

Śuddha-bhakti Cintāmaṇi

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Chapter 17- Removing Unwanted Habits

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- Chapter sixteen discussed the beginning of devotional service in practice up to the stage of steadiness.
- It especially dealt with the removal of unwanted habits (anartha-nivṛtti) during the practice of unsteady devotion.
- This chapter discusses the further eradication of unwanted habits up to the stage of love.
- Unsteady devotional service removes most impurities from the heart; service in steadiness, taste, and attachment remove almost all that remain.
- A few particularly serious habits, however, go away only at the stage of ecstasy, and the most pernicious only at the stage of love.

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- The preceding chapter also mentioned the four types of unwanted habits, sinful and pious acts performed before devotional life, and offensive and careless acts committed during the course of devotional life.
- It also spoke of how anarthas are nullified to different degrees at different stages of advancement.
- In short, the more advanced the stage of devotion, the more complete the nullification of unwanted habits.
- As devotees advance in Kṛṣṇa consciousness their spiritual strength increases.
- Consequently, the rate at which they give up unwanted habits and the rate at which they advance accelerate.
- Thus they begin to move more quickly from one stage to another.

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- When they begin to perceive the blossoming of their devotional creeper they dance in ecstatic bliss.
- Most unwanted habits caused by previous sinful and pious activities are quickly eradicated even by unsteady practice.
- By the time devotees reach the stage of steadiness, these unwanted habits are fully eradicated, with only a slight chance that they will recur.
- When devotees reach the stage of attachment (āśakti), there is no chance that they will again commit the same sins.
- In this way, all anarthas arising from past sinful and pious acts are absolutely nullified at āśakti.

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- Mundane moralists and religionists argue in favour of performing pious acts—building hospitals, feeding the poor, and schooling the illiterate—and speak of such virtuous work as if it were the ultimate goal of life.
- They go so far as to say that “service to man is service to God.”
- Surely people’s essential needs must be met, but to confuse mundane welfare work with the goal of life is a misunderstanding.
- Pious, attached work leads to the growth of the anarthas that bind conditioned souls to matter.
- In that sense, they have the same effect as sinful work.

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- The only difference is that the ropes that bind the conditioned souls have different natures—that is, pious acts create temporary happiness while sinful acts create temporary misery.
- Therefore Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī considers the distinction between piety and impiety false.

‘dvaite’ bhadṛābhadrā-jñāna, saba——‘manodharma’
‘ei bhāla, ei manda’,——ei saba ‘bhrama’

- “In the material world, conceptions of good and bad are all mental speculations. Therefore, saying ‘This is good’ and ‘This is bad’ is all a mistake.” (Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Antya-līlā 4.176)

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- In this regard, Śrīla Prabhupāda often remarked that it is not our business to try to gain popularity by posing as a welfare institution, one that, for instance, feeds the poor.
- This kind of posturing misleads both the public and the members of our own Society.
- Furthermore, by identifying with charitable acts as the ultimate service to humanity, devotees accumulate obstacles that are as burdensome to their spiritual lives as those created by sinful acts.
- ISKCON's only concern should be to distribute pure devotional service.
- To qualify people for the process of pure devotion, the society distributes Kṛṣṇa's mercy in the form of sanctified food to rich and poor alike.

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- But that should be the extent and purpose of its charitable acts.
- The eradication of habits arising from improperly performed devotional practices follows a more lenient pattern.
- Unsteady practice nullifies a few of these anarthas, but with the appearance of steady practice they are all eliminated, with only a slight chance that they will recur.
- With the appearance of taste (ruci), there is no chance of their recurrence. [Mādhurya-kādambinī, chapter 3]
- The ease by which obstacles created by mistakes in the performance of devotional service are eradicated comes from the mercy of Bhaktidevī, the goddess of devotion.

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- Bhaktidevī ensures that these unwanted habits are short-lived and easily nullified because she considers sincere the students who try to better themselves.
- If, however, devotees abuse her mercy by purposeful carelessness, if they think, “Because Bhaktidevī is always lenient it doesn’t matter whether we commit offences,” then their insincerity is exposed and they lose Bhaktidevi’s mercy.
- In this case, she applies a stern hand to help the devotees nullify offences and to free them from unwanted habits thus accrued.
- For example, if a pūjārī worships the deity while in an unclean state due to circumstances beyond his or her control, the mistake is forgiven when the devotee expresses true repentance and recites a chapter of Bhagavad-gītā.

