

Hari-Nāma-Cintāmaṇi

The Touchstone of the Holy- Name

by Śrīla Saccidānanda
Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura

Chapter – 6

Disregarding the Guru

Chapter – 6 Disregarding the Guru

pañca-tattva jaya jaya śrī rādhā-mādhava
jaya navadvīpa-vraja-yamunā-vaiṣṇava

- Haridāsa said, "O Lord, now I will tell you how the third offense occurs. According to Your order, I will describe in detail all the offenses that occur from disobeying the guru.
- "Having wandered from one body to another in 8,400,000 species of life, through unintentional pious activity the jīva obtains a human body.
- The human body is a rare opportunity because only in this form can the living entity perform devotional service properly.
- As a demigod, one has the tendency to enjoy, and as a lower animal, one has no capacity for knowledge.

Chapter – 6 Disregarding the Guru

- But in the human form the living entity can progress back to his constitutional position with Kṛṣṇa.
- Therefore if one does not take care to attain Kṛṣṇa in this temporary body, one will die and obtain some other body, losing the opportunity to escape from the material prison.
- The intelligent person, having attained a human birth in this world, will take shelter of a spiritual master who will act as a captain to guide the jīva over the ocean of material nature with the instructions of bhakti-yoga.
- This is the importance of the guru.

Chapter – 6 Disregarding the Guru

- "One should approach the qualified guru, that person who is a devotee of Kṛṣṇa and has conquered over the senses, and inquire submissively from him.
- Being satisfied with his answers, the jīva takes initiation from him and thus crosses over the material ocean.
- Having attraction for Kṛṣṇa, he will give up useless material logic, take shelter of higher knowledge and receive mantra initiation from the spiritual master.
- "One who is a gṛhastha should accept a guru but remain in his duties of varṇāśrāma.
- If a brāhmaṇa is a Kṛṣṇa devotee, he can serve as a guru for the varṇas; but if there is no suitable person of brāhmaṇa birth, one can receive initiation from a guru of another varṇa.

Chapter – 6 Disregarding the Guru

- If there is a choice, the gr̥hastha should choose the bona fide guru of higher caste.
- But in any case the main qualification by which to judge who is suitable bona fide guru is how much the guru knows about Kṛṣṇa.
- He may be brāhmaṇa or śūdra, householder or sannyāsī, but this makes no difference in the guru's ability to deliver the jīva.
- This should be the main consideration in choosing a guru, if one desires to progress to pure attraction for Kṛṣṇa.
- In other words, if there is a qualified guru of high caste, there is no necessity of seeking a guru of a lower caste; but if the high caste guru is not qualified as a Kṛṣṇa bhakta, one should not take dīkṣā from him on the basis of his high caste alone.

Chapter – 6 Disregarding the Guru

- "In the case of a householder who cannot find proper spiritual life in the gṛhastha āśrāma, he should take a bona fide guru who is not a householder.
- In other words, if one renounces household life and is seeking spiritual guidance, one should take shelter of an ācārya who has successfully renounced household life and receive dīkṣā and śikṣā from him in order to reach the desired goal of prema.
- But if the householder had a qualified guru previously, that previous guru should not be disrespected or rejected.
- He should be honored always.

Chapter – 6 Disregarding the Guru

- "The householder may take a guru who is either a householder or renounced. Either is suitable.
- Accepting guru and performing sādhana-bhakti, the householder will eventually achieve the stage of bhāva, at which time his attraction for family life and sense gratification will cease.
- At that stage he will naturally give up household life and enter the renounced order.
- This person should seek out an ācārya in the renounced order and take his instruction.
- "Guru may be of two types: one who gives dīkṣā with mantra and one who gives spiritual instruction.

Chapter – 6 Disregarding the Guru

- They should be considered equal in importance by one who wants to advance quickly.
- A person can accept only one dīkṣā guru, but may have many śikṣā gurus, who give sambandha-jñāna.
- "The sambandha-jñāna or teachings are handed down in a sampradāya from the founder-ācārya of the sampradāya.
- These original teachings and the founder-ācārya of the sampradāya should be worshiped with all respect.
- One should be loyal to his conclusions and instructions, not taking teachings from others.

