

Śrī Caitanya-Śikṣāmṛta

Nectarean Teachings of Lord Śrī
Caitanya

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Thākura

Chapter – 3

Vaidhi Bhakti

Part – 3

Avoiding obstacles in devotional
service

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Lamentation

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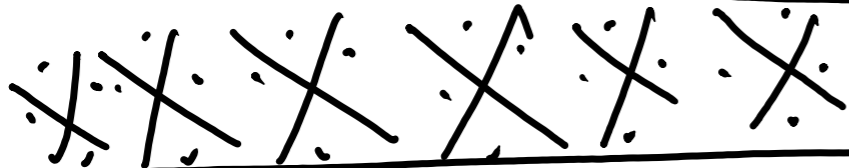
Part - 3 Avoiding obstacles in devotional service

Devotees should not be controlled by lamentation and other emotions by bad habits, by intoxication or by superstition.

There are thousands of circumstances for feeling lamentation, grief, anger, fear, greed and illusion, but the devotee does not become affected when such circumstances arise.

- Difficult Situations
- a) prayers
 - b) friendships
 - c) scriptures
 - d) absorbed in likeable KC activity
 - e) Learn to depend on the HN
 - f) seek guidance

These emotions weaken the mind and obstruct the cultivation of bhakti.



The devotee should always be on the alert.

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Bad habits

Bad habits such as sleeping during the day, sleeping during the early morning, chewing betel, untimely eating and drinking, untimely cleaning the body, sleeping on a luxurious bed, and eating luxurious items eventually become a disturbance to devotion.

Taking only what is necessary to maintain life, the devotee should not become habituated to unnecessary items.

Taking intoxicants gives rise to many faults, for by becoming addicted to them, devotion gets contaminated.

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Alcohol, marijuana, opium, and even tobacco must be avoided by the Vaisnava.

They are prohibited in the Vaisnava scriptures.

Just by smoking a person becomes so much addicted that he takes to sinful company to enjoy the habit. (Proof Below)

॥ 11.5.11 ॥

loke vyavāyāmiṣa-madya-sevā
nityā hi jantor na hi tatra codanā
vyavasthitis teṣu vivāha-yajña-
surā-grahair āsu nivṛttir iṣṭā

In this world (**loke**), people are always attracted to sex, meat eating and intoxication (**jantor nityā vyavāya-āmiṣa-madya-sevā**). This is not a rule in the scriptures (**na hi tatra codanā**), but there is an arrangement (**teṣu vyavasthitiḥ**) through marriage and sacrifice (**vivāha-yajña-surā-grahair**) so that they can eventually give up these acts (**āsu nivṛttir iṣṭā**).

|| 11.5.14 ||

ye tv anevam-vido 'santah
stabdhah sad-abhimāninaḥ
paśūn druhyanti viśrabdhah
pretya khādanti te ca tān

Those sinful persons (**ye tv asantah**) who are ignorant of actual religious principles (**anēvam-vido**), yet consider themselves to be completely pious (**stabdhah sad-abhimāninaḥ**), without compunction commit violence against innocent animals (**paśūn druhyanti**) who fully trust them (**viśrabdhah**). They will be eaten by the same creatures in their next lives (**pretya khādanti te ca tān**).

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To be controlled by superstition causes many problems.

From superstition arises prejudice; with prejudice, there is no respect for truth. (Proof Below)

|| 11.5.17 ||

eta ātma-hano 'śāntā
ajñāne jñāna-māninaḥ
sīdanty akṛta-kṛtyā vai
kāla-dhvasta-manorathāḥ

The killers of the soul (**ete ātma-hanaḥ**), never peaceful (**aśāntā**) and thinking themselves full of knowledge, though they are ignorant (**ajñāne jñāna-māninaḥ**), not doing their real duties (**akṛta-kṛtyā**), with their desires destroyed by time (**kāla-dhvasta-manorathāḥ**), continually suffer (**sīdanty**).

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For example, wearing the signs of the Vaisnavas is one of the methods of cultivating devotion, involving the body.

But to think that is the distinguishing characteristic of a Vaisnava is a superstition arising from sampradaya prejudice.

Controlled by such false beliefs, a person may not respect a real Vaisnava who is not wearing those marks.

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If devotees cannot find good association within their own organization, they will not venture to find good association elsewhere if they have such prejudice.

As without good association no thing can be accomplished, the devotees then fall into a dangerous position.