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- But if that same devotee repeatedly neglects the standards of cleanliness, thinking, “I will chant a chapter of the Gītā after worship and be freed of my misdeed,” his or her mentality is no longer innocent but devious.
- This devious mentality offends the goddess of devotion. Purposeful mistakes in service are actually offences against the holy name. [Mādhurya-kādambinī, chapter 3]
- Of all unwanted habits, those arising from offences to the holy name are the most protracted and difficult to eradicate.
- This is due to the virulent nature of these offences.
- Unsteady devotion is impotent to eradicate most of the anarthas that spring from nāmāparādha.

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- Steady devotion removes more but not all of these anarthas, and ecstasy (bhāva) nullifies all but a few.
- At bhāva, only those hindrances caused by offending great Vaiṣṇavas remain.
- Astonishingly, even after love destroys all unwanted habits from offences, devotees are still not free from the danger of those anarthas that tend to recur.
- They attain absolute freedom from anarthas and ultimate shelter (vastu-siddhi) only when they return to the spiritual world.
- Devotees may argue that Mahārāja Citraketu and the brothers Jaya and Vijaya committed offences to great Vaiṣṇavas—Lord Śiva and the Kumāras, respectively—even after having obtained the Lord’s shelter.

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- Thus not only is it impossible to nullify offences at any stage, it appears that even the Lord's associates are not free from the flaw of committing offences and tasting their bitter fruits.
- On closer examination, however, we can see that these examples do not substantiate the arguments raised.
- Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura clarifies that Mahārāja Citraketu's mahāparādha to Lord Śiva was apparent, not factual. [Mādhurya-kādambinī, chapter 3]
- As evidence, he explains that if this were not true, how could love for the Lord be visible in the demonic body Citraketu was cursed to accept in his next life, the body of Vṛtrāsura?
- Had his offence been factual, prema surely would have withdrawn from his heart.

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- The case of Jaya and Vijaya is similar.
- The two Vaikuṅṭha gatekeepers were aware that the Lord wanted to enjoy the pleasure of fighting, and because they were the strongest among Lord Nārāyaṇa's associates they considered themselves most fit to fulfil His desire.
- But their fighting spirit could not be fully aroused unless they became inimical to the Lord.
- Stimulated by prema, they offended the Kumāras and later came to the material world as a result of loving service and not because of an indiscretion.
- There are many examples in which the Lord's associates apparently commit offences, yet every act the Lord's personal associates perform is under the protection of His internal potency.

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- It is therefore impossible for them to be offenders.
- Such apparent transgressions are merely facets of the Lord’s pastimes.
- In conclusion, the Lord’s associates are free from both the results of past offences and the tendency to commit new offences.
- Devotees should carefully understand the causes and implications of aparādhās.
- This topic is worth discussing among serious Vaiṣṇavas, who can thus learn to avoid offences and the crippling effects they have on the growth of their devotional creeper.

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- Caitanya-caritāmṛta gives a chilling reminder of the serious implications of offences committed on the royal road of pure devotion:
- bahu janma kare yadi śravaṇa, kīrtana
- tabu ta' nā pāya kṛṣṇa-pade prema-dhana
- “If one is infested with the ten offences in the chanting of the Hare Kṛṣṇa mahā-mantra, despite his endeavour to chant the holy name for many births, he will not get the love of Godhead that is the ultimate goal of this chanting.” (Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Ādi-līlā 8.16)
- The phrase “many births” (bahu janma) should send a stern warning to all those who wish to go back to Godhead in this lifetime: “Be forewarned: be extremely careful.”

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- The eradication of unwanted habits from the first three causes—reactions from pious acts, from sinful acts, and from mistakes committed while performing worship—may take place automatically as one practises devotional service, but eradication of bad habits arising from the fourth cause, offences to the holy name, are neither easily nor automatically cleared.
- Once they have taken root, the results of nāmāparādha are difficult to weed out.
- What makes an offence vile and subject to possibly severe punishment lies not so much in the offensive act as in the mentality that bred it.
- Generally, offenders knowingly perform their wrong acts.
- In the courts of humans, demigods, and the Lord sins committed knowingly are more serious than those committed unwittingly.

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- An accidental offence means one breaks a rule of devotion, or goes against the letter of the law.
- Devotees may break a rule out of ignorance, by innocent oversight, or because they are strongly influenced by the material energy.
- But the deviant mentality that underlies conscious disobedience transgresses the spirit of the law and reveals the devotee's duplicity, selfishness, or rebellious spirit.
- Honest mistakes are more easily corrected than acts performed with a deviant mentality.
- To correct His devotees' delinquency and to make them pure-hearted, Kṛṣṇa provides suitable discipline.

