material elements?”

Gorācānda Bābājī, “Both are the same. The mind, albeit a subtle material element, is still a part of the mundane nature.”

The thoughts of the materially engrossed mind are always contaminated by matter; thus, every product of the mind is inert

For example, when we pronounce, ‘Brahman is all-pervasive,’ does this indicate that we are actually able to fathom completely this quality of Brahman’s ubiquity?

I think not, the conditioned mind recoils from the infinite all-pervasiveness of transcendental Brahman and grasps at the closest material comparison of our experience—the vast, yet still limited, material sky.

Again, if an ordinary person should say, 'I am meditating upon Brahman,' his perception of Brahman will inevitably be limited by time and space, both mundane conditions.

If the meditating mind cannot break the bonds of material time and space and reach beyond them, how then can it perceive transcendence?

By rejecting a Deity formed of the gross elements such as earth or water and then creating a mental image of Īśvara, we still find that we are worshipping an image of Īśvara composed of the material elements.

Therefore, both these forms of worship, internal or external, involve the material elements.



“Ultimately, no material element can act as a vehicle to bring us into contact with the transcendental platform.”

The one indispensable element is bhāva, faith and devotional feeling for the Supreme Personality of Godhead; such bhāva resides only within the spirit soul—the jīva.

Hearing and chanting harināma and the pastimes of the Supreme Lord and worshipping His Deity form provide the jīva with the inspiration to be steady in devotional practice and thus strengthen his bhāva.

Eventually, this practice ascends to true śuddha-bhakti. At this point, the purely spiritual form of the Supreme Godhead is revealed to the sādḥaka.

Therefore, through this process of pure devotional service the transcendental form of the Lord is revealed—an impossible task for the methods of karma or jñāna.”

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Mullah Sāhib, “Matter is distinct from God.

Our tradition proclaims that Satan has introduced the worship of Deities formed of material elements just to enslave the jīva in material existence.

In our opinion, it is better to avoid such idol worship.”

Gorācānda Bābājī, “Īśvara is one and unsurpassable; He has no rival.