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Sri Harinama Cintamani

(The Transcendental Touchstone Of The Holy Name)

CHAPTER ONE INTRODUCTION TO THE GLORIES OF THE HOLY NAME

All glories to Sri Gadadhara Pandit and Lord Sri Gauranga; all glories to Lord Nityananda, the life of Srimati Jahnadevi; all glories to Sri Advaita Acarya and Mother Sita; all glories to Srila Srivasa Pandit and all the devotees of Lord Caitanya.

At Nilacala, within His sacred temple near the ocean shore, the Supreme Personality of Godhead resides in His form of wood known as Darubrahman. The Supreme Lord Hari descended to the material world in this form of Jagannatha to deliver the living entities from their eternal bondage. He grants material benedictions to those who require them and final release from all material attachments to those who are more spiritually advanced.

In this same sacred abode, the same Supreme Lord took the role of a renounced sannyasi to give His supreme blessing to humanity. Residing in Kasi Misra's home, He propagated the only dharma needed by the fallen souls of this age, and so established the real meaning of religion in Kaliyuga.

There, like a desire tree yielding unlimited treasures, surrounded by His many devotees, Lord Caitanya distributed love of Godhead (Krsnaprema) freely to all people. Ensuring that His teachings would be correctly disseminated, He had certain associates speak on specific subjects while He Himself gave His blissful audience.

Thus He relished Sri Ramananda Raya's revelation of the confidential sweetness of the conjugal love of Sri Sri RadhaKrsna; Sri Sarvabhauma Bhattacharya's explanation of actual liberation; Sri Rupa Goswami's intricate analysis of the various levels of loving exchange with the Lord; and Srila Haridasa Thakura's glorification of the supreme efficacy and excellence of the Holy Name.

One day, after bathing in the ocean, Lord Caitanya met Srila Haridasa Thakura under the Siddha Bakula tree. Greatly pleased at seeing Srila Haridasa, the Lord inquired from him the means by which the conditioned souls can most easily be delivered from sin.

Srila Haridasa fell at the Lord's lotus feet and clasped them tightly. His entire body went into rapture, and he offered humble prayers punctuated by shivering and tears. In a choked voice Srila Haridasa said, "My Lord, Your wonderful pastimes are unfathomable, and I am but unfortunate and illiterate. Your lotus feet are my only resort. What is the use of asking such questions of a worthless person like me?"

Srila Haridasa continued: "You are Krsna, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who has appeared in Navadvipa to save all living entities. O my Lord Gauranga, kindly shelter me in the shade of Your lotus feet, for only this will engadden my heart. Your holy name is unlimited, You are the embodiment of endless excellences, and Your exquisite beauty draws me into a shoreless ocean of joy. Your pastimes are everexpanding; You have manifested Your name, form, qualities and activities in this material world so even a fallen wretch like myself can relish them. It is impossible for one with mundane vision to perceive Your transcendental features with his limited senses, but now You are mercifully revealing Yourself for the highest benefit of humanity; this is indeed the direct display of the internal spiritual potency of the Lord.

"You are the spiritual sun and I am an insignificant spark of Your effulgence. You are my Lord and master and I am Your servitor eternally. The ambrosia emanating from Your lotus feet intoxicates all my senses. My only hope lies in the limitless nectar of Your holy name. I am fallen what can I say of my own volition? I am here just to execute Your orders. I shall be greatly satisfied to speak the words You put into my mouth and I will not consider whether they are right or wrong."

Lord Krsna and His energies

Lord Krsna is the Supreme Personality of Godhead. He is beyond anyone's jurisdiction, for He alone is the master (sarvesvara) of all that exists. He completely independent, being selfwilled and selffulfilled. His unrestricted desires are effortlessly satisfied by His inconceivable internal potency that constantly associates with Him. This potency is a feature of His inherent nature and is therefore never independent of Him.

[Footnote 1 by Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura:]

He is known as the nondual Supreme Consciousness by dint of His free will and inconceivable potency. Empirical philosophers (jnani) attempt to rob this nondual Divinity of His personal will and potency by postulating Him to be the impersonal Brahman. But in fact the impersonal Brahman (Krsna's consciousness minus will and potency) is only the effulgence of the Supreme non-dual Brahman.

Through the eightfold yoga system, yogis can perceive the nondual Supreme Being within their hearts as the localized Supersoul or Paramatma who pervades and witnesses all existence. But Paramatma is also just a partial appearance of Krsna. Lord Krsna alone is the Absolute Consciousness, for only He displays

absolute potency, will and control. [End of footnote 1]

Krsna exists within all His energies and is thus not different from them.

The Vedas declare Lord Krsna to be the infinite, absolute Vibhu; His energies are His attributes (vaibhava). His vaibhava energies are the root of all existing phenomena: yet even in the midst of unlimited phenomena everexpanding throughout all time, Krsna remains aloof and indivisible in His original form.

The three kinds of vaibhava

Vibhu is perceivable only by the grace of His vaibhava energies, of which there are three kinds. They are, as revealed in the scriptures, the spiritual energy (cid-vaibhava), the material energy (maya or acid-vaibhava), and the marginal energy (jiva-vaibhava).

[Footnote 2 by Bhaktivinoda:]

Krsna's cid-vaibhava is a direct transformation of His citsakti, His personal internal potency. The display of cidvaibhava includes His abode, known as the Vaikunthaloka; His innumerable names like Govinda, Hari, etc.; His transcendental forms like the threefold bending form with two hands playing the flute; His divine qualities, so sublimely pleasurable to His devotees; His superexcellent pastimes like the rasa dance in Vrindavana and its corresponding appearance in Navadvipa as the congregational chanting of the holy names. These spiritual opulences are countless.

Another feature of the citsakti is the sandhini potency by which all things exist and are held together as an interrelated whole, including the relationships of the jivas to the Lord.

Similarly, the citsakti manifests the samvit potency, which reveals knowledge of Krsna, His energies, and one's own identity.

The citsakti also generates the hladini potency, which gives rise to the ecstatic bliss of spiritual relationships, spiritual emotions and their combination in the sweet exchanges of rasa or the mellows of divine love. All of these transformations of the citsakti or Yogamaya (i.e. cidvaibhava and the sandhini, samvit and hladini saktis) are beyond material place, time and qualities, being eternally pure and full of bliss. [End of footnote 2]

The citsakti is known as Visnupada

The citsakti is never affected by the inferior acitsakti. Even when it descends to this material world, citsakti remains untouched by the inebrieties of matter.

Forever spiritual, embodying the absolute nature of the Supreme Godhead, the spiritual potency is glorified in the Vedic hymns as being equal to the Lord Himself; thus it is known as Visnupada (intimately connected with Visnu). There is no tinge of material influence in Lord Krsna's energies: they are transcendental and exist in pure goodness (suddha-sattva).

[Footnote 3 by Bhaktivinoda]

Sattva, or goodness, is of two kinds: suddha sattva and misra-sattva (mixed goodness). Everything in the category of cid-vaibhava is suddha-sattva, or pure goodness. All sattva in the material nature is mixed, or misra-sattva.

Suddha-sattva is devoid of passion and ignorance. Birth indicates the mode of passion in action. The eternally existent spiritual essence, suddha-sattva, has never been touched by birth, which is a manifestation of passion, nor by annihilation, which occurs in the mode of ignorance.

As the Supreme Lord's separated parts and parcels, the jivas (the living entities, who are individual spirit souls) are originally suddha-sattva, but due to their contact with nescience they have come under the sway of the material modes of passion and ignorance, and hence are now in the mixed or misra-sattva category. Even demigods like Siva, though far superior in many ways to the ordinary jivas, are nevertheless captivated by the material glare due to false identification, and so fall in this category of misra-sattva.

