

# Hari-Nāma-Cintāmaṇi

The Touchstone of the Holy-  
Name

by Śrīla Saccidānanda Bhaktivinoda  
Ṭhākura

# Chapter – 5

Worshiping the Demigods as  
Independent of Kṛṣṇa

# Other Common Misunderstandings

- "Some people claim that the Brahman without qualities takes on qualities when it expands as Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva.
- However, the conclusion of scripture is that Nārāyana is supreme, and is the cause of Brahmā and Śiva.
- Whoever rejects Viṣṇu as the supreme controller and takes to worship of demigods, falls into the world of illusion.

- "Other people claim that since Viṣṇu is all pervading throughout the universe and is present in the demigods as well, one can worship Viṣṇu by worshiping all the demigods."
- But this is not the ruling in the scriptures.
- Rather, this type of activity is forbidden.

- By worshiping Viṣṇu all other worship is perfected.

- Just as by giving water to the root of a tree the branches become satisfied; by worshiping Visnu exclusively, all worship is covered.

- This is the Vedic conclusion, but unfortunately, the fools reject this precept.

- Under the influence of māyāvādī philosophy, the living entities of Kali-yuga put Viṣṇu on the same level as the demigods.
- In truth, however, the demigods give only limited result, whereas worship of Viṣṇu yields all results.
- If the materialists can understand this truth, they will take to Viṣṇu worship and achieve all results.

# Instructions to House-Holders

"How should a householder in  
the varṇāśrama system act?"



Generally he should give up worrying about inferior  
obligations and simply worship Kṛṣṇa.

In other words, in all the samskāras from insemination to  
funeral rites, Kṛṣṇa should be worshiped, using appropriate  
mantras from the Vedas.

- One should worship the Vaisnavas and Viṣṇu directly and worship the forefathers by giving them prasāda from Viṣṇu.
- To directly worship the demigods as the māyāvādīs do will only shorten one's life.
- To think that the demigods are independent of Viṣṇu is an offense.

- Since the demigods take their existence from Viṣṇu, in them one cannot find full perfection.
- Even the controlling powers of Brahmā, Gaṇeśa and Sūrya come from Kṛṣṇa.
- They do not have independent power.
- Therefore the gr̥hastha Vaisnava should recognize one supreme Lord Viṣṇu, and regard the demigods as His dependent energies.

- Thus the gr̥hastha, though following the rules and customs prescribed in his caste, will give up all those rules which include demigod worship, aimed at sense gratification, and hold firmly to the path of bhakti, worshiping Him alone in all cases where worship is prescribed.

- "In this way the gr̥hastha, with his mind fixed on devotion to Kṛṣṇa, will perform the saṁskāras of his caste, satisfy the ancestors by Viṣṇu prasāda offerings, and offer oblations to the demigods by recognizing them as the devotees of Kṛṣṇa, and then taking prasāda himself.

- He knows that by worshiping Kṛṣṇa and the Vaiṣṇava all results are attained.

- Thus he always chants the holy name, being careful to avoid offenses such as the second aparādha.

# Another Understanding of the Second Offense

Śivasya śrī-viṣṇor ya iha guṇa-nāmādi-sakalāni  
dhiyā bhinnam paśyet sa khalu hari-nāma-hita-karah  
 abhiye abhinnam paśyet

In this material world, the holy name of Viṣṇu is all-  
auspicious. Viṣṇu's name, form, qualities and pastimes are all  
transcendental, absolute knowledge. Therefore, if one tries to  
separate the Absolute Personality of Godhead from His holy  
name or His transcendental form, qualities and pastimes,  
thinking them to be material, that is offensive.

- "There is one other offense derived from not accepting  
Viṣṇu as the supreme, one without a second, or advaya-  
tattva.

- Being the advaya-tattva, Viṣṇu, by His inconceivable  
energies, possesses inherently name, form and qualities  
which cannot be considered separate from Him.



- To consider the name, etc. as different from the Lord is to consider the Lord and the name on a material level.
- This concept of duality is offensive.
- At the stage of nāmābhāsa one may hold this conception unconsciously from lack of knowledge or faith, but it is impossible to hold this conception at the stage of prema.