Those who are bound to the varnasrama system by prejudice also fail to develop a taste for the higher level of bhakti.

Sometimes hatred, which degrades a person even more, may also appear.

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Disrespect to Devatas

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Devotees should not disrespect the devatas. (Proof Below)

|| 1.2.23 ||

sattvaṃ rajas tama iti prakṛter guṇās tair
yuktaḥ paraḥ puruṣa eka ihāsyā dhatte
sthity-ādaye hari-viriñci-hareti saṁjñāḥ
śreyāṁsi tatra khalu sattva-tanor nṛṇāṁ syuh

The one supreme puruṣa, accepting the guṇas of prakṛti known as
sattva, rajas and tamas, for creation, maintenance and destruction, is
called Viṣṇu, Brahmā and Śiva. The best results for the devotees will
come from Viṣṇu with śuddha-sattva body.

|| 1.2.25 ||

bhejire munayo 'thāgre
bhagavantam adhokṣajam
sattvaṁ viśuddhaṁ kṣemāya
kalpante ye 'nu tān iha

Therefore the ancient sages worshipped Supreme Lord, beyond the material senses, composed of viśuddha-sattva. Those who follow the sages attain liberation in this world.

|| 1.2.26 ||

mumukṣavo ghora-rūpān
hitvā bhūta-patīn atha
nārāyaṇa-kalāḥ śāntā
bhajanti hy anasūyavaḥ

Rejecting the frightful forms Śiva or others devatās, persons desirous of liberation (what to speak of the devotees), without criticizing those devatās, worship the avatāras of Nārāyaṇa.

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There are two types of devatas, incarnations of the Lord and jivas with special qualification.

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None of the Lord's servants should be disrespected.

Those souls who, by the mercy of the Lord have attained positions to control and protect the world, are considered to be devata, and are to be worshipped by all.

↓
respected.

The Vaisnava should not out of envy disrespect them.

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Giving them proper respect, the Vaisnava may pray to them for the boon of devotion to Krsna.

The Vaisnava should not disrespect any living entity.

Respect should be given to all the forms of the devatas who are being worshipped in various places, for by worshipping those forms, the people on a lower level of consciousness learn the preliminaries to devotional service.

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By disrespecting them, the devotee's pride will grow, and humility will decrease.

In this way the heart will no longer be a suitable dwelling place for devotion.

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Violence to other entities

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The devotees should not disturb other living entities. (Proof Below)

yady adharma-rataḥ saṅgād asatām vājitendriyaḥ
kāmātmā kṛpaṇo lubdhaḥ straino bhūta-vihimsakaḥ
paśūn avidhinālabhya preta-bhūta-gaṇān yajan
narakān avaśo jantur gatvā yāty ulbaṇam tamaḥ
karmāṇi duḥkhodarkāṇi kurvan dehena taiḥ punaḥ
deham ābhajate tatra kim sukham martya-dharmināḥ

If a human being is engaged in sinful activities (yady adharma-rataḥ), either because of bad association (asatām saṅgād) or because of his inability to control his senses (vā ajitendriyaḥ), such a person will be full of desires, miserable, greedy for pleasure (kāmātmā kṛpaṇo lubdhaḥ), and attached to women (straino). He becomes violent towards other beings (bhūta-vihimsakaḥ) and kills animals against the rules (paśūn avidhinā ālabhya). He worships ghosts and spirits (preta-bhūta-gaṇān yajan) and goes to hell against his will (narakān avaśo gatvā). He attains the body of a plant (yāty ulbaṇam tamaḥ). By his body (dehena) he performs actions (kurvan karmāṇi) which create future suffering (duḥkhodarkāṇi) and attains another body by those actions (taiḥ punaḥ deham ābhajate). How can the person with a body leading to death (kim martya-dharmināḥ) attain happiness in that body (tatra sukham)?

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1st type of violence

One type of disturbance is to kill other living beings for food.

2nd type of violence

Talking about others' misdeeds, criticizing others, quarrelling, scolding, bearing false witness, taking advantage at other's expense, violence, theft, spending others' money, beating others, lusting after others' wives—these are all actions to disturb others. The devotee avoids these.

