

Śuddha-bhakti Cintāmaṇi

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Chapter 10- Regulative Devotional Service

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- Chapter nine discussed the three divisions of pure devotional service—sādhana-, bhāva-, and prema-bhakti—along with their characteristics.
- This chapter discusses devotional service in practice (sādhana-bhakti) in greater depth.
- Devotional service in practice has two divisions: regulative (vaidhī) and spontaneous (rāgānugā). [Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā 22.108]
- The basic difference between the two has to do with what impels their practitioners to perform devotional service.
- The impetus for regulative service is faith in and sometimes fear of the consequences of disobeying scripture, and for spontaneous devotion a natural and intense longing for Kṛṣṇa's service (lobha).

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- Which path devotees adopt depends on their qualification.
- As Śrīla Prabhupāda writes, “Spontaneous service is not artificial.” [Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā 22.109, purport]
- Only with the guidance of the spiritual master and senior Vaiṣṇavas can practising devotees know the level of their own qualification.
- It is generally understood, however, that because very few devotees are initially fit for spontaneous devotion, most practising devotees begin by following the path of regulative devotion.
- Why are so few devotees initially qualified for spontaneous devotion?
- Neophyte and even intermediate devotees rarely have genuine greed.

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- For this reason Caitanya Mahāprabhu’s followers advise devotees without true greed to practise regulative devotion.
- The external activities of both regulative and spontaneous devotional service are the same, and thus this study of sādhana-bhakti will stay within the context of regulative devotional service.
- Books such as Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu, and Jaiva-dharma use this authorized process in order to discuss the details of bhakti.
- It is a common misunderstanding among devotees that spontaneous devotional service appears only at the stage of ecstatic devotion and is thus a practice only for liberated souls.
- But Rūpa Gosvāmī’s twofold division of devotional service in practice reveals that this assumption is incorrect.

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- There are good reasons, however, why neophytes have been discouraged from practising spontaneous devotion, reasons this book will discuss later.
- For now, the reader should remember that in Lord Caitanya's teachings spontaneous devotion is one of two aspects of sādhana-bhakti and the sole aspect of bhāva- and prema-bhakti.
- Devotees are often confused about the role regulative devotional service plays in Caitanya Mahaprabhu saṅkīrtana mission, the mission meant to bless souls with the spontaneous devotion experienced by the Vraja-vāsīs.
- Sometimes neophytes reject regulative devotional service and artificially take up the practices of spontaneous service, creating havoc in ISKCON and in their own spiritual lives.

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- Other times, devotees reject vraja-bhakti, hoping that by their regulative practices they will attain one of the innumerable Vaikuṅṭha planets.
- Both these types of devotees support their behaviour by citing the following verse from Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta,

**aiśvarya-jñāne vidhi-bhajana kariyā
vaikuṅṭhake yāya catur-vidha mukti pāñā**

- “By performing such regulated devotional service in awe and veneration, one may go to Vaikuṅṭha and attain the four kinds of liberation.” (Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Ādi-līlā 3.17)
- This verse appears in the section of Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta that describes Kṛṣṇa’s expansions and the external reasons for the Lord’s descent.

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- The destination and types of liberation mentioned here appear inconsistent with Caitanya Mahāprabhu’s ultimate mission,
- which is to return to Goloka Vṛndāvana by imbibing the service mood of the Vraja-vāsīs.
- When devotees read this verse, therefore, they either reject regulative practice, thinking it irrelevant to vraja-bhakti, or they think that vraja-bhakti is for others, not for those who tread the path of regulative service.
- It is important, therefore, to reconcile how Lord Caitanya’s followers can go to Goloka Vṛndāvana by practising regulative devotional service.
- The essence of the solution lies in the proper understanding of the mood with which devotees of Lord Caitanya take up regulative devotional service.