The Supreme Lord is always in pure goodness. He descends to this material world by His inconceivable spiritual potency and is always the controller of the material nature, maya, who is ever-ready to act as His maidservant. [End of footnote 3]

Visnutattva

All the plenary expansions of the Lord such as Govinda, Vaikunthanatha, MahaVisnu, Garbhodakasayi Visnu and Ksirodaksayi Visnu are in the category of absolute goodness, supreme and divine, and are known as Visnutattva.

The Visnu-tattva forms may reside in any place, either the spiritual abodes of Goloka, Vaikuntha, the Causal ocean, or in this material universe, yet They are always the master of maya and the supreme controller of every other living entity great or small. Their remaining unaffected by the influence of the illusory potency is evidence of their inconceivable spiritual position.

Brahma, Siva and the other demigods are misra-sattva, being influenced by maya. The Visnutattva forms, Their abodes, Their pastimes, and all else in the spiritual sky exist in pure goodness.

Maya-tattva

A river called Viraja separates the material universe from the spiritual abode. Everything in the fourteen material planetary systems is acit-vaibhava or the temporary manifestation of matter. This place has been described in the scriptures as Devi "dhama (the abode of Durgadevi), who is the presiding deity of maya.

The material universe, including the physical bodies of the living entities, is made up of the five gross elements of earth, water, fire, air and ether. Mind, intelligence and false ego are subtle material elements that comprise the psychic bodies of the living entities. The psychic bodies arise from desire. Yet the soul is always purely spiritual and distinct from his subtle body; he is by nature suddha-sattva, as are his original mind, intelligence and ego.

The seven higher planetary systems Bhur, Bhuvar, Svarga, Mahar, Jana, Tapa, and Satya or Brahma and the seven lower planetary systems such as Atala, Sutala and so on are all manifestations of maya (the illusory potency). Cid-vaibhava is the complete whole, and maya is its shadow.

Jivavaibhava consists of both liberated and conditioned souls

The jivas are originally completely spiritual, infinitesimal and endowed with a limited degree of independence. The jivas are countless in number and are in urgent need of spiritual bliss for the attainment of their perfection. In seeking that bliss, those who surrender their lives to Lord Krsna are liberated from birth and death and reside eternally in the Lord's company as His confidential associates.

On the other hand, the jiva-souls who desire self-importance and selfish pleasure become attracted by maya, who awaits them on the other side of the River Viraja. She entices them away from Lord Krsna's service and lures them into the trap of the Devi-dhama, where they are chained to bodies manufactured by material nature. Bound by the reactions of their misdeeds, they wander from birth to birth in gross and subtle forms. Sometimes they are elevated to the heavenly planets and afterwards go to hell. In this way they travel through all the eight million four hundred thousand species of life, suffering the pains of material existence.

Lord Krsna is always merciful to the jivas

The Lord is the Supreme Personality, and the jiva is His tiny part and parcel. Krsna is always concerned for the well-being of His jivaexpansions. In whatever situation the jiva may find himself, Lord Krsna is always prepared to grant the jiva his heart's desire, like a well-wisher who never forsakes his friend.

Krsna's relationship with the jiva is eternal: He uses the jiva as an instrument through whom and to whom He manifests His energies and opulences. The Lord

is the controller, the jiva the controlled; the Lord is independent, the jiva dependent; the Lord is master, the jiva the beneficiary of the results of his service to the master. Pious acts are material and fruitive

The soul greedy for material sense pleasure finds even this easily available by the kindness of the master. The means to attain such gratification is the performance of auspicious activities (subhakarma) recommended in the Vedas. These are: following the duties of the varnasrama system; performing sacrifices such as the fire sacrifice (agnistoma); executing the eight-fold yoga process; offering havana or oblations; keeping vows on full-moon days; giving in charity on auspicious days and other occasions conducive to material benefit.

Although subhakarma is performed with Lord Visnu as the presiding Deity, the performer lacks spiritual intentions. He unfortunately takes complete shelter of material considerations of object, time and place and cannot even intuit his dearth of Krsna consciousness because such ritualistic considerations thwart the mood of spiritual selfexamination and inquiry.

The results of subhakarma are material, for they merely inflame lust for more enjoyment in higher planets. Such sacrifices and their results can never satisfy the soul, the real self, because their cause is illusion. These so-called auspicious activities only avail the jiva temporary heavenly pleasures diametrically opposed to transcendental bliss.

The means of deliverance from material piety

If a person is fortunate enough to get the association of a saintly devotee and learns that he, the jiva, is an eternal servant of Lord Krsna, then he easily surmounts the great obstacle of material nature. This is very rare, being the result of a vast accumulation of piety that can never be acquired by the performance of subhakarma, which gives only insignificant results.

Empirical philosophy (jnana-kanda) elevates one to the brahmajyoti

The dry empirical philosophers are more advanced than the karmis, for they understand the material existence to be a condition of suffering and so strive for liberation. The Lord is kind to them also: He has given them the jnana-kanda section of the Vedas so they can pursue impersonal knowledge of the Absolute. Their final goal is absorption into the brahmajyoti. The brahmajyoti is Krsna's blinding spiritual effulgence and is situated on the bank of the Viraja. All the demons the Supreme Lord kills also merge into Brahman, just beyond the periphery of maya. Both the empiricists and fruitive workers are nondevotees, disinclined to serve Lord Krsna. They can never relish the sweetness of Lord Krsna's service.

Piety leading to devotional service

Sukriti, or pious activity, is of three varieties: karmomukhi or piety derived from subhakarman, jnanomukhi or piety derived from the cultivation of knowledge, and bhakty-unmukhi or piety derived from devotional activities. The first two lead, respectively, to enjoyment of the fruits of action and to liberation. The last leads to an appreciation for saintly association. Bhaktyunmukhi is achieved by performing devotional service to the Lord unknowingly, without spiritual knowledge.

Bhakty-unmukhi is the most important kind of sukriti, for it impels the jiva to meet a pure, saintly devotee. By associating with a devotee of Krsna, the jiva's faith becomes firm. Gradually he develops a taste for chanting the holy name, becomes compassionate towards all beings, and is then firmly fixed in Krsna consciousness.

Compassionately, the Lord guides the karmi and jnani to the unknowing performance of devotional service

The Lord is an ocean of magnanimity, and the supreme controller of everyone. He is always keen to serve the conditioned souls, including the karmis and jnanis. Thinking of their welfare, He provides them the opportunity for indirect devotional service.

The karmi who follows varnasramadharm associates with saintly persons and executes his duties for the satisfaction of the Supreme Lord Hari. Such activities cleanse his heart and gradually destroy the desire for more fruitive work. In its place the seed of sraddha, or pure faith, is sown within his heart.

The jnani who sincerely seeks transcendental wisdom humbly enters the company of pure devotees and invokes their inherent compassion towards him. By their grace, he easily develops firm faith in the direct process of pure devotional service. In this way, by the jnani's indirect devotion to knowledge, he gets the shelter of the pure devotees.

The Lord says, 'My servant, the jiva, may succumb to the treachery of My illusory potency, but I keep his best interests in My heart. By degrees I inspire him to develop an aversion to sense enjoyment and liberation, and then grant him attraction to devotional service unto Me. I lead the jiva in his pursuit to fulfill his material desires by engaging him in the indirect devotional processes of karma and jnana, and in this way I strengthen his faith and love for Me.'

Lord Krsna is most compassionate. The indirect devotional paths are but a hint of His causeless mercy. Without His loving intervention, how could the jiva ever become purified?

The indirect processes have deteriorated badly in Kaliyuga

The Satya-yuga sages who took up the process of meditation were personally purified by Krsna and given the treasure of devotional service. In the Treta-yuga,

the same spiritual success crowned those who flawlessly performed opulent sacrifices to satisfy the Lord. In the Dvapara-yuga, He granted devotion to those who adhered to the path of perfect Deity worship. With the advent of Kali-yuga, Lord Krsna saw the dreadful condition of the jivas and relinquished all hope in the processes of karma, jnana and yoga.