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- Sometimes this discipline is severe—and may increase in severity according to the degree of the remaining defiance.
- In summary, the severity of the reaction to offences depends even more on the attitude with which devotees offend than it does on the seriousness of the acts themselves.
- Bhṛgu Muni offended Lord Śiva, Lord Brahmā, and Lord Viṣṇu with increasingly grave acts, but his motive was relatively innocent: [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 10.89.1–17] He was simply making an experiment to determine which of the three deities was supreme.
- Had his motive been envy or malice, his transgression would have been viewed in a much more serious light.

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- Scripture repeatedly praises the power of devotional service to at once eradicate all kinds of sins, including offences. Why, then, do the wise say that the effects of offences are difficult to nullify?
- The answer lies in how the holy name responds to those who commit offences to devotional service and to the Vaiṣṇavas.
- Without doubt, the holy name and pure devotion have inestimable power to purify the greatest offenders.
- Many scriptural statements confirm this truth, including the following:

na hi bhagavann aghaṭitam idaṁ
tvad-darśanān nṛṇāṁ akhila-pāpa-kṣayaḥ
yan-nāma sakṛc chravaṇāt
pukkaśo 'pi vimucyate saṁsārāt

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- “My Lord, it is not impossible for one to be immediately freed from all material contamination by seeing You.
- Not to speak of seeing You personally, merely by hearing the holy name of Your Lordship only once, even caṇḍālas, men of the lowest class, are freed from all material contamination.
- Under the circumstances, who will not be freed from material contamination simply by seeing You?” (Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 6.16.44)
- The mystery is that although the holy name has the power to immediately neutralize the reactions to all offences, He sometimes chooses not to.
- Unhappy with offenders, Nāma Prabhu does not empower them to chant without offence despite His being the most merciful and complete form of the Lord.

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- Equipped only with the semblance of the name, devotees cannot remove lingering unwanted habits.
- Can no other process help devotees free themselves from offences to the holy name?
- The wise suggest that devotees discard this question because the proposal itself is offensive.
- By inference it places the purifying potency of mundane acts such as fruitive work, mental speculation, and mystic yoga on an equal footing with that of the transcendental chanting of the holy names.

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- This is the eighth offence in chanting the holy name: “The chanting of the Hare Kṛṣṇa mahā-mantra must not be compared to materialistic pious religious ceremonies, such as following vows, practising renunciation, or performing sacrifice” (dharma-vrata-tyāga-hutādi-sarva-śubha-kriyā-sāmyam api pramādaḥ). [Padma Purāṇa, Brahma-khaṇḍa]
- Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura adds that one cannot become free from even the slightest offence simply by following the rules of yoga, even for thousands of years. [Mādhurya-kādambinī, chapter 3, translation of Padma-Purāṇa, Brahma-khaṇḍa 25.16]
- What, then, should devotees do to clear their offences?
- The holy name, being nondifferent from the Lord, is independent.
- No one can force the Lord to bestow His grace.

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- But a sincere devotee can please the holy name and invoke His mercy.
- Devotees who have committed offences must cease their misbehaviour, and with faith in the Lord's benevolence, take shelter of devotional service in the company of Vaiṣṇavas.
- The only remedial measure is to chant with the Lord's pure devotees.
- Offenders must accept whatever punishment the holy name deems suitable and patiently wait to be reinstated in the Lord's good graces.
- Devotees are like servants of a wealthy king.
- When a king's servants offend him, the king may neglect them for some time in order to reform them.

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- This is the king's mercy.
- The neglected servants then fall into poverty with all its distresses.
- While suffering the lot of paupers, errant servants recall their happy past as the king's wards and finally, in a mood of humility, again surrender to their master.
- When the king sees his servants' sincerity, he regains his confidence in them and reinstates them with the same privileges they had previously enjoyed.
- At this point, all offences are forgiven. [This and the following paragraph are based on Mādhurya-kāḍambinī, chapter 3]
- The holy name neglects and then forgives offenders in the same way.
- By His neglect, offenders become spiritually impotent.

