

Hari-Nāma-Cintāmaṇi

The Touchstone of the Holy- Name

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Chapter – 5

Worshiping the Demigods as Independent of Kṛṣṇa

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jaya gadādhara-prāṇa jāhnavā-jīvana
jaya sītānātha jaya gaura-bhakta-gaṇa

- Haridāsa spoke with folded hands, "Now hear about the second offense, O Lord of the universe.
- First he clarified the position of Viṣṇu. “
- Viṣṇu is the supreme principle, not subject to the duality of the material world.
- He is a form full of consciousness and knowledge, existing eternally beyond the modes of material nature, although being the absolute controller of the material world.

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- Kṛṣṇa in Goloka is the original and supreme Viṣṇu form, being ornamented with sixty-four transcendental qualities to enhance His blissful activities by which He performs His activities.
- The puruṣa-avatāras and other plenary avatāras all possess these sixty qualities in order to carry out their function.
- "Kṛṣṇa expands as two types of conscious particles.
- The first is the ordinary jīva, who has fifty qualities to some degree.
- The second are the demigods, who have the same fifty qualities but to a greater degree.
- In addition, Śiva possesses five more qualities.

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- In addition, Śiva possesses five more qualities.
- Viṣṇu has all these qualities plus five more which are not found in other living entities.
- In this way we can see that Viṣṇu or Nārāyaṇa, with sixty qualities, is the Lord, and Śiva and the demigods are His servants.
- Greater than the ordinary jīvas are the demigods and Śiva, and greater than Śiva is Viṣṇu, who is the Lord of the jīvas and the Lord of the demigods.
- Therefore, whoever considers Viṣṇu on the same level as the demigods is very ignorant.

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- "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 Nārāyaṇa 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.

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- 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 Viṣṇu 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.

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- If the materialists can understand this truth, they will take to Viṣṇu worship and achieve all results.
- "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 saṁskāras from insemination to funeral rites, Kṛṣṇa should be worshiped, using appropriate mantras from the Vedas.
- One should worship the Vaiṣṇavas 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.

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- 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 Vaiṣṇava 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.

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- "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.
- "The question may arise why one should follow the varṇāśrama system at all.
- The answer is that everyone who has taken a human birth must follow this system.

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- By this scientific arrangement of society, the general masses of people can attain to their full capacity according to their individual nature and gradually attain devotion to Kṛṣṇa.
- Those outside the varṇāśrama system should be made to give up all bad habits and begin practicing as śūdras.
- This must be the path for civilized society to carry on life.
- "The worship of Kṛṣṇa is an essential part of the varṇāśrama system.
- If the four varṇas carry out life according to the rules of their particular caste but do not worship Kṛṣṇa, then they simply go to hell.

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- Particularly the gṛhastha must follow the rules of his varṇa in performing his worldly activities of raising family and relating with the rest of society, but at the same time, according to his means, he must worship Kṛṣṇa.
- And he must respect and follow these rules as long as he has not come to the platform where the rules hamper his progress in worshiping Kṛṣṇa.
- This is the platform technically known as bhāva.
- In that state the jīva develops sādhana bhakti, in which the inspiration to perform devotional activities comes directly from the taste experienced by the pure jīva.
- This goal will eventually be achieved by the gṛhastha Vaiṣṇava who accepts Viṣṇu as supreme.

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- "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.

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- 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.

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- 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.

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- "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.

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- By rejecting the lotus feet of Viṣṇu, who is worshiped by the higher beings or 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.

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- 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.
- "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.

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- 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.

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- 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.

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- "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."

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- Haridāsa concluded, "One should avoid association with those who worship demigods as supreme and rather worship the Vaiṣṇavas, who take Kṛṣṇa as the supreme. In this way, one can avoid the second offense."
- For one who performs his devotions at the feet of Haridāsa, the touchstone of the holy name, the name becomes his very life and soul.