People in the Kali-yuga are short-lived, always harassed by disease, and are born with a weak body and mind. The observance of varnasramadharm and the cultivation of sankhya philosophy, yoga, and empiricism will not yield the strength humanity needs to redeem itself.

[Footnote 4 by Bhaktivinoda]

In Kaliyuga, the indirect devotional paths of jnana and karma are extremely narrow and hazardous. They are intended to lead one to the shrine of devotional service through either the association of saintly persons during philosophical discussions, or by the ritualistic offering to the Supreme Lord of the results of work performed without desire. In Kali-yuga both paths have become contaminated. Genuine saintly persons, now rarely seen, have been displaced by crass, commercial pseudospiritualists. Religious duties are no longer performed for purifying the consciousness but for enjoyment of the material results of the rituals. Therefore these secondary paths are no longer beneficial. Even the process of Deity worship that gave the highest spiritual success in Dvaparayuga has become impure and degraded. [End of footnote 4]

The prime process - chanting the holy name

The Lord, considering the jivas' welfare, descended in Kali-yuga along with His holy name to propagate the yugadharm (the religion of the age). By taking up the yugadharm the jiva attains love of Krsna: he has only to remember the Supreme Lord's name (namasmarana or japa) and chant the Lord's name congregationally (namasankirtan).

The holy name is both the means and the end

The only method or means (sadhana) in this age is the holy name of the Lord. The only goal (sadhya) to be attained in this age is Krsnaprema. Even in the stage of perfection, the name is not given up but is chanted all the more, for it is intrinsic to the activities of prema. Indeed, the name is not different from the Lord: it is the very embodiment of prema. If the means is the end, then the end and the means never contradict one another. If process is identical to the objective, then it is easy for the jivas to attain the desired goal of life, Krsnaprema. By the mercy of His holy name, Krsna easily delivers the jivas in the age of Kali.

[Footnote 5 by Bhaktivinoda]

In karma and jnana, the sadhana and sadhya are in conflict. The only real goal or sadhya of the Vedas is to attain the mercy of the Lord. As one approaches the goal via the paths of karma and jnana, they vanish, being impermanent. But namasadhya already exists in nama-sadhana, for the Lord is forever identical to His holy name. This truth is known only by great good fortune. [End of footnote 5]

Srila Haridasa, the incarnation of Lord Brahma, fell at the Lord's lotus feet with tears cascading from his eyes. His body heaving with sighs, Haridasa declared, "I am extremely fallen and am much engrossed in material life. Being the rascal I am, I never chanted Your holy name."

Only those persons who appreciate Lord Hari, His devotees, and devotional service can take this Harinama Cintamani to heart.

CHAPTER TWO THE ACCEPTANCE OF THE HOLY NAME

All glories to Sri Gadadhara Pandit and Lord Sri Gauranga; all glories to Lord Nityananda, the life of Srimati Jahnadevi; all glories to Sri Advaita Acarya and Mother Sita; all glories to Srila Srivasa Pandit and all the devotees of Lord Caitanya.

Srila Haridasa continued to weep in ecstatic love. Lord Gauracandra encircled him with His arms in a loving embrace and said, "O Haridasa, a devotee of your caliber is rarely found. You are wellversed in all spiritual conclusions and you are always unaffected by maya.

Elevation by pure devotion

"Taking birth in a low family and caste, you have proven to the world that Krsna is not obtained merely by amassing wealth, reputation, lineage or refinement. Whoever develops unflinching faith in unalloyed devotional service to the Supreme Lord as you have done is factually superior to the demigods.

"You are learned in all the truths of the holy name of the Lord; your spiritual conduct is exemplary; and you are an expert preacher. Therefore, O Haridasa, kindly reveal to Me something of the unlimited glories of the holy name. Please allow Me to savour your words.

Three stages of acceptance of the name

"One who chants the holy name even once is considered a Vaisnava devotee, and the householders should be very attentive to respect such a person. But the devotee who constantly chants Krsna's name is even a better Vaisnava, for he is

endowed with all good qualities. The most advanced Vaisnava of all is he who inspires others who see him to immediately chant the Lord's name. When he chants the name even once, attraction to rendering eternal devotional service to the Supreme Lord is irrevocably established. Kindly tell Me how the nondevotees can be made to accept the chanting of the holy name of Krsna."

The spiritual identity of the holy name

Srila Haridasa clasped his hands together. Eyes brimming with tears and voice choked in spiritual love, he began his reply in soft, gentle tones.

Lord Krsna's name is cintamani, formed of eternal and transcendental touchstone. Just as a touchstone yields all desirable objects, so the touchstone of Krsna's holy name gives religiosity, wealth, sense pleasure and liberation to a materialistic person. To a surrendered devotee, it offers pure love of Krsna.

Lord Krsna and His holy name are not different; They are the one and same Absolute Truth who is the allpervading yet supremely independent form of dynamic spirituality (caitanya vigraha), fully cognizant and full of bliss, without beginning or end. Eternally free of material imperfection (nitya mukta), always situated in pure goodness (suddha sattva), the holy name, identical (abhinna) with He who is denoted by the name (the nami, or Krsna), descends to this world as the complete incarnation of the highest sweetness (rasa).

Krsna's name, form, qualities and pastimes are full of potency

Any object is known by four characteristic features: name, form, qualities and activities. Lord Krsna, the Supreme Object, is knowable in terms of His unlimited and eternal name, form, qualities and pastimes. The absence of these four features in anything denies its status as object. For example, Brahman is impersonal and formless; hence it is not an object unto itself, but simply a distinctive trait of the Supreme Lord.

Lord Krsna is the nondual Absolute Object who perfectly manifests Himself through the four features of name, form, qualities and pastimes. Each one of these features is fully potent and able to express Him in totality. They exist and are sustained by the Lord's sandhini potency, and they are eternal and transcendental. As Lord Krsna attracts all living entities, similarly the holy name, which is not different from Him, also attracts everyone.

Krsna's sublime form is as identical to Him as His holy name. Remembering and chanting Krsna's name immediately invokes His beautiful form in the mind, and both dance there harmoniously like inseparable partners.

Krsna's sixtyfour qualities are unlimited and transcendental. Brahma and Siva are expansions of His qualities, but they only partially display the transcendental nature of the Supreme Lord, which is infinite, eternal, unending and absolutely

spiritual. Krsna alone has the full sixtyfour qualities of the Supreme Person; even His full expansions like Lord Narayana and avataras like Lord Ramacandra are ornamented with only sixty of them. Demigods up to the level of Siva possess fiftyfive of these qualities, but only in limited measure. Ordinary jivas have just fifty, visible in mere fractional degrees, like small drops. Only Krsna, even amongst all His Visnu expansions, is the master of four exceptional qualities visible in Him alone.

If the Lord's qualities are compared to waves, then His pastimes appear in these waves and continuously form, crest and reshape themselves again and again. Wherever they may be enacted, either in Goloka, Vaikuntha, or Vraja, they are always transcendental. Hence, the Lord's name, form, qualities and pastimes are of the same spiritual substance.

Conditioned consciousness is opposite to Krsna consciousness

The jiva conditioned by the illusory material nature experiences a state of consciousness that is a complete reversal of Krsna consciousness. Because he falsely identifies with his body, the jiva's name, form, qualities and activities are full of contradiction. Once he is purified of his material contaminations, these four features become harmonious and identical with the soul. But until he is liberated by the Lord's grace, the jiva will continue to suffer the pains of his false identification eternally. Krsna, being beyond material existence, eternally enjoys His name, form, qualities and activities as one Truth inseparable from Him.

