

Śrī Caitanya-Śikṣāmṛta

Nectarean Teachings of Lord Śrī
Caitanya

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Thākura

Chapter – 3
Vaidhi Bhakti

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**Avoiding obstacles in devotional
service**

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Vaidhi Bhakti

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Avoiding obstacles in devotional service

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Avoiding Offenses

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Part – 3 Avoiding obstacles in devotional service

The nama aparadhas are:

1. to criticize devotees;
2. to think that the devatas are independent of the Lord;
3. to disrespect the guru;
4. to criticize the Vedas and other scriptures;
5. to think the glorification of the Name an exaggeration;
6. to interpret the Name;
7. to commit sinful activity on the strength of the Name;
8. to think that the Name is like a pious activity;
9. to teach the Name to faithless people;
10. not to have attraction for the Name in spite of hearing its glories.

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① Criticizing devotees

Even in the scriptures of moral dharma, criticizing others is a sin.

The scriptures dealing with devotion, which is the essence of dharma, consider criticizing the devotee to be the most serious offence.

Those who commit this offence cannot advance in devotion, for they are without the association of devotees.

By criticizing the devotee, gradually devotion will decrease in the heart day by day, like the waning of the moon. (Mentioned in BRS)

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Although a person may be well -established in varnasrama dharma, without devotional association and with the commission of this offence, devotion will disappear from the heart.

It is often seen that by this offence people situated in varnasrama dharma gradually fall from their position and become atheistic moralists, and then finally become amoral, living like animals.

Due to offenses
SE dharmā → atheistic moral → atheistic immoral (animal)

Therefore this offence must be avoided.

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② ~~Do~~ Consider DGs to be independent of P

To think that the devatas are independent of the Lord, that they all have equality, is polytheism.

Such people are not devotees.

Understanding that Lord is one is the correct understanding.

Without this understanding a person is ignorant, an offender.

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In chanting the Lord's Name, the names of the devatas are included.

The devotee should understand that the devatas are all servants of the Lord.

Someone may object that Siva is the supreme and Visnu is his avatara, that Vishnu's Name is dependent on Siva's name.

Such arguments between different groups do not bear any good result.

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The real goal is to worship the Supreme Lord, and to that end it is necessary to stick to chanting the name of Visnu or Krsna.

The highest truth is without material qualities.

All the devatas, endowed with sattva, rajas and tamas, should be regarded as the servants of the Lord, but without being envious of them, the devotee should worship the Lord situated in pure sattva, beyond the modes of material nature.

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By giving up the path shown in the Vedas and other authorized scriptures and imagining other things, great disturbance will take place.

Those scriptures that indicate worship of devatas like Siva, Durga, Ganesa, Surya and Indra, think of that worship as a materialistic means (saguna) to attain the pure (nirguna) realization of impersonal Brahman. (ye 'py anya devata bhakta....avidhi purvakam)

In the Vaisnava scriptures, the Lord is defined as the highest form endowed with eternity, knowledge and bliss.

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The Vaisnava does not serve the Lord to attain impersonal Brahman.

Therefore it is improper to think that the imaginary forms of devatas (being material and therefore temporary) are the same as the highest truth.

If a person then tries to argue that the devatas are eternal spiritual forms, the philosophies of both advaita and bhakti disappear.

Therefore the wise person maintains that the devatas are devotees of the Lord, or gunavataras, and does not change the meaning of scripture.

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Otherwise there will be an offence against the Lord, the eternally perfect form.

③ Disrespecting GURU

Disrespect to the guru is a serious offence.

Without faith in the guru there can be no faith in his instructions.

Without faith, there can be no devotional activities.

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Thus a devotee must have unshakable faith in the diksa and siksa guru

Those who have a strong tendency to surpass the guru commit this offence and cannot develop attachment to the Lord.

④ DISRESPECT THE SCRIPTURES

The four Vedas (Rg, Sama, Yajur and Atharva), the Puranas, Mahabharata, the twenty dharma sastras, and the Pancaratras, all glorify the chanting of the name of the Lord and devotional service.