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- That mood has two aspects: The first is that Śyāmasundara of Vṛndāvana is the devotees' worshipable Deity (iṣṭa-deva); they do not worship any other form of Godhead.
- The second is faith that following the loving mood of the inhabitants of Vṛndāvana is the way to achieve Śyāmasundara. [This mood is expressed in the verse of Caitanya-maṣjuṣā beginning with ārādhyo bhagavān vrajeśa-tanayas tad-dhāma vṛndāvanam...]
- Regulative practice with these two points in mind leads to spontaneous practice and to Vraja.
- Śrīla Prabhupāda states that devotional service performed under the regulative principles helps devotees rise to the stage of rāga-bhakti. [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 3.5.4, purport]

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- Externally the regulative devotion of Lord Caitanya’s followers may bear the same name and appearance as Vaikuṅṭha vaidhī bhakti, but the two are set apart by contrasting moods and goals.
- Śrīla Prabhupāda, who set his followers on the path of regulative devotion, confirms the above conclusions.
- “Regarding your second question: what determines whether a devotee goes to a Vaikuntha planet or to Goloka Vrindavana?”
- Those devotees who are following vidhi-marga are meant for going to Vaikuntha planets and those who are following raga-marga are meant for going to Krishnaloka.
- It is generally accepted that the followers of Lord Caitanya are going to Goloka Vrindavana.” [Letter to Tamal Krishna, Los Angeles, 21 June, 1970]

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- Devotees often question the role Vaikuṅṭha devotees have in the saṅkīrtana movement. What is their destination?
- What is their relationship with Kṛṣṇa, with Lord Caitanya, and with their iṣṭa-deva, one of the Lord’s worshipable expansions?
- Detailed answers to these questions appear in later chapters of this work.
- For now suffice it to say that all devotees, even those who feel attraction to forms of Godhead other than Śyāmasundara, should wholeheartedly serve Lord Caitanya’s mission and practise the same sādhana as all of Gaurāṅga’s followers.
- In turn, the Lord will reciprocate with their service and their inner desires.
- By worshipping Śyāmasundara Kṛṣṇa, these devotees will come to see their worshipable Lord in Vaikuṅṭha.

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- Devotees confused about this issue often cite Murāri Gupta as an example of a devotee of Lord Caitanya encouraged to worship Lord Rāmacandra. [Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā 15.137–57]
- These devotees should note that Lord Caitanya encouraged Murāri to follow the above principle; that is, to worship Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa while remaining faithful to Lord Rāma.
- In this regard, Locana Dāsa Ṭhākura narrates: “Then Lord Gaura mercifully said to Murāri, ‘Please do not know anything but devotion to Me.
- If that is your desire, I will be Lord Rāmacandra to you.
- I will be Lord Rāmacandra, and you will taste the nectar of service to Me.

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- Still, in this saṅkīrtana movement you must chant the glories of Śrī Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. In this way please render devotional service to Me.
- Please hear these words with all your heart.” [Śrī Caitanya-maṅgala, Madhya-khaṇḍa, Nityānanda-milana 11, verses 11.15–17]
- To conclude the topic of how ISKCON’s members should practise devotional service: They should neither reject the path of vraja-bhakti nor take it up prematurely.
- Unless they genuinely desire vaikunṭha-bhakti, their patient fidelity to the regulative principles of devotional service will, in good time, mature into the spontaneous service of the Vraja-vāsīs.
- The impetus for regulative practice is faith in the scriptures and the fear that by transgressing scriptural injunctions one will commit sin and thus suffer.

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- To make this point to all four social orders of life and their spiritual counterparts,
- the four āśramas, Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam states:

ya eṣāṁ puruṣaṁ sākṣād
ātma-prabhavam īśvaram
na bhajanty avajānanti
sthānād bhraṣṭāḥ patanty adhaḥ

- “If any of the members of the four varṇas and four āśramas fail to worship, or if they intentionally disrespect, the Personality of Godhead, who is the source of their own creation, they will fall down from their position into a hellish state of life.” (Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 11.5.3)

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- This verse, spoken by Nārada, is more than just a sober warning to worship Kṛṣṇa; it is a synthesis of the purpose behind the rules and regulations of the Vedas that govern the varṇāśrama social system.
- In essence it instructs all living entities to conduct their lives according to the will of the Supreme Lord.
- By remembering His instructions, they invariably remember Him.
- And by remembering Him faithfully and favourably they serve the purpose of those instructions.
- Practising devotees, by definition, feel great concern for scriptural injunctions, because for them following such injunctions is their means to approach Kṛṣṇa.