The holy name is the primary feature

Of the four characteristic features (nama, rupa, guna, lila), the Lord's holy name is the primary one because it awards cognition of the other three. Therefore chanting the holy name is the foremost religious activity (dharma) of a Vaisnava. From the holy name gradually blossoms the Lord's form, qualities and pastimes. The entire panorama of Lord Krsna's pastimes is present in the holy name. Lord Caitanya has personally declared Krsna's name to be the highest Absolute Truth.

There are only two realities in this world, the holy name and the jiva

In the entire material existence there is nothing comparable to the holy name. The holy name is the most precious jewel in the Lord's treasurehouse. In this whole universe there are only two meaningful truths: the jiva and the holy name everything else is deceptive. By the will of the Lord, the jiva entered this realm of inert matter and was bewildered by it, as when in the beginning Brahma thought himself to be all alone. But when Krsna descended into the world as His holy name, the spiritual reality of which Brahma and the other jivas are a part was revealed.

The name is of two kinds - principal and secondary

The holy name can be categorized in two types: principal and secondary. By taking shelter of Krsna's principal names, the jiva obtains the real boon of spiritual life. The holy names of the Lord that describe His transcendental pastimes and which contain all of the Lord's spiritual excellences are defined as principal names. They are, for example: Govinda, Gopala, Rama, Sri Nandanandana, Radhanatha, Hari, Yasomati Pranadhana, Madana-Mohana, Syamasundara, Madhava, Gopinatha, Vrajagopal, Raksala, Yadava, and so on. Anyone who chants the names of the Lord that depict His eternal pastimes can attain the Lord's supreme abode.

The secondary names and their symptoms

The Vedas address the Lord with names that describe His affiliation with His material energy. These are His secondary names, e.g. Creator, Supersoul, Brahman, maintainer and annihilator of the world, Yajneswar, Hara, etc. Such names of the Lord are invoked by those pursuing fruitive activities and empirical knowledge. In keeping with the Vedic directions, the chanting of such names of the Lord will result in piety and salvation. However, Krsnaprema, the most perfect result of chanting the holy name of the Lord, is attained only by saintly souls who invoke Krsna's principal names.

The pure name and namabhasa; different results

If the holy name is chanted just once, though impurely so, or if the sound is simply heard, then the living entity regardless of his high or low caste is immediately liberated. This is the declaration of scripture. And furthermore, when the holy name is chanted in the clearing stage (namabhasa the stage when impurities are swept from the heart of the chanter), then the highest goal is attained after some delay.

All other auspicious pious results including liberation can be quite easily achieved in namabhasa, but the attainment of love of Godhead is suspended for a while until the jiva reaches the summit of chanting the pure name or suddhanama. One obtains love of Krsna only after reaching this stage of pure chanting. In namabhasa, sin and unwanted desires in the heart are eventually dissipated; thereafter the devotee chants purely. Suddhanama offers the devotee the highest spiritual success, love of Krsna.

Vyavadhana or 'disruption' causes offense

Chanting should be free from any form of disruption because this will result in offenses against the holy name, which in turn pose an insurmountable obstacle on the path to success. Vyavadhan or 'disruption' is of two kinds. The first type is known as varna-vyavadhan or disruption in the syllables. For example, in the

Bengali word 'hathikari', 'ha' and the last syllable 'ri' can be put together to form 'Hari', a name of Krsna. But because the syllables 'thi-ka' are inserted in the middle, the repetition of 'hathikari' will not give actual benefit. Yet the Islamic word 'haram' is not perverted by such disruption of the syllables or varna-vyavadhan. The syllables comprising the holy name 'Ram' are uninterrupted; hence, speaking the word 'haram' gives liberation because it is namabhasa.

The second type of vyavadhana is called tattva-vyavadhana or disruption of philosophical conclusions. This offense is much more serious. Lord Krsna's name and Lord Krsna Himself are non-different. But someone who is polluted by Mayavadi philosophy imagines them to be separate. Such an offensive conclusion is clearly against all Vedic teachings and will totally destroy one's spiritual life. It is impossible to obtain Krsnaprema from such chanting.

In summary, one should understand properly that the holy name is identical to the Lord Himself. The principal names of Krsna should be chanted as suddhanama, devoid of namabhasa and the aparadha of vyavadhana. The person who takes these considerations to heart and chants suddhanama even once is considered a Vaisnava. He is to be served with faith and devotion.

Overcoming namabhasa and attaining prema

Anyone wanting to attain the highest spiritual success of chanting purely must approach a bonafide spiritual master and serve him carefully and sincerely. Gradually, as all the anarthas or unwanted desires in the heart are destroyed, the transcendental name of Krsna appears and dances on the tongue of the devotee. The holy name, now nectarean in taste, cannot but be relished by the devotee at every moment. Thus spiritually intoxicated, the devotee always feels like dancing. As the holy name dances, the devotee likewise dances, and at that moment the ecstasy of love of Godhead also enters dancing into the devotee's heart. Then the entire world will dance and maya will flee away.

Only the faithful are eligible to chant the omnipotent holy name

The Supreme Lord has infused His transcendental name with all of His potencies and offered it to humanity. One who has sufficient faith in Lord Krsna's name is eligible to chant, and only one who chants the name is properly executing the prescribed duties of the human being. He is called an adhikari or possessor of the holy name.

The holy name is so potent that chanting does not depend on conditions of time, place, rules, cleanliness, and so on. Pious activities, such as the giving of charity, the performance of sacrifices, the taking of ablutions, or the recitation of Vedic mantras are all regulated by stringent rules. But for the chanting of the holy name, the only prerequisite is faith. One who takes shelter of the holy name with unflinching faith will attain all perfection.

Accept things favorable to chanting and reject things unfavourable

The jiva in Kaliyuga must become free from deceit, join Lord Krsna's family of devotees and continuously chant the holy name. He should accept everything favorable for devotional service and at the same time reject unfavorable things. He should seek out the association of devotees and utilize his life in service to the Lord's holy name and the Vaisnavas. He should forego all other religious practices and pious activities and never worship any other devata. Nor should he think anything to be independent from Krsna. One who always chants the holy name and serves the devotees will surely obtain Krsnaprema.

Srila Haridasa Thakura again placed his head on the Lord's lotus feet. Weeping, he begged the Lord that he might develop attachment for the holy name.

One who is blessed with love and devotion and who takes pleasure in serving Srila Haridasa Thakura's lotus feet will find the touchstone of the holy name to be as precious as life itself.

CHAPTER THREE THE UNCLARIFIED NAME (NAMABHASA)

All glories to Sri Gadadhara Pandit and Lord Sri Gauranga; all glories to Lord Nityananda, the life of Srimati Jahnadevi; all glories to Sri Advaita Acarya and Mother Sita; all glories to Srila Srivasa Pandit and all the devotees of Lord Caitanya.

Extending His lotuslike hands, the merciful Lord Caitanya lifted up Srila Haridasa and said, "My dear Haridasa, please take hold of yourself and inform Me about namabhasa. The holy name is so potent and endowed with such transcendental qualities that anyone can easily achieve liberation simply by chanting. Once namabhasa is understood, one can strive to chant purely the holy name of Krsna.

Ajnana is like mist, and anartha is like clouds

"The holy name is an allpowerful, brilliant sun that disperses the darkness of maya or nescience. Clouds and mist may sometimes blanket one's vision; the sun is then not visible. Similarly, the jivas are covered over by the mist of ajnana (ignorance) and the clouds of anartha (material tendencies).

"Lord Krsna and His holy name are identical. They are an omnipotent spiritual sun that destroys the darkness of nescience. To stream mercy upon the

conditioned souls the sun of the holy name has arisen on the horizon of this material world. The mist of ignorance and the clouds of anartha spread a blanket over the jiva's vision so that he is unable to see the sunlike holy name. The sun is too big for any cloud or mist to cover, but if the jiva's vision is obscured, then the sun is hidden from him.