When a person takes shelter of bhakti, mercy towards all living entities is a natural quality. (Proof Below)

|| 7.6.25 ||

tuṣṭe ca tatra kim alabhyam ananta ādye
kim tair guṇa-vyatikarād iha ye sva-siddhāḥ
dharmādayaḥ kim aguṇena ca kāṅkṣitena
sāraṁ juṣāṁ caraṇayor upagāyatām naḥ

What cannot be attained (tatra kim alabhyam) if the unlimited original Lord is satisfied (tuṣṭe ananta ādye)? Since we glorify (upagāyatām naḥ) and relish the lotus feet of the Lord (sāraṁ caranayoh juṣāṁ), what is the need (kim kāṅkṣitena) for dharma, artha and kāma (taih dharmādayaḥ) which are achieved automatically (ye sva-siddhāḥ) by the transformations of the guṇas (guṇa-vyatikarāt)? What is the need of liberation (kim aguṇena ca)?

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Compassion does not have a separate existence from bhakti.

The quality which, when offered to the Lord, is called bhakti or prema, becomes friendship, compassion and indifference when directed towards other living beings.

It is a feeling that is inherent in the eternal nature of the soul.

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In the spiritual realm, this quality manifests only as friendship but in the material world it manifests as friendship towards devotees, mercy towards the innocent and indifference towards the offenders.

These are but different aspects of the same compassion.

In the conditioned state this compassion is extremely stunted.

It starts with affection for the individual body, then widens to include attachment to household, then to varna, then to countrymen.

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Expanding, it includes the human beings of the whole world.

Compassion becomes complete when it is directed towards all living entities.

Patriotism is but an aspect of this sentiment in relation to a country

Philanthropy is compassion directed towards all humanity.

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Vaisnavas should not be limited by these sentiments.)

They have compassion for all living entities, not wanting to cause harm to any of them.

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Avoiding Offenses

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Vaisnavas should always be careful to avoid seva and nama aparadhas.

The seva aparadhas are of five types according to the Varaha and Padma Puranas: ① negligence in spite of ability; ② disrespect; ③ impurity; ④ lack of determination; and ⑤ pride. All the different offences mentioned in the scriptures that can be committed against the form of the Lord in the temple fall within these five types.

It is difficult to list all the offences, but those mentioned in the Varaha and Padma Puranas will be briefly described.

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Among the first type of offence are the following: ① Negligence in spite of ability

1. not holding regular festivals for the Deity, although there is money to do so;
2. worshiping the Lord with inferior items, although the ability is there to supply better;
3. not offering the seasonal fruits to the Lord;
4. coming before the Lord without offerings obeisances, prayers or verses of praise;
5. entering the Lord's temple without lighting any lamp.

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② Disrespect

Disrespectful offences are as follows:

1. entering the Deity room with shoes on or in a vehicle;
2. not paying respects to the Deity;
3. paying respects to the Deity using one hand;
4. pointing at the Deity with a finger;
5. circumambulating someone in front of the Deity;
6. spreading the feet before the Deity;
7. reciting prayers while sitting on a bed;
8. sleeping or eating before the Deity;

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Disrespectful offences are as follows:

9. speaking loudly before the deity;
10. gossiping with someone in front of the Deity;
11. criying because of material affairs, quarrelling, talking of others in front of the Lord;
12. passing air before the Lord;
13. giving part of an item to someone before offering it to the Lord;
14. sitting with ones back to the Deity;
15. addressing or greeting others before the Deity;
16. seeing the Deity at the wrong time.

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③ Impurity

Offences of impurity are as follows:

1. going to the temple with an unclean body;
2. to serve the Deity with clothing made of animal hair;
3. spitting while serving the Deity;
4. thinking of material things while serving the Deity.

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④ Lack of determination

Offences due to lack of determination are:

1. to drink water before worshipping the Lord;
2. to eat unoffered food or water;
3. not daily seeing the Lord and His worship;
4. not offering your favorite items, foods, and fruit to the Lord;
5. not observing Ekadasi vows.

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⑤ pride

In serving the Lord, devotees think of themselves as the Lord's humble servants.

Otherwise the devotees will praise themselves and think that they are the best worshippers.

To think oneself great, offering many items with great pomp, is also pride.

In serving the Lord, these five types of offences should be avoided.

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In serving the Lord, devotees think of themselves as the Lord's humble servants.

Otherwise the devotees will praise themselves and think that they are the best worshippers.

To think oneself great, offering many items with great pomp, is also pride.

In serving the Lord, these five types of offences should be avoided. The installer of the Deity, the pujari, and the general devotees as well must avoid them.