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- However, the numerous recommendations (vidhi) and prohibitions (niṣedha) of the Vedic injunctions sometimes appear contradictory and can become a source of bewilderment.
- Thus the ācāryas, quoting the famous Padma Purāṇa verse, offer devotees a simple guideline for practising sādhana and as a means to resolve conflicting views:

smartavyaḥ satataṁ viṣṇur
vismartavyo na jātucit
sarve vidhi-niṣedhāḥ syur
etayor eva kiṅkarāḥ

- “Kṛṣṇa is the origin of Lord Viṣṇu. He should always be remembered and never forgotten at any time. All the rules and prohibitions mentioned in the śāstras should be the servants of these two principles.” (Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā 22.113)

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- This brilliant statement simplifies the many confusing and sometimes contradictory statements of scripture into one rule and one prohibition: always remember Kṛṣṇa and never forget Him.
- By adhering to these two injunctions, alert devotees can perfectly fulfil all their duties.
- But if devotees are not alert, they will forget Kṛṣṇa and fall from their positions, even if they perfectly execute all their varṇāśrama duties.
- Mundane or blind obedience offers no spiritual benefit.
- How can one always think of Kṛṣṇa?
- It is natural for a person in love to always be absorbed in thoughts of his or her beloved.

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- Similarly, advanced devotees approaching the stage of ecstatic devotion constantly think about Kṛṣṇa, their beloved. This is the perfection of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.
- However, devotees in the early stages of regulative devotional service are not so advanced.
- They cannot always remember Kṛṣṇa.
- Their bad habits influence and distract them, and therefore their affection for the Lord is less mature and therefore less intense.
- For this reason, Rūpa Gosvāmī in Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu and Sanātana Gosvāmī in Hari-bhakti-vilāsa have compiled basic rules of devotion to help practising devotees (sādhakas) fix their minds on Kṛṣṇa.

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- Rūpa Gosvāmī says that he selected sixty-four prominent rules of devotional service from Hari-bhakti-vilāsa, [Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu 1.2.72–74] so pure devotees generally follow the items he listed.
- Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda mentions that Śrī Rūpa’s sixty-four items come from similar instructions Kṛṣṇa gave Uddhava. [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 11.19.20–24]
- Among the sixty-four items, some are engagements for the body, some for the senses, and some for the mind.
- Thus, regulative devotional service in practice is the method of engaging the body, mind, and senses in Kṛṣṇa’s service.
- Some devotees reach perfection by practising only one of the sixty-four items, and others by practising more than one.

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- The end result of fully executing each activity, however, is constant remembrance of Kṛṣṇa.
- Śrīla Prabhupāda was a master at engaging his disciples—and indeed the whole world—in fixing the mind on Kṛṣṇa, and he did so in a way that simultaneously fulfilled Caitanya Mahāprabhu’s saṅkīrtana mission.
- Two examples of Śrīla Prabhupāda’s genius at engaging others are book distribution and the enrolment of life members.
- Śrīla Prabhupāda writes, “When one goes with a saṅkīrtana party, or to sell books, he naturally thinks that he is going to sell Kṛṣṇa’s books.
- In this way he is remembering Kṛṣṇa.” [Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā 22.113, purport]

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- Śrīla Prabhupāda does not restrict his concept of remembering Kṛṣṇa to meditating only on Kṛṣṇa's form or pastimes.
- For His Divine Grace, full engagement in Kṛṣṇa's service, especially in speaking about Him, is the means of remembrance most suited to Vaiṣṇavas of every caliber.
- Young men and women especially can dovetail their exuberance with this noble cause.
- By so doing they purify their hearts and acquire the ability to think of Kṛṣṇa at will.
- In this way Śrīla Prabhupāda marries preaching with regulative devotional practice.
- He thus engages his followers in the topmost religious principle, remembering Kṛṣṇa.

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- Devotees interested in a detailed description of the sixty-four items of devotional service should consult The Nectar of Devotion. [The Nectar of Devotion, chapter 6–14]
- The first twenty items of devotional service Rūpa Gosvāmī gives are of prime importance, comprising ten do's and ten do not's.
- The list of do's forms the foundation of regulative devotional service, and their strict observance assures rapid advancement in Kṛṣṇa consciousness.
- Śrīla Prabhupāda writes, “Success is sure for the rigid practitioner.” [Bhagavad-gītā As It Is 6.24, purport]
- Avoiding the do not's removes obstacles to advancement.