Ignorance covers knowledge of the holy name, the Lord's position, and selfidentity

"Even after accepting the holy name, if one does not understand the name's identity and transcendental nature, a mist of ignorance is created that plunges the jiva into darkness. One who is ignorant about Lord Krsna's position becomes confused and begins to worship the demigods. Thus he is entangled in the cycle of fruitive action or karma. That person who has not realized the jiva's transcendental nature suffers from svarupa-bhrama (confusion of identity), and is in material consciousness, deluded and always in ignorance."

Srila Haridasa Thakura exclaimed in exhilaration, "Today I am most fortunate, for from my mouth the Supreme Lord Himself, Caitanya Mahaprabhu, wants to hear about the holy name!" He then began by elaborating further on the subject of ignorance.

One who is in ignorance does not know that Lord Krsna is supreme over all. His eternal servitors are the demigods and all other jivas. He does not know that the jiva's nature is transcendental, and that the material world is an appearance of maya, the Lord's illusory energy. Anyone who understands these truths and their relationships is freed from the darkness of ignorance and can pass beyond the veil of namabhasa.

The cloud of anartha is comprised of hankering for illusory things, weakness of heart, and offenses

Hankering for things temporary and unreal, weakness of the heart and mind, and offenses are clouds of anarthas that keep the jivas in constant suffering.

Asat-trsna ('thirsting for the illusory') indicates desires for things not related to Lord Krsna. These desires are: the craving for so-called material gains in this world or in heaven, the craving for mystic powers, and the craving for impersonal liberation.

Hridaya-daurbalyam refers to propensities of the heart and mind (viz. material attachment, deceit, enviousness of another's advancement, and desire for name, fame and glory) that arise from a condition of spiritual weakness.

Aparadha means offenses; these may be offenses to the holy name (namaaparadha), to Krsna's service (sevaaparadha), to Krsna's devotees (vaisnavaaparadha), or to other living entities (jivaaparadha).

These clouds hide the sun of the holy name. If one chants the holy name while maintaining these anarthas, the chanting can at best be only the unclarified name (namabhasa). The holy name is always perfect in itself, but namabhasa obfuscates the jiva's vision of it.

Namabhasa is counteracted by sambandhatattva

As long as the jiva is not firmly established in the knowledge of sambandhatattva or the correct understanding of the relationship between God, His energies, and the jiva, he will continue to chant in the namabhasa stage. When the serious chanter takes full shelter of a bonafide spiritual master, he learns how to expertly perform devotional service and thus disperse the mist and clouds in his heart. Once the cloud and mist are removed, the sun of the holy name shines brilliantly once more and bestows the devotee with love of Godhead.

Sambandha as relationship, abhideya as indication, prayojana as necessity

The bonafide spiritual master gives the disciple sambandha-jnana. The chanting of the holy name is the indication (abhideya) of this eternal relationship (sambandha). The spiritual master enthuses the disciple to take up abhideya or chanting. The sun of the holy name then shines stronger and evaporates the mist and clouds. Chanting at this stage becomes an indispensable need (prayojana). Prayojana leads the devotee to pure love of Godhead, at which point he experiences ecstasy in every moment of chanting. The spiritual master must exactly explain sambandha-jnana to the disciple, who in turn must receive it with proper faith. The quintessence of this knowledge is that Lord Krsna is eternally the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the jiva is His eternal servitor, and the jiva's loving relationship with Krsna is likewise eternal as an inherent trait of his nature.

In contact with material nature, the jiva forgets his eternal relationship with the Lord and loiters aimlessly in this world of illusion searching for bliss. The material world is a veritable prison house where the jiva is penalized for turning his back on Krsna. It consists of the fourteen planetary systems which together are known as the Devidhama. These planetary systems are the cells within the prison where the recalcitrant jivas are confined. Devidhama is not a place for experiencing happiness and bliss. The material so-called pleasures offered to the jivas here are only temporary, and as such are the cause of further suffering. As is the plan of any penal system, the jivas are gradually reformed through this punitive arrangement.

By the mercy of a Vaisnava devotee of the Lord, an imprisoned jiva may accept the holy name and the attendant sambandha-jnana and finally ascend to pure love of Godhead. Such a fortunate soul will consider even sayujya-mukti or impersonal liberation to be reprehensible. But until he is solidly grounded on the sambandha-jnana understanding, his chanting will be polluted by anarthas. This is

namabhasa. In this stage, the jiva cannot chant the pure name of Krsna.

The result of namabhasa chanting

However, the value of the namabhasa stage of chanting is not to be underestimated, for it avails many positive benefits to the jiva and increases his piety. Verily, namabhasa proves to be one of the jiva's greatest benefits. It offers him more good fortune than all religiosity, vows, yoga, or sacrifices can offer together.

In namabhasa, all sins are absolved, liberating the jiva from the effects of Kaliyuga. The namabhasa chanter becomes a wellwishing servitor of the fallen souls because he frees others as well as himself from the disease of material consciousness. Fear and distress are subdued, allowing the chanter to enjoy security and equanimity. The miseries inflicted by demons, ghosts, hobgoblins, evil spirits and malefic planetary influences are easily averted. Even if the chanter is destined for the hellish planets he will attain liberation, because prarabdha-karma (sinful reactions of previous lives' activities that are taking effect now) is countered.

Namabhasa is greater than the result of studying all the Vedas, of visiting every pilgrimage place, or of performing every possible altruistic and pious work. The four goals offered in Vedas - religiosity, wealth, sense enjoyment and liberation are made freely available by namabhasa chanting. It is endowed with unimaginable power to reclaim any living entity. It bestows unlimited joy and elevates even the derelicts to a very exalted stage of realization. Namabhasa offers eternal residence in the spiritual abode of Vaikuntha, especially in Kaliyuga. This is the declaration of scripture.

Namabhasa has four attitudes: sanketa, parihasa, stobha and hela

The four attitudes in namabhasa chanting are sanketa (unintentionally or coincidentally), parihasa (in jest or ridicule), stobha (derisively) and hela (with disregard and neglect).

Sanketa is of two kinds: 1) when one, though intending to chant Lord Visnu's name, has a material conception of it, and 2) when one has something entirely different than the Lord or His name on his mind, but chants the holy name being somehow or other reminded of that transcendental sound. The yavanas eat cows, yet in spite of this they can attain liberation by uttering 'haram', an ordinary word of their language (Urdu). Because sanketa is the least offensive attitude of namabhasa, the power of the holy name is largely undiminished when chanted in that way.

Chanting in jest - parihasa, like Jarasandha results in liberation, as does chanting derisively (stobha, like Sisupal). Even chanting inattentively and with disregard (hela) results in deliverance from the pangs of material existence.

Namabhasa chanting can purify anyone. People of low upbringing like mlecchas, gross materialists, and lazy persons can all avail of this opportunity to obtain liberation.

The difference between sraddhanamabhasa and namabhasa

Faithful chanting that is yet afflicted by anarthas is known as sraddhanamabhasa. The element of sraddha (faith) is absent in the four attitudes of namabhasa chanting; even sanketa chanting is tinged with neglect. Nonetheless, the lowest attitude of namabhasa (hela) gives one liberation, what to speak of faithful chanting. Chanting with faith establishes one on the platform of sambandha-jnana, which results in rati or attraction for the holy name. Sraddhanama actually clears away anarthas very easily and quickly.

Anarthafree namabhasa chanting becomes suddhanama, which gives Krsnaprema. Short of Krsnaprema, every other success is available in namabhasa. When anarthas are nullified, then namabhasa is converted to nama or suddhanama, the pure name. By pure chanting and by following the rules of sadhana as instructed by guru, sadhu and sastra, one slowly but surely acquires Krsna prema - love of Godhead. But namabhasa chanting can never give Krsnaprema.