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- Their joy in Kṛṣṇa consciousness vanishes, and they feel orphaned even while living in the midst of the Lord’s family of devotees.
- Although this may leave devotees feeling devastated, those who faithfully continue their devotional practices and take full responsibility for their misfortune, blaming no one else, gradually improve.
- The holy name, pleased by their sincere repentance, empowers them to chant properly once more.
- The nullification of their bad habits then again follows the standard sequence.
- Śrīla Prabhupāda writes, “[O]ne who accepts punishment as a reward dealt by the master becomes intelligent enough not to commit the same mistake again.” [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 4.26.21, purport]

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- The above account should alarm even the most cautious devotees.
- The destructive effects of offences on the devotional creeper are frightening.
- Consider Gopāla Cakravartī, the handsome brāhmaṇa who became a leper because of the malicious comment he made to Haridāsa Ṭhākura. [Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Antya-līlā 3.177–214]
- Gopāla lost his beauty, wealth, and position. Disgraced and banished from Vaiṣṇava association, he finally died a painful death.
- Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī stresses the spiritually debilitating effect of offences by citing the following verse:

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ke te 'parādhā viprendra
nāmno bhagavataḥ kṛtāḥ
vinighnanti nṛṇām kṛtyam
prākṛtam hy ānayaṅti hi

- “O foremost of brāhmaṇas! What are the offences against the name of the Lord that destroy the results of one’s devotional service, and even lead to material conceptions of transcendental topics?” (Padma Purāṇa, Brahma-khaṇḍa 25.14) [Quoted in Mādhurya-kādambinī, chapter 3]
- Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura elaborates on this verse: [Mādhurya-kādambinī, chapter 3] Although hearing and chanting should bestow prema, although visiting holy places should bestow pure devotion, and although honouring the Lord’s remnants (prasāda) should bestow freedom from material desire, offences against the holy name neutralize these blessed results.

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- Furthermore, if the offence is grievous, devotional activities and things in relationship with devotion will appear to the offender as mundane.
- If the offence is heinous, it will cause the offender to become inimical to guru, to devotional service, and to the Lord Himself.
- Rāmacandra Purī dared to advise his exalted spiritual master, Mādhavendra Purī, to meditate on the impersonal Brahman during his guru's final days on earth. [Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Antya-līlā 8.18–21]
- This offence deprived Rāmacandra Purī of his already meagre devotion and transformed him into a Māyāvādī.
- Thus he became antagonistic toward Lord Viṣṇu.

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- Then whenever he visited Jagannātha Purī, he made it a habit to criticize Lord Caitanya’s standard of sannyāsa.
- For this sin the Lord’s devotees cursed Rāmacandra Purī and ultimately banished him from their company.
- What can save devotees who fall into the misfortune of committing offences?
- Faith is the redeeming quality of sincere devotees.
- Despite the holy name’s neglect and punishment, devotees who maintain faith in Kṛṣṇa, devotional service, and the holy name do not fall from the path.
- How can devotees protect their faith from the ravages of offences?

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- Only the cloudburst of pure Vaiṣṇava association can protect devotees' faith from the forest fire of reactions to offences.
- There is no other means.
- Why do sincere and faithful devotees who try to atone for their offences find the spiritual practices they once found easy now difficult?
- And why do acts of devotion performed with such difficulty bestow so little spiritual strength?
- Offenders whom the holy name neglects almost lose their taste for devotional service.
- Consequently, it becomes difficult for them to practise it.

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- It follows that neglected devotees do not enjoy full reciprocation from their practice of the limbs of devotion; they are actually deprived of the full potency of their practices.
- For these reasons, Vaiṣṇavas who have committed offences get neither taste nor strength from their devotional activities.
- Offences affect us like a fever.
- During a high fever a person cannot eat.
- Similarly, during the high fever of reaction to offences devotees lose all desire to chant and hear.
- As a fever falls, the taste for food returns, and as the effects of offences lessen, a slight taste for devotional activities returns.

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- Similarly, just as food cannot bestow its full nutritional value on a person with weakened health, so devotional activities cannot reveal their full potency while the effects of offences linger.
- Only the spiritual diet of prasāda and the medicine of chanting and hearing can cure the devotees' feverish condition. [This paragraph is based on the same example given by Viśvanātha in Mādhurya-kādambinī, chapter 3]
- And what about devotees who make no effort to rectify their offences?
- The poison of offences pollutes the mind of those devotees who do not recognize and rectify their misdeeds.
- Arrogance transforms these persons into chronic offenders (aparādhīs) like Rāmacandra Purī.