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- Śrīla Prabhupāda adds that the first three items are most essential: accepting the shelter of a bona fide spiritual master (guru-pādāśraya), taking initiation from him (śrī-kṛṣṇa-dīkṣādi-śikṣaṇam), and serving him with respect and reverence (visrambheṇa guroḥ sevā).
- The remaining forty-four items include thirty-nine secondary items and five very special ones, which Rūpa Gosvāmī lists twice to stress their complete superiority.
- They are:

sādhu-saṅga, nāma-kīrtana, bhāgavata-śravaṇa
mathurā-vāsa, śrī-mūrtira śraddhāya sevana

- “One should associate with devotees, chant the holy name of the Lord, hear Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, reside at Mathurā, and worship the deity with faith and veneration.” (Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā 22.128)

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- It is difficult to understand the wonderful potency of these five items of devotional service.
- A slight connection with any of them, even when one has no faith, can awaken a person's dormant love of God.
- Regarding deity worship, for example, Rūpa Gosvāmī warns his readers that if they unknowingly behold the deity of Govindajī, they will be overwhelmed by ecstasy and will abandon worldly pursuits: “My dear friend, if you are indeed attached to your worldly friends, do not look at the smiling face of Lord Govinda as He stands on the bank of the Yamunā at Keṣī-ghāṭa.
- Casting sidelong glances, He places His flute to His lips, which seem like newly blossomed twigs.

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- His transcendental body, bending in three places, appears very bright in the moonlight.” [Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu 1.2.239]
- The reader may wonder why Rūpa Gosvāmī does not mention faith in this last statement glorifying the deity of Kṛṣṇa.
- This book, Śuddha-bhakti-cintāmaṇi, places so much stress on the importance of faith.
- Is Śrī Rūpa now saying that faith is not required for those wishing to quickly arouse ecstasy and love?
- Yes, that is precisely what he is saying.
- Kṛṣṇa is so powerful that contact with Him, even without faith, elevates anyone who merely looks at Him.

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- But Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī's conclusion should not be misconstrued as a recommendation for faithless practice; rather, he is praising the potency of devotional service. [Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu 1.2.238]
- It may be true that on rare occasions a person without faith comes to the stage of ecstasy.
- But the prerequisite for receiving such special mercy is that the person must be completely free from offence.
- Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura comments that persons whose hearts and minds are purified of the slightest traces of offence may acquire rati and prema without developing faith. [See Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura's commentary on Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu 1.2.238]

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- In this way, even without the standard prerequisite of faith, devotees sometimes quickly attain perfection.
- Of course, when ecstatic devotion does appear, it infuses devotees with deep, matchless faith.
- Therefore in the end no devotee is without faith.
- As superexcellent as the five special limbs of devotion are, the manifestation of their glory is tempered in Kali-yuga by the practical reality of peoples' offensive nature.
- People in this age, almost without exception, are unfortunate. [The unfortunate condition of the people of this age is described in Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 1.1.10]

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- Therefore they cannot always receive the immediate benefits offered by these five amazing items of devotional service.
- To taste the bliss of loving devotion, then, they must acquire faith and progressively develop that faith by advancing through the stages of devotional service in practice.
- So to answer the reader's question, while for a very exceptional person who is free of offence faith is not always a prerequisite for loving devotion, common people devoid of such purity must acquire faith to systematically attain life's ultimate goal.
- These five peerless limbs of devotion also contain within them the nine limbs of devotional service (navāṅga-bhakti) described by Prahlāda Mahārāja. [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 7.5.23–24]

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- Nāma-kīrtana, for instance, contains chanting, hearing, and remembering.
- Rūpa Gosvāmī mentions these nine items immediately after the first twenty.
- Once established in devotional service, devotees must first perform these nine positive actions.
- Whether grouped in five or nine, any one these practices can enable a devotee to achieve perfection.
- Parīkṣit Mahārāja achieved perfection by hearing, Arjuna by being Kṛṣṇa's friend, and devotees who practise all items simultaneously achieve success in the wake of Mahārāja Ambarīṣa. [Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu (1.2.265) describes which great devotees perfected the nine limbs of devotion]
- Śrīla Prabhupāda made these items of devotion the cornerstone of ISKCON.

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- The morning and evening programmes are tailored to enable devotees to chant japa, engage in kīrtana, worship the deity, and hear class on Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam and Bhagavad-gītā.
- One who strictly follows Śrīla Prabhupāda’s programme automatically does all these things in the company of devotees, the ingredient constantly stressed by all Vaiṣṇava ācāryas as most important.
- Then there are daily (nitya) engagements such as hari-nāma, book distribution, and temple maintenance, and occasional (naimi-ttika) engagements such as putting on festivals, visiting holy places, and receiving visiting devotees.
- All in all, ISKCON devotees, have ample opportunities to purify themselves, whether they live in the temple or in their own homes.