- This anartha can be removed by the mercy of the bona fide guru who will guide the practitioner in sādhana bhakti so that the śuddha-nāma, the pure name, is revealed.
- "By material speculation one can bring about this concept of duality in the Lord, and it can become a serious offense which is difficult to remove.
- Thus, in the case of the māyāvādīs, holding to this concept is an aparādha.

- The māyāvādīs claim that the impersonal Brahman is the supreme truth, without variety, character or energies, without form or beauty, without change or activity, simply pure existence.
- For them, the name and form of Viṣṇu are creations of māyā, the material energy of illusion.
- When a person can overcome illusion, then Viṣṇu simply merges into the impersonal Brahman, losing individual identity.

- This is all simply bad logic, based on atheism.
- To claim that the Supreme Truth is without all inconceivable transcendental energies, or is unable to possess character, is madness.
- There may be some confusion of what to call the Supreme Truth—Brahman or Viṣṇu—but in either case, the highest realization must be God with energies and personality.

- That is the Vedic conclusion.
- "Actually Viṣṇu has both features in Himself: nirviśeṣa and saviśeṣa, without variety and with variety.
- This is possible by the inconceivable power of God, the Supreme Powerful.
- All opposites are assimilated without difficulty.

- By this inconceivable power the Supreme One can exist with variety, beauty and līlā.
- “Of course, the jīva, being naturally of small intelligence as a particle of God, cannot fully understand the nature of the Lord's inconceivable power.”
- In the attempt to establish a concept of the Supreme Truth by his own intelligence, the jīva takes shelter of [material logic] and accepts the secondary feature of the Lord, or impersonal Brahman, which is a state of unity and peace, as the supreme.

- By rejecting the lotus feet of Viṣṇu, who is worshiped by the demigods, and by then being bound up in a state of Brahman, he cannot distinguish what is good or bad for his own welfare.
- "But a person who can understand that the Absolute Truth can exist with form and variety in a pure transcendental state, can properly see that Viṣṇu, His name and qualities are all one and inseparable from Him.

- This concept of Kṛṣṇa with personality is actual knowledge.
- With this understanding one can take to chanting the holy name, knowing that it is Kṛṣṇa Himself.
- Thus one must avoid the offense of thinking materially that Viṣṇu and His name, form, etc. are different, and of thinking that other living entities, such as the demigods, have an existence separate from Viṣṇu.



# Summary of the Second Offense

- "To summarize, whoever is solely devoted to Kṛṣṇa simply worships Kṛṣṇa and gives up all other worship.
- He does not criticize the demigods or the scriptures which support the worship of the demigods, but respects the demigods as the servants of Kṛṣṇa.
- Some scriptures may establish demigods as supreme to establish belief in different categories of human beings, in order to raise them through regulation to the point of coming to faith in Kṛṣṇa and bhakti.

- The true Vaiṣṇava will see the function of the demigods and their respective scriptures in proper perspective.
- Criticism of Kṛṣṇa's servants, the demigods, is also offensive.
- "Since it is obligatory for the householder to worship the demigods according to his caste, he will worship the demigods and forefathers by offering them the remnants from their Lord, Kṛṣṇa."

- Similarly, when the devotee sees the mūrtī of a demigod, he will pay respects to the demigod, seeing the demigod as a Vaiṣṇava.
- However the devotee will not accept the prasāda remnants of an offering that a māyāvādī has made to Viṣṇu.
- Because the māyāvādī's chanting and worship are both offensive, the Lord never accepts his offering.

- Also to accept offerings made directly to the demigods is an offense to Viṣṇu and obstructs the path of pure devotional service.
- But by worshiping Kṛṣṇa, the real devotee will give the demigods the Lord's prasāda out of respect.
- Such worship, and receiving such prasāda, is not offensive.
- In this way, the devotee avoids the second offense in chanting the name, and by continuing this process correctly, he achieves love of God.

# Rectification of the Second Offense

- "If by accident, one should happen to turn from accepting Viṣṇu as supreme, one should be repentent and take shelter of Viṣṇu and be careful not to commit the offense again.
- By remembering Kṛṣṇa, by remembering His name and chanting His name, the offense will disappear.

- According to the Vedic literature, there is no prāyaścitta (reformatory process or atonement) more effective than this.
- This is because the Lord is an ocean of mercy and an ocean of forgiveness.
- Similarly, the devotee also forgives past faults."