That soul is indeed fortunate who has freed himself from committing nama aparadha in the namabhasa stage. The offenseless stage of namabhasa is far superior to karma and jnana, for it nurtures the seed of faith that sprouts rati or attraction. This attraction leads the chanter to suddhanama and finally to prema.

[Footnote 1 by Bhaktivinoda]

The scriptures are filled with words like 'namabhasa', 'Vaisnavabhasa', 'sraddhabhasa', 'rati-abhasa', 'premabhasa', 'mukti-abhasa', etc. The suffix 'abhasa' has a special meaning that is applicable in many ways.

Abhasa (faint or indistinct image) is of two sorts: svarupa-abhasa and pratibimba-abhasa. Svarupaabhasa is the partial infiltration of the full brilliance. For example, on a cloudy day the light of the sun is only partially visible because the full brilliance of the sun is shaded by the clouds. Namabhasa caused by the cloudlike coverings of ignorance is called chayanamabhasa or 'the faint shadowy name.' The way to the shadowy name is opened by chayasraddhabhasa or the faint shadow of sraddha (faith).

Pratibimba-abhasa means the reflection of a distorted image of the real object, as sunlight is distorted when reflected off the surface of water. Such a distorted, broken reflection can never result in a complete perception of the original source of light.

When the rays of the holy name reflect off the heart of a Mayavadi,

pratibimbanamabhasa appears, bequeathing sayujya-mukti upon the Mayavadis who chant it. Such chanting, however, will fail to generate the quintessence of chanting - Krsnaprema. Indeed, this type of namabhasa is a major namaparadha; therefore it cannot really be counted as a namabhasa at all.

Chayanamabhasa or svarupanamabhasa is the real namabhasa, and is subdivided into four categories of attitude, as previously mentioned. The scriptures, while praising namabhasa, profusely condemn pratibimbanamabhasa. Chayanamabhasa is the result of chanting the holy name with anarthas born of ignorance. But the chanting of the holy name with anarthas nurtured by wicked and distorted philosophy produces pratibimbanamabhasa, and this is a major obstacle to devotional service and a grave offense.

A Vaisnavaabhasa person, though not honored as a genuine Vaisnava, should still be given the respect due a neophyte devotee as long as he is not contaminated by the Mayavadi philosophy. Such a person can easily become elevated by contact with saintly personalities. The elevated Vaisnavas consider such neophytes to be innocent and so shower mercy on them. They must not be ignored and avoided like the agnostic Mayavadis. The pure devotees will resuscitate the small spark of devotion in the neophytes, encourage their propensity to worship the Deity and progressively give them sambandha-jnana and establish them in devotional service of the Supreme Lord and His devotees. But if a neophyte exhibits a strong inclination to incorrigible Mayavadi attitudes, then he must be avoided. [End of footnote 1]

When such a person sees pure firm faith in others, he is impressed, and dim faith is invoked in him by good association. Desiring elevation, he may chant constantly, but because he nurtures strong attachments to sense pleasure and liberation, his sraddha is not real - it merely appears to be sraddha. This is defined in the scriptures as pratibimbanamabhasa. Hence, pratibimbanamabhasa results in pratibimbanamabhasa. If this sort of namabhasa becomes further aberrated by Mayavadi philosophy, the chanter thinks that the perfect and transcendental name of the Lord is mundane and imperfect, and requires to be perfected by impersonal knowledge. This offense obliterates whatever little bit of genuine sraddha he may have had.

The difference between chaya and pratibimbanamabhasa

Chayanamabhasa is symptomatic of ignorance and weakness of the heart. Many anarthas may plague the devotee in this condition, but all these faults are rectified by continuous chanting of the Lord's holy name. But pratibimbanamabhasa chanting increases one's offenses.

According to the Mayavadis, Lord Krsna's name, form, qualities and pastimes are all illusory, false, temporary and contaminated. They mistake prema or pure love of Godhead for sentimentalism. Mayavadi philosophy characteristically contradicts the devotional path of bhakti at every turn. Therefore, Mayavadis are the greatest offenders.

The Mayavadi's chanting is not real chanting. The syllables of the Lord's name may emanate from his mouth, but the vibration is bereft of the potency of the Lord. His chanting is filled with yearnings for sense pleasure and liberation, and all the while he thinks the Lord's name is material. Because he tries to cheat, his chanting results in unrelenting misery.

How does the Mayavadi redeem himself?

If by some good fortune the Mayavadi relinquishes the desire for sense gratification and liberation and, thinking himself a servant of Krsna, begins to chant, he becomes exonerated from his offenses and philosophical aberrations. He then takes shelter of the holy name and repents. This opens the way to again hear from and associate with the pure devotees. Thus his chanting leads him to comprehend sambandha-jnana. If he chants while continuously shedding tears of contrition, he can invoke the mercy of the holy name.

The Mayavadi's offense is he sees bhakti as material

The Mayavadi considers both the transcendental form of Lord Krsna and the jiva's constitutional position as the Lord's eternal servitor to be transient and imaginary. This Mayavadi philosophy is a grievous namaparadha. Namabhasa is truly a wish fulfilling tree, for it even offers to the Mayavadis the sayujya liberation so desired by them. Because the name is omnipotent, it offers mukti-abhasa or seeming liberation in the pratibimbanamabhasa stage. Amongst the five types of liberation, sayujya (becoming one with God) is considered abhasa, or merely the hint of liberation. Material suffering is indeed terminated in sayujya, but certain spiritual doom follows.

The Mayavadis, captivated by maya, find sayujya pleasurable; but it is only a mere hint of actual happiness. They forever forfeit transcendental existence, knowledge, happiness and devotional service, because sayujyamukti obfuscates remembrance of Krsna. Where is the question of eternal bliss when the eternality of bhakti and prema is doubted?

If the chaya-namabhasa chanter refrains from Mayavadi contamination, he gradually attains suddhanama

If the chaya-namabhasa chanter is not contaminated by atheistic concepts, then he has a good chance. He is ignorant about the potency of the holy name, but it is the inherent nature of the name to impregnate that knowledge into the chanter. For example, the sun may not be visible when the sky is cloudy, but once the clouds are dispersed, the sun shines through in full glory. The dispersal of the clouds of anartha and ignorace is greatly assisted by the powerful influence of a bonafide spiritual master, and in a short time the chanter is able to attain the pure name and Krsnaprema.

A devotee must not associate with Mayavadis

Concluding his explanation of namabhasa, Haridasa said, "The devotee must diligently avoid the association of Mayavadis and serve Vaisnavas who are attached to the pure holy name. O Lord Caitanya, this is Your injunction and whoever follows it is very fortunate. Those who disregard and disobey this instruction are wretches who will suffer for a hundred million births. My Lord, please rescue me from bad association and keep me at Your lotus feet, for I can see no other alternative to your lotus feet."

One who takes shelter at the feet of Srila Haridasa Thakura will incessantly chant the holy name and find real satisfaction in life.

CHAPTER FOUR TEN OFFENSES AGAINST THE HOLY NAME (NAMAPARADHA); BLASPHEMY OF THE DEVOTEES (SADHU-NINDA) IS THE FIRST OFFENSE

Introductory note by Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura:

["Namabhasa was described in the previous chapter; the next ten chapters deal with the ten offenses to the holy name, and Chapter Fourteen explains offenses to the Deity (sevaparadha). The nama and seva aparadhas initially arise from anarthas that cause namabhasa. If these aparadhas are not corrected and become intentional, they not only impede one's spiritual progress, but remove one from devotional service entirely, placing him in hell. The first of these offenses is the subject of this chapter. Criticism or harmful intent to a qualified sadhu is a serious offense to the holy name. How can the Lord tolerate criticism of those who spread the glories of His name?"]

All glories to Lord Sri Gauranga, the life of Sri Gadadhara Pandit; all glories to Lord Nityananda, the heart of Srimati Jahnadevi; all glories to Sri Advaita Acarya, the Lord of Mother Sita; all glories to Srila Srivasa Pandit and all the devotees of Lord Caitanya.