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- They need only put into practice Śrīla Prabhupāda’s perfect programme for Kṛṣṇa consciousness.
- That programme embraces the essence of engagement in devotional activities: *tasmāt kenāpy upāyena manaḥ kṛṣṇe niveśayet*, “Somehow or another one must fix the mind on Kṛṣṇa.” [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 7.1.32]
- What if a devotee cannot perform all these items of devotional service and must select one?
- A devotee can complete all nine limbs of devotional service described in the Bhāgavatam by practising the five stressed by Rūpa Gosvāmī.
- Of those five, three are foremost: associating with devotees, chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa, and hearing Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam.

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- Of these three, the first two are indispensable.
- But if circumstances force devotees to choose only one, they should select the chanting of the Lord’s holy names.
- Chanting the holy names is the most powerful spiritual practice.
- By chanting, a devotee automatically performs all other limbs of devotional service.
- In his Krama-sandarbha commentary on Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, Jīva Gosvāmī comments on Prahlāda Mahārāja’s description of the ninefold practice of devotional service:

yadyanyā bhaktiḥ kalau kartavyā tadā kīrtanākhyā-bhakti-saṁyogenaiva ity uktam. yajñaiḥ saṅkīrtana-prāyair yajanti hi sumedhasa iti. tatra ca svatantram eva nāma-kīrtanam atyanta-praśastam.

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- The essence of this statement is that in the Age of Kali kīrtana must accompany the other eight branches of bhakti.
- In other words, kīrtana is not an option for one who wants to advance in devotional service.
- Śrī Jīva goes on to cite Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, the emperor of all scriptures, and concludes that from the Bhāgavatam's objective point of view, nāma-saṅkīrtana is the best of all devotional processes. [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 11.5.32]
- Why, then, is hearing (śravaṇa) the first item on the list, and why is it frequently emphasized as the most important limb of devotional service?
- It is true that revealed scriptures and their commentaries often make such statements about hearing, but they do so along with constant glorification of saṅkīrtana as the best limb of devotion.

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- Śrīla Prabhupāda explains, “These are nine processes of devotional service, of which śravaṇa, hearing, is most important.
- Without hearing, nobody can understand the science of God.” [Festival lecture, Montreal, 16 August, 1968]
- Here Śrīla Prabhupāda stresses hearing as most important because it is the only way to acquire knowledge, even about chanting.
- Therefore, when considering the sequence of devotional activities, hearing must come first, and in that sense hearing is most important.
- But once a person has heard about the science of God, of all the nine limbs of devotion, chanting is the most important.

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- It is the most effective process for purifying the heart and achieving life’s ultimate goal.
- Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam calls chanting the “most auspicious activity” and the “one good quality” of this age. [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 6.3.31 and 12.3.51]
- And of all the ways to chant the Lord’s glories—including the recitation of the Vedas and Purāṇas, speaking one’s own narrations of the pastimes of the Lord, singing devotional songs, and offering prayers—chanting the Lord’s holy names (nāma-saṅkīrtana) is foremost because it can at once independently awaken love of God in the heart. [Śrī Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta 2.3.158, commentary]
- We should note that while devotees chant the Lord’s holy names and glories they automatically hear the name.

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- That hearing is contained in the process of chanting again confirms the foremost position of chanting.
- Both chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa in private [japa] and chanting loudly in public [kīrtana] must be performed.
- Both aloud chanting of japa and public kīrtana are parts of saṅkīrtana.
- Jīva Gosvāmī writes, bahubhir militvā kīrtanaṁ saṅkīrtanam, “When many [devotees] are assembled together to enjoy chanting the Lord’s glories, such chanting is called saṅkīrtana.” [Quoted in Śrī Amnāya-sūtra 62]
- Why do the ācāryas stress chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa in public?
- When devotees chant to themselves, they are benefited, but when they chant in public, many others are benefited.