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- They criticize devotees for the smallest fault and in the process uproot their own devotional creeper.
- They take shelter of concocted, offensive philosophies, and become thorns in the side of true Vaiṣṇavas.
- In short, the offences of devotees who refuse to repent and subdue their offensive tendencies go to seed and sow countless more seeds of ever more virulent offences.
- These seeds fructify first as offences to their peers, then to their gurus and other seniors, and finally to the Supreme Lord Himself.
- Thus wherever offenders roam, they remain residents of hell, (nārakī saḥ). [This is from a verse in Padma Purāṇa, quoted in Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 4.21.12, purport]

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- Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī concludes the pastime of Rāma-candra Purī criticizing the Lord with this comment: “The devotees considered Rāmacandra Purī to be like a great burden on their heads.
- When he left Jagannātha Purī, everyone felt extremely happy, as if a great stone burden had suddenly fallen from their heads to the ground...
- If one’s spiritual master rejects him, one becomes so fallen that he, like Rāmacandra Purī, commits offences even to the Supreme Personality of Godhead.” [Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Antya-līlā 8.97, 99]
- In summary, devotees unfortunate enough to commit offences against pure Vaiṣṇavas or the holy name quickly lose the joyful taste of devotional service because the holy name neglects them.

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- As a result, devotees' unwanted habits fructify into the bitter fruits of desire for wealth, women, and fame.
- Those offenders too arrogant to take shelter of Vaiṣṇavas are blinded by material desires and fall into the ditch of chronic antagonism against the Lord and His servants.
- They soon perish and disappear from the society of devotees.
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- But those offenders who humble themselves are saved.
- They tolerate the pain resulting from their offences and faithfully chant in the company of pure devotees.
- They are redeemed only because the holy name, seeing their sincerity, gradually shows His mercy and reinvests their chanting with devotional potency.

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- Bit by bit, these devotees again taste bliss; gradually their unwanted desires are removed, and little by little ignorance and passion evaporate.
- Finally, once again, the path to prema shines clear.
- Even though thoughtless devotees no longer taste the potency of the holy name, some of them foolishly argue that they have never made offences.
- But the Bhāgavatam concludes that offences alone bar devotees from the ecstasy of chanting. [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 2.3.24]
- If devotees' hearts do not melt while they vibrate the holy name, if there are no tears in their eyes, if their bodily hair does not stand on end, then either they are unconsciously committing offences or they have committed serious offences in previous lives.

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- Śrīla Prabhupāda’s way of testing the truth of such statements was phalena paricīyate, “Judge a thing by its result.” [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 8.9.28, purport]
- For example, when asked whether the falldown of devotees meant that they did not want to love Kṛṣṇa, His Divine Grace gave a resounding “Yes!” [Lecture, Bhagavad-gītā As It Is 9.34, New Māyāpur, 3 August, 1976]
- All living entities have free will.
- If they remain in the Lord’s service, it is because they want to love Him, and if they leave His service, it is because they no longer want to love Him.
- Similarly, offenceless chanting means devotees will experience ecstasy.
- If there is no ecstasy while chanting, then devotees may assume their chanting is offensive.

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- Why argue that despite one's offenceless chanting one is not feeling ecstasy?
- We must judge a thing by its result.
- We should never think, however, that the Lord's eternal associates suffer reactions to offences or past sins. Kṛṣṇa stages events such as the Pāṇḍavas' exile and their subsequent participation in the fratricidal war for the good of future devotees and of humankind.
- What to speak of the Lord's eternal associates, even devotees at the stage of steady practice are freed from reactions to past deeds (prārabdha-karma).
- If they seem to suffer, it is because Kṛṣṇa has personally arranged sickness, poverty, or conflict in their lives as part of His pastime in order to bring them closer to Him.

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- Śrīla Prabhupāda was very fond of quoting the following verse to explain why he went through so much tribulation in his household life.
- He said that Kṛṣṇa wanted him to give up family life so that he could be free to preach Kṛṣṇa consciousness all over the world.
- śrī-bhagavān uvāca

yasyāham anugṛhṇāmi
hariṣye tad-dhanamśanaiḥ
tato 'dhanam tyajanty asya
svajanā duḥkha-duḥkhitam

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- “The Personality of Godhead said: If I especially favour someone, I gradually deprive him of his wealth.
- Then the relatives and friends of such a poverty-stricken man abandon him. In this way he suffers one distress after another.” (Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 10.88.8)
- Devotees who do not see symptoms of ecstasy in all advanced Vaiṣṇavas sometimes ask: “Why does prema sometimes not manifest itself in Kṛṣṇa’s associates, or in worthy devotees?”
- Just as fruit-bearing trees display fruit in the proper season, loving devotion bestows prema on devotees at the proper time in their spiritual journey.
- Even though pleased with an offenceless person, the holy name reveals His mercy by His own sweet will and in His own sweet time.