These are considered the real scriptures.

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By criticizing them, there can be no advancement in devotion.

People who do not respect the scriptures and concoct a new form of worship become a burden on the world. (Bhakti Sandharba 312 and also Sruti smrti puranadi.....)

Looking at the philosophies of (theosophy, brahma samaj, Buddhism and Dattatreya, this becomes apparent.)

The essence is that there is one means to attain the end.

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This is seen everywhere.

In (different countries), (with different languages) and (different customs), the practice may differ a little but the essence is one.

With an analytical eye, one will not see difference.

The Vedic scriptures are eternal. The methods given there are also eternal.

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The methods given in the works following the authority of the Vedas are approved methods.

If a person out of pride wants to invent a new process, and offers some new philosophy, it can only be judged as a manifestation of pride and imagination, with no substance.

It will act as an obstacle to development of that person's devotion.

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⑤ To think of the stories of chanting to be an imagination (or) exaggeration.

There are many pious activities that do not bear permanent results, but these results are glorified to encourage people with material propensities.

By glorification of the result, people are encouraged to perform pious activity.

Many unfortunate people say that the glorification of the holy name is similar to the empty glorification of pious activities.

But the results of chanting the Name are actual and eternal, and the scriptures cannot even enumerate the many results of chanting.

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There are many directives to worship the Lord, but the essence of the worship is chanting the Name.

Those who think that the glories of chanting given in the scriptures are simply exaggerated praises are offenders.

⑥ Give some interpretation to the HN

To speculate whimsically about the meaning of the Name is an offence.

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Hari means the personal form of Krsna, endowed with eternity, knowledge and bliss, but a person who cannot understand that Krsna has as beautiful form will think that Hari indicates impersonal Brahman.

For fear that "hari" may indicate Krsna, some people add extra words to "hari" such as "nirakara". This is interpreting the name.

Those who commit this offence become cold-hearted and gradually become devoid of rasa.

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If a person dares to commit sin thinking that the power of the Name will nullify the reactions, they commit grave offence.

Sin and attraction to material pleasure are extinguished along with the development of attraction for the Lord.

When devotees take shelter of the Name, naturally they will not have a taste for sinful activities.

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But if someone always chants the Name and secretly commits sins, it is cheating of the worst type.

Such a person, while committing sin, will think that by later chanting the Name they will cancel the effect of the sin.

The devotee should take shelter of the Name, being free from this offence.

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There are many pious activities such as sacrifices, austerities, yoga, and study of the Vedas, following the rules of varnasrama dharma, and serving guests.

Those engrossed in materialism will think that the chanting of the Name is on the same level as these pious activities. This is a great offence.

There is a great difference between pious actions that yield temporary material results and the chanting of the Name that brings eternal bliss.

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Those who are atheistic or extremely entangled with moral rules or duties of karma cannot take up chanting the Name unless they first purify their hearts.

To give such unqualified and faithless people the teachings of the Name is as useless as sowing seeds on barren ground.

Those who give out the Name motivated by receiving substantial donations are selling the Name.

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They reduce the priceless jewel to nothing in exchange for insignificant trinkets, and fall from the path of devotion.

Persons are unfortunate if, even after hearing the glories of the Name, the sense of possessiveness and attachment is so strong that they do not develop an attachment for the Name.

Such a person is in a hopeless position and is considered an offender.

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Being free from these ten offences, devotees should perform their worship.

They should not consent to or assist in criticism of the Lord or His devotee.

If devotees hear such words, they should, if possible, counter them.

If they hear such words from their own guru, then they should humbly warn him.

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If the guru becomes a hater of Vaisnavas, they should reject him and take shelter of a real guru (**Bhakti Sandharba**).

Giving up the ten detrimental activities, the vaidha bhaktas carefully tend to their development of their devotion through the five types of cultivation. (**through body, mind, soul, matter and society**)