Chapter – 6 Disregarding the Guru

- One should take as śikṣā guru only a person who is following faithfully the teachings of that founder-ācārya.
- To take initiation or teachings from a māyāvādī is useless.
- "Whoever takes or accepts such unauthorized teachings simply goes to hell.
- Rejecting Kṛṣṇa and learning anti-Kṛṣṇa philosophy can only lead to ruination of one's life.
- How can a person be guru and deliver others, not having achieved or being able to achieve perfection himself?

Chapter – 6 Disregarding the Guru

- "Thus guru, whether śikṣā or dīkṣā, must be the servant of Kṛṣṇa, and an associate of the Lord eternally in Vṛndāvana, who has been especially empowered by Kṛṣṇa.
- One should serve the guru with great devotion, knowing Him to be directly empowered by Kṛṣṇa, the dearest servant of Kṛṣṇa, and one's own eternal spiritual guide.
- By such sincere service to the guru one can cross over the material ocean.
- "What is the procedure for worshiping the guru?"
- First one should worship the guru (offering pādya, arghya, etc.), then, taking his permission, worship the Lord.

Chapter – 6 Disregarding the Guru

- Then one should offer Kṛṣṇa's prasāda to the guru, the Vaiṣṇavas, the demigods and the forefathers.
- With the guru in mind, one should worship Kṛṣṇa, and with the guru in mind, one should chant Kṛṣṇa's name.
- "Consequently, if one disobeys or disrespects the guru, that is offensive, and will block one's progress in bhakti.
- As in the case of showing proper respect and devotion to the sādhu and to Kṛṣṇa, similarly, by properly serving the guru and chanting the holy name one can get quick success.
- Having firm faith in the guru, one can, by the strength of the pure name, attain the goal of prema.

Chapter – 6 Disregarding the Guru

- "When should a guru be rejected?"
- It may happen that through asat-saṅga a guru may lose his qualifications.
- Starting as a big guru, by committing nama-aparādha he loses his knowledge.
- By offending other Vaiṣṇavas he loses the taste for the name and gradually falls under the control of wealth and women.
- Such a guru should be rejected.
- By the mercy of Kṛṣṇa, that disciple will obtain a new bona fide guru and take up pure chanting of the name again.

Chapter – 6 Disregarding the Guru

- "If a guru takes unsuitable people for disciples, he will have to suffer for that, and if a disciple takes an unqualified guru, he will accordingly suffer.
- In order to avoid these misfortunes, one should be cautious.
- On the other hand, as long as both guru and disciple are properly qualified, the relationship will continue.
- Ideally, this relationship is eternal, but if the disciple becomes bad, the guru must reject him, and if the guru becomes bad, the disciple must reject him.
- Otherwise both may fall; better one than both.

Chapter – 6 Disregarding the Guru

- "In order to prevent the pain of having to reject one's guru, one should first carefully examine him to see if he is a pure devotee of Kṛṣṇa.
- Even in receiving a material article, one examines it for quality.
- Once having accepted a qualified guru, if one disobeys his instruction, one commits a grave offense. By that even the demigods can fall down to hell.
- "How should the guru be respected?"
- The guru's bed and seat, his shoes, car, water from washing his feet, and his image should be respected.

Chapter – 6 Disregarding the Guru

- If one fails to respect them or worships someone else as guru in the guru's presence, that is devious mentality, trying to minimize the bona fide guru.
- One should regard the guru as one's lord and master, obey his words and instructions, and when seeing him, fall flat on the ground.
- One should loudly glorify the guru, never disobey his order, take his prasāda remnants, and not discuss anything that the guru dislikes.
- Surrendering oneself humbly at the guru's feet, one should act so that he is pleased.
- If one acts in this way, and performs Kṛṣṇa nāma-saṅkīrtana, one will gain all perfections. That is the statement of the Vedas.

Chapter – 6 Disregarding the Guru

- "The guru will give proper teachings concerning the holy name, and after having established faith in the holy name in a person's heart, he will formally give him the name of Kṛṣṇa or a mantra containing the name of Kṛṣṇa to chant as his sādhana. This is dīkṣā.
- If by bad association or contact with bogus literature one happens to reject or disrespect such a bona fide nāma-dīkṣā-guru, one should immediately give up the bad association and literature and in sorrow approach the feet of one's guru.
- Being all-merciful, the guru will reinstate him, and by again chanting sincerely, he will attain prema.“
- That person who, thinking himself lower than a blade of grass, aspires for the dust from the feet of Haridāsa Nāmācārya, will be qualified to sing always the touchstone of the holy name.