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- When many devotees chant together in public, they benefit themselves, one another, and the conditioned souls who may be in the vicinity.
- Furthermore, because performing saṅkīrtana fulfils Lord Caitanya’s desire to bless the world, the devotees manage to please Him.
- Gaurāṅga’s mercy then flows to all involved, and the results expand exponentially. Thus in Nārada’s opinion, the benefits enjoyed by performers of public nāma-saṅkīrtana are a hundred times greater than those enjoyed by chanters of japa.

japato hari-nāmāni sthāne
śata-guṇādhikaḥ
ātmānaṁ ca punāty uccair
japan śrotṛn punāti ca

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- “Compared to a person who is attached to chanting japa, the person who performs loud chanting of the holy name of Śrī Hari is one hundred times better.
- This is because the person who chants japa purifies himself, whereas the person who chants the holy name loudly in kīrtana purifies himself, all those who are with him, and everyone else who hears the holy vibration.” (Śrī Nārādīya) [Quoted in Caitanya-bhāgavata, Ādi-khaṇḍa, 16.283]
- The importance of chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa cannot be over-emphasized.
- Nāma-saṅkīrtana is the act of devotion that governs all other devotional acts and empowers them to bestow love of God on a devotee.
- In Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta, the Vaikuṅṭha-dūtas tell Gopa-kumāra, “When the nectar of the Lord’s name appears in just one sense, all the senses are flooded with their own sweet tastes.” [Śrī Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta 2.3.162]

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- Nāma-saṅkīrtana does not depend on any external conditions, prerequisite paraphernalia, or previous qualification.
- It is in-dependent of anything material and its performance readily accessible to all.
- Nāma-saṅkīrtana fulfils all sacrifices, penances, and austerities, for when one achieves ecstatic love of God one attains the complete perfection of life.
- Therefore whatever devotional service one performs, whatever ordinary activity one performs, one should humbly and meekly, free from all offence, chant the Lord’s holy names.
- Śrīla Prabhupāda writes, “If one wants to achieve success at the end of his life, the process of remembering Kṛṣṇa is essential.

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- Therefore one should constantly, incessantly chant the mahā-mantra—Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare.” [Bhagavad-gītā As It Is 8.5, purport]
- Still, chanting should be done with due respect for the holy name.
- This means that even though there are no hard and fast rules for chanting, devotees should avoid the ten offences against the holy name listed in scripture.
- Devotees should be especially attentive not to commit offences while chanting their prescribed rounds on the beads sanctified at their initiation.
- Chanting one’s rounds while driving or cooking, or slurring, skipping, or adding words to the mantra are examples of disrespecting the name.

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- Dozing while chanting, neglecting to chant, thinking and planning while chanting, and gossiping or talking while chanting should also be avoided.
- Unfortunately, such negligence is prevalent in ISKCON today.
- Offensive chanting invariably debilitates faith in the efficacy of vaidhī bhakti and weakens one's ability to remember Kṛṣṇa.
- Offenders to the holy name are unable to reap the ample protection real chanting awards.
- By such offensive chanting devotees gradually retreat to Māyās lap.
- Chapter two provides a list of the anomalies by which devotees can evaluate whether or not they are trying hard enough to avoid offences in their chanting.

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- Devotees must at all times be vigilant to the aberrations caused by material conditioning.
- Then the holy name will award all strength and protection.
- Śrīla Prabhupāda has promised us this. [Letter to George Harrison, Bombay, 4 January, 1973]
- Devotees often question the need for deity worship if chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa is sufficient in itself for perfection.
- Śrīla Prabhupāda repeatedly answered this question.
- He said that chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa is sufficient for all spiritual success provided it is done without offence, free of material contamination.

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- But he added, “[A]lmost all the souls we have to initiate are conditioned...[and] due to their past bad habits they violate the rules and regulations.” [Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Ādi-līlā 7.76, purport]
- Therefore Śrīla Prabhupāda introduced and stressed as essential the rules and regulations for worshipping the deity in the temple or at home.
- The procedures for deity worship are based on Nārada Muni’s pāñcarātrikī-vidhi and are meant to help restrict the spirit of sense enjoyment for those in the bodily concept of life.
- By bathing, dressing, and feeding the Lord’s deity, devotees easily develop a personal conception of God and quickly become free of obstacles to the pure chanting of the holy names.

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- Householders busy working to maintain their families do not always have the opportunity to preach every day and in that way fix the mind on Kṛṣṇa.
- They must, therefore, engage in deity worship.
- Śrīla Prabhupāda did not make it optional for them: “Gṛhastha devotees, however, are generally engaged in material activities, and therefore if they do not take to deity worship, their falling down is positively assured.” [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 7.5.23–24, purport]
- Jīva Gosvāmī also gives a stern warning to householders who neglect to worship the deity.
- If they ignore this duty on the plea of having no money, their cheating activities will be a source of inauspiciousness for them.