Lord Caitanya said, "Haridasa, now describe in detail the offenses against the holy name." Srila Haridasa replied, "My Lord, whatever I say will be on Your prompting alone. I am a mere puppet.

The ten offenses against the holy name

"The scriptures enumerate ten offenses against the holy name. I am very fearful

of these offenses. I will list them one by one. As I do, please give me the strength to avoid them, my Lord."

- 1) Blasphemy of the devotees of the Lord.
- 2) To consider demigods to be independent of the Supreme Lord, and to similarly think Lord Krsna's name, form, qualities and pastimes are separate from Him.
- 3) To disobey the spiritual master who reveals the truth about the holy name.
- 4) To criticize the scriptures that describe the glories of the holy name.
- 5) To think the excellences and divine qualities of the holy name are imaginary, and to so interpret the scriptural glorification of the holy name.
- 6) To commit sinful activities on the strength of the holy name.
- 7) To instruct the faithless on the glories of the holy name.
- 8) To equate chanting of the holy name with auspicious ritualistic activities recommended in the karmakanda sections of the Vedas.
- 9) To be inattentive while chanting the holy name.
- 10) To not develop love for the holy name after learning the the name's glories because of maintaining attachments to the body and things related to the body.

To blaspheme devotees is the first offense

To blaspheme a devotee of the Lord is the first offense against the holy name, and it completely disrupts one's spiritual life. The good qualities of a devotee have been personally described by Lord Krsna in His instructions to Uddhava, as recorded in the Eleventh Canto of Srimad Bhagavatam.

The devotee is merciful; is tolerant; is equal to all; does penance without injuring the body; is truthful; is pure-hearted; is compassionate; is free from lust in his intelligence; is master of the senses; makes no claims of ownership; is gentle; is clean; is regulated in eating; is peaceful; is apathetic to materialism; is patient; is steady; takes Lord Krsna as his only shelter; is free from illusion; is grave; has conquered over hunger, thirst, lamentation, envy, old age and death; does not expect honor from others; offers respect to others; is expert; is not a cheater; is knowledgeable.

Qualities are of two kinds - svarupa and tathasta

These qualities can be divided into two categories: svarupa, or the direct and

indigenous quality of any substance, and tathasta, qualities that are ornamental and visible when the substance comes in contact with something else. The devotee's acceptance of Lord Krsna as his only shelter (Krsna eka sarana) is his svarupa-laksana, and all the other qualities are tathasta.

If by some good fortune one associates with a Vaisnava, he may develop a taste for the holy name and takes complete shelter at Krsna's lotus feet. Thus he develops the svarupa-laksana, and then through continued chanting he will gradually develop all the other laksanas or symptoms. The other symptoms are tathasta but nevertheless are essentially present in a Vaisnava.

Saintliness depends not on external designation but on svarupa-laksana

External designations such as the four social and religious orders of brahmana, ksatriya, vaisya, sudra and bramacari, grihastha, vanaprastha, sannyasi are not the symptoms of a devotee. The scriptures say the quality of complete surrender to Lord Krsna is the hallmark of a devotee, and he alone can chant Krsna's name purely.

Through Raghunatha das Goswami's example, Sri Caitanya taught everyone how the proper grihastha Vaisnava should behave. Srila Raghunatha das Goswami appeared not in the brahmana caste but in the inferior kayastha caste of the village of Saptagrama. The Lord instructed him not to be impatient and impulsive, but to return to his household life and remain there.

One is purified in degrees by following this orderly process. There is no need to prematurely pretend that one is detached and renounced just to impress people. Renunciation has to take place within the heart. Wearing the dress of a renunciate when the senses are still uncontrolled is called monkey renunciation or markatavairagya.

The householder should regularly fulfill his duties. Detachment from matter will naturally arise within his heart as he internally cultivates firm faith in Krsna while conducting normal external social dealings among the people in general. Very quickly Lord Krsna will personally liberate him.

The symptoms of a renounced sadhu

When Srila Raghunatha das Goswami at last left his household and embraced a sannyasi's life, the Lord personally instructed him about the proper path of renunciation. The sannyasi should not engage in nor give audience to frivolous materialistic conversations. The wearing of fine clothes and the tasting of delicacies must be rejected. Being always ready to offer respect to others, demanding no respect for oneself, the sannyasi should constantly chant the holy name. He should render intimate service to Sri Radha and Krsna in the mood of the residents of Vraja.

The svarupa-laksana of both the householder and sannyasi is the same

The svarupa-laksana or principal symptom (i.e. surrender to Lord Krsna) must prevail in a devotee regardless of his varna or asrama. The tathasta-laksana or marginal symptoms will naturally vary according to the varnas and asramas, while undeviating surrender to Lord Krsna remains as the fixed symptom of devotional service in all cases.

Once he has this symptom, gradually but unfailingly the marginal symptoms appear in the devotee's character. Even if the marginal symptoms haven't reached full maturity in a surrendered devotee, and instead some serious discrepancies are visible in his character, he is still to be respected as a sadhu or saintly soul. This is the verdict of the scriptures as expressed in Lord Krsna's own words in the Bhagavad Gita, and it must be given full respect.

It is offensive to criticize a devotee on the basis of his past sins

When one has developed a real taste for chanting, then a single utterance of the holy name can eradicate all previous sins. Some vestiges of sinful reaction may still remain in a particular individual, but these will steadily be removed by the process of chanting. As these last traces of sin disappear, he emerges a pure devotee. Of course, the lingering traces of sin are seen by ordinary people as actual sin; if a devotee is criticized because of the traces of almost extirpated sin in his character, that is a grievous offense. If criticism is made against a devotee for sins committed prior to his surrendering to Krsna, that is likewise another serious offense. Such a faultfinder surely invites the wrath of Lord Krsna.

A few words on the principal symptom of a devotee

One who has fully surrendered to Lord Krsna will naturally only chant Lord Krsna's name. By the grace of the Lord, such a person is entitled to be called a sadhu. Only a devotee of Lord Krsna is eligible to be respected as a sadhu, and none other. One who proclaims himself a sadhu is but a charlatan and a braggart; one who humbly says he is a poor soul surrendered to Lord Krsna and who constantly chants Krsna's name is a real sadhu. He, considering himself lower than a blade of grass and more tolerant than a tree, offers all respects to others without expecting any for himself. The holy name of Krsna grants such a sadhu pure love of Godhead.

A Vaisnava firmly fixed in the holy name is the real sadhu; criticizing him is nama-aparadha

Hearing such a sadhu chant the holy name, one should offer him all respects, knowing him to be a perfect Vaisnava. A Vaisnava is the spiritual master of the world, a true friend of every being, and is always an ocean of compassion.

Anyone who criticizes such a Vaisnava goes directly to hell and suffers untold pains birth after birth. The doors of bhakti are closed to such an offender because devotional service is the merciful gift of a Vaisnava to the living entities. The Vaisnava is an abode of Lord Krsna's spiritual potencies; others receive Krsna-bhakti only by his confidential association.

This pure bhakti potency is distributed by a perfected pure devotee to the aspirant devotee, and that devotee, becoming perfect, distributes it to another aspirant. Thus the bhakti potency expands. The three great touchstones of bhakti sakti are the mercy of the pure devotee in the form of his eatable remnants, the water from his foot bath, and the dust from his lotus feet.

How a Vaisnava imbues his potency in others: By remaining in the presence of a Vaisnava for some time, one absorbs the bhakti energy flowing from the body of that saintly person. If one is sufficiently faithful, he can bind that energy within his own heart and experience immediate ecstasy. By just a moment's association with a Vaisnava, bhakti is invoked in the heart of a pious person, who will immediately be inspired to chant Lord Krsna's name; gradually, the holy name will award him all good qualities.