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- The heart freed from the burden of bad habits surely receives love of God when it is bestowed.
- The waiting only serves to make that day more delightful.
- These are some of the principles underlying the science of offenceless chanting of the holy names.
- Although our ācāryas have given many guidelines on how to achieve perfection, devotees sometimes question the need to know and systematically apply these details of devotional service.
- Some devotees argue that a minimal effort to chant Hare Kṛṣṇa will automatically bring them to the perfect stage without further effort or study.

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- This common misconception arises from a misreading of a phrase Śrīla Prabhupāda often used: “automatic advancement.”
- He writes, “When a devotee revives his loving service to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, it should be understood that he has been successful in achieving the desired goal of his life.
- At that time everything is automatically done by the mercy of the holy name, and the devotee automatically advances in his spiritual progress.” [Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Ādi-līlā 7.84, purport]
- To think the term “automatic advancement” means that devotees need do nothing but mechanically follow the routines of devotional service to achieve perfection is to ignore the teachings of śāstra, guru, and sādhu.

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- Devotees who have been deluded like this ask, “Why should we know about anarthas, offences, and the stages of devotion?”
- Simply by chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa we will automatically become lovers of Kṛṣṇa.”
- It is true that practising devotees advance automatically, but only if they carefully follow the right process.
- We cannot make advancement by following the wrong process.
- To distinguish between the right and wrong path, devotees must know the “dos” and “don’ts” of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.
- As already mentioned, devotees who neglect the science of devotion and who chant without trying to avoid offences cannot advance. How then will they become lovers of Kṛṣṇa?

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- Rather, Vaiṣṇavas must carefully study the bhakti scriptures, which provide the roadmap to perfection.
- They must know the right path, the detours, and the pitfalls of their journey.
- If they do, no doubt they will automatically make step-by-step progress—ascending systematically through the stages of devotional service.
- Although volumes could be written on the eradication of unwanted habits (anartha-nivṛtti), we will conclude the topic here.
- No devotee has the independent power to remove from the heart the storehouse of unwanted habits accumulated over countless lifetimes of material activity, but all anarthas can be quickly destroyed by the potency of devotional service in practice.

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- It is, however, in every devotee's power to avoid committing offences while on the path of pure devotional service.
- Devotees can do a lot to avoid newer, more tenacious, and even more dangerous bad habits.
- It is a question of making deliberate and educated choices at every moment.
- Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu has mercifully given Vaiṣṇavas one all-embracing guideline to assure offenceless devotion.
- Devotees who conduct themselves accordingly are certainly spared the pain of offensive chanting.
- Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja enjoins all devotees to follow this guideline.

SBC 17 – Removing Unwanted Habits

- He writes, “Raising my hands, I declare, ‘Everyone please hear me! String this verse on the thread of the holy name and wear it on your neck for continuous remembrance.’” [Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Ādi-līlā 17.32]
- Who does not know this path to perfection, the third verse of Śrī Śikṣāṣṭaka?

tṛṇād api su-nīcena
taror api sahiṣṇunā
amāninā māna-dena
kīrtanīyaḥ sadā hariḥ

- “One who thinks himself lower than the grass, who is more tolerant than a tree, and who does not expect personal honour yet is always prepared to give all respect to others can very easily always chant the holy name of the Lord.”

SBC 17 – Removing Unwanted Habits

- If devotees carefully avoid offences, they inevitably come to the milestone in their spiritual development at which unsteadiness transforms into steadiness.
- At the stage of niṣṭhā the emphasis in cultivating Kṛṣṇa consciousness is no longer on avoiding things unfavourable to devotion and protecting oneself from māyā.
- The emphasis shifts to looking for things favourable for loving Kṛṣṇa. Then the nectar of pure devotion really begins to flow.

eka aga sdhe, keha sdhe bahu aga 'eka' aṅga sādhe, keha sādhe 'bahu' aṅga
'niṣṭhā haile upajaya premera taraṅga

- When one is firmly fixed in devotional service, whether he executes one or many processes of devotional service, the waves of love of Godhead will awaken. [Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā 22.134]