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- Just as watering the roots of a tree automatically nourishes its branches, twigs, and leaves, the householder's proper worship of the deity brings peace, prosperity, and health to the family.
- If this important duty is neglected, however, then householders can expect want, disease, and strife.
- Deity worship allows devotees to see their family, home, and wealth as the Lord's property.
- Then as His servants they simply offer back to the Lord whatever He has given them as their necessities. [Based on a quotation from Bhakti-sandarbha, as quoted in Śrī Amnāya-sūtra (65)]
- It is not unusual when doing home programmes to see family altars in small rooms or even closets, where the deity lives in poverty while the family lives in luxury.

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- This is certainly not the concept of deity worship chalked out by the ācāryas.
- Householders must worship the Lord according to their means and not with less.
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- Devotees should love the Lord as if He were a friend or family member, and they should gaze on Him with tears of love.
- Having given their hearts, should it be difficult for devotees to offer their bodies and possessions to their most worshipable Deity?
- Standing before the beautifully decorated form of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, pure Vaiṣṇavas pray:

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vapur-ādiṣu yo 'pi ko 'pi vā
guṇato 'sāni yathā tathā vidhaḥ
tad ayaṁ bhavataḥ padābjayor
aham adyaiva mayā samarpitaḥ

- “In this world there are bodily distinctions such as man and woman, and according to the three modes of nature there are four different varṇas and four āśramas.
- In this way there are countless varieties of bodies.
- O Lord of my life! It does not matter in which body I must reside, in whatever condition, for I now surrender myself at Your lotus feet.
- From now on I have nothing left that I consider mine.” (Śrī Stotra-ratna 49)

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- Since Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa are the object of spontaneous affection, devotees often inquire how Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa deities are to be worshipped on the path of regulative devotion.
- Devotees first worship Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa with reverence, the mood of worship offered to Lakṣmī-Nārāyaṇa.
- As they advance, their mood becomes more spontaneous, although their external worship remains formal and regulated.
- The deity worship in ISKCON is performed according to the rules of regulative devotion, technically known as pāñcarātriḱa-vidhi.

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- Śrīla Prabhupāda refers devotees to The Nectar of Devotion for directions on how to perform this kind of deity worship, and he personally taught this process when he installed Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa deities in London and New York and the world over.
- In regulative reverential worship, Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa reciprocate in the mood of Lakṣmī-Nārāyaṇa.
- Neophyte devotees who avoid the sixty-four offences in deity worship are gradually purified and raised to what Śrīla Prabhupāda calls the “Vṛndāvana platform,” the path of spontaneous devotion. [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 4.24.45–46, purport]
- In this advanced stage, devotees worship Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa with natural attraction, and Their Lordships reciprocate with them accordingly.

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- Does this mean that as devotees advance to the spontaneous platform the standard of deity worship in ISKCON should change?
- No, it should not change because there will always be neophyte devotees visiting or joining the temples and deity worship should always be suitable for them.
- Otherwise, beginners will not become fixed in the essential principles of regulative devotion and may become sahajiyās.
- Advanced devotees need not change the external form of their worship.
- They need only change their mood of worship, which develops naturally, without external adjustment.

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- The same may be said of home deities, the worship of whom must be suitable for younger, less advanced members of the family, what to speak of for future generations.
- Thus the worship of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa follows the regulative pāñcarātriḱa-vidhi. For devotees faithful to Śrīla Prabhupāda’s teachings, the mood of regulative worship gradually transforms into the spontaneous mood of rāga-mārga, the “Vṛndāvana platform.”
- Yet to the observer, both the neophyte and advanced devotee appear to be engaged in the same type of worship—the regulative worship characteristic of service to Lord Nārāyaṇa.
- Readers may consult Śrīla Prabhupāda’s teachings on this matter. [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 4.24.45–46, purport]

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- mukhy vraja-vsi-janerāgātmikā-bhakti—‘mukhyā vraja-vāsi-jane
- tāra anugata bhaktira ‘rāgānugā-nāme
- The original inhabitants of Vṛndāvana are attached to Kṛṣṇa spontaneously in devotional service.
- Nothing can compare to such spontaneous devotional service, which is called rāgātmikā bhakti.
- When a devotee follows in the footsteps of the devotees of Vṛndāvana, his devotional service is called rāgānugā bhakti.
- Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā 22.149