[Footnote 1 by Bhaktivinoda]

The potency or sakti of pure devotion is a blend of hladini (Krsna's pleasuregiving potency) and samvit (Krsna's knowledgegiving potency). Bhakti reposes in the heart of the transcendentalist and uses him as a vehicle for further movement. When a jiva becomes free from envy and is inclined to devotional service, the bhakti potency is then transferred from the pure devotee's heart into that jiva's heart, where it takes shelter of his soul and achieves perfection there. This is a great mystery. [End of footnote 1]

There are four kinds of blasphemy of a devotee

The offender criticizes a Vaisnava about his caste, or some unpremeditated accidental fall-down, or the last traces of his previous sins, or his sinful activities prior to his surrendering to Lord Krsna. Such an offender will never develop a taste for chanting the holy name.

One who has taken complete shelter of the pure devotional process is considered a pure Vaisnava. The four abovementioned faults may be present in him, but he is totally free from all other shortcomings. Hence, criticizing him spells doom for the offender. The glories of the holy name are propagated by the Vaisnava, and Lord Krsna does not tolerate any criticism against him. One may discard all other activities like religiosity, yoga, sacrifices, fruitive activities, empirical knowledge and so on; if one simply chants the holy name, that is the quintessence of spiritual culture.

The sadhu takes complete shelter of the holy name

Never criticizing demigods or other scriptures, the Vaisnava simply chants the holy name. Regardless of whether such a sadhu is a householder or a sannyasi, one should eagerly take the dust from his lotus feet. The purity of a Vaisnava is judged by how much attraction or rati he has for the name. His purity has nothing whatsoever to do with his official status as a Vaisnava, or his wealth, erudition, youth, pleasing appearance, strength or following.

One who aspires to take shelter of the holy name must shun the propensity to criticize devotees. Pure devotion in the chanting of the holy name depends on association with the pure devotee and his pure devotion. Without this association, everything becomes perverted and spoilt. Bhakti immediately recedes at the first indication of sadhuninda, which immediately becomes nama-aparadha. Let the aspirant devotee reject sadhuninda and associate with and serve the pure devotees.

There are two types of bad association, the first being association with women

The proper Vaisnava behavior is to avoid asatsanga or bad company that influences a person to disrespect a sadhu. Bad association is of two kinds. The first is association with a woman, which means either to have illicit connection with a woman other than one's wife, or to be excessively fond of one's own wife. The scriptures permit a husband only a properly regulated relationship with his spouse. Keeping company with a licentious or henpecked man also falls within this first category of asat sanga or bad association.

Non-devotees are of three kinds

The second type of bad association is to mix with nondevotees. There are three kinds of non-devotees: the Mayavadi, the dharmadhvaji (pretender), and the nirisvara (atheist). Mayavadis never accept the Supreme Lord's form as being eternal. They say the Deity form of the Lord is material, and that the jiva is also a product of maya. A dharmadhvaji is a person who has no devotion or attachment in the heart but makes a show of it externally. He wears the clothes of a devotee to accomplish materialistic ends. A nirisvara is a nonbeliever who rejects God outright. A serious aspirant or sadhaka must shun such bad association. If anyone argues that avoiding such nondevotees is sadhuninda, their company must also be shunned. One has to keep away from such bad association and take complete shelter of the holy name. Only then is love of Godhead ensured.

There are three kinds of devotees; the lowest is the kanistha devotee

The neophyte devotee (kanistha Vaisnava) displays a faith that is formal and worldly. He worships the Deity but has no service attitude towards the devotees of the Lord. He is almost a Vaisnava (Vaisnavapraya), but is not a real Vaisnava yet;

hence, he is not able to take full advantage of sadhusanga. Such a neophyte will have to receive the blessings of a pure devotee to advance further.

The madhyama devotee

The madhyama devotee knows well the importance of the Lord's devotees, and remains always in their association. He is convinced of Krsna's position as the Lord, the jivas as His eternal servants, the means of advancement as bhakti and the goal as prema. He is compassionate to the innocent and avoids the company of atheists.

The madhyama stage of devotee marks the beginning of pure Vaisnavism because at this stage one become eligible to chant the pure name. The madhyama devotee knows well the different effects of different types of association. He distinguishes between the Vaisnavas and the non-Vaisnavas, for he is especially required to serve the advanced devotees and avoid asatsanga and sadhu nindha. Indeed, this is his necessity. If he neglects to differentiate between the grades of devotees and between Vaisnavas and nonVaisnavas, then he stands to commit Vaisnava aparadha.

The uttama devotee

A pure devotee of the highest order sees Lord Krsna manifest everywhere and knows that everything rests in Him. He sees Krsna is his very life and soul. He is unconcerned with distinctions of who is a Vaisnava and who is not thus for him there is no regulation to serve a Vaisnava. His whole life revolves around the holy name, which he considers to be the essence of everything.

The scriptures declare that a kanistha devotee, being ignorant of the proper attitudes towards Krsna, the devotees and the holy name, is only capable of namabhasa chanting. A madhyama devotee is worthy of chanting the pure name: therefore he must always carefully avoid offenses to other devotees, so that his chanting will be pure. The uttama Vaisnava can never commit any offense, because he perceives Lord Krsna everywhere.

Every sadhaka should consider these points calmly and reflect upon his real position. First, he must stop sadhuninda. Then he should chant with firm faith, according to his status as a Vaisnava. He should aspire to become fixed on the madhyama platform through association with equal devotees, service to superior devotees, avoidance of nondevotees, compassion for all living entities and constant chanting of the holy name.

The remedy for sadhuninda

If anyone offends a devotee in a moment of delusion or madness, he must fall at the devotee's feet and repent bitterly and, weeping and full of contrition, beg

forgiveness. He should declare himself a fallen wretch, in need of that devotee's grace. A devotee is very merciful; his heart will soften and he will embrace the offender, thus exonerating him from his offenses.

Concluded Thakura Haridasa, "I offer this explanation of the first of ten nama-aparadhas at Your lotus feet."

One who is like a bumble-bee lingering the lotus feet of Srila Haridasa Thakura will find his life and soul in this Harinama Cintamani.

CHAPTER FIVE WORSHIPING THE DEMIGODS INDEPENDENTLY OF KRSNA IS THE SECOND OFFENSE

All glories to Lord Sri Gauranga, the life of Sri Gadadhara Pandit; all glories to Lord Nityananda, the heart of Srimati Jahnavadevi; all glories to Sri Advaita Acarya, the Lord of Mother Sita; all glories to all the devotees of Lord Caitanya.

Srila Haridasa Thakura continued speaking with folded hands: "O Lord of the Universe, now I pray that You may listen to my explanation of the second offense against the holy name." Visnutattva, or the principle of the Supreme Godhead Visnu Lord Visnu is the supreme nondual Absolute Truth. Though He is the ultimate lord of material creation, His own form is transcendental, being always situated in pure goodness. Lord Krsna in Goloka is the original and supreme form of Visnu. Krsna is embellished with sixty-four extraordinary excellences, and He is the shelter of all transcendental mellows. Lord Narayana possesses sixty of those excellences, and to a lesser degree of fullness than Him, so do Lord Visnu and the purusaavataras.

[Footnote 1 by Bhaktivinoda]

Lord Narayana, the Lord of Vaikuntha, is Lord Krsna's vilasavighraha or partial expansion. In Vaikuntha, the Sankarsana form of Narayana expands as Maha-Visnu, Who lies in the Causal Ocean. This is the first purusa expansion; the next is Garbodakasayi Visnu, the source of Brahma. He enters every universe as the purusaavatar. He further expands as Ksirodakasayi Visnu, the Supersoul within every living entity.

The three purusa expansions are known as Lord Visnu. Ksirodakasayi Visnu is the source of the incarnations like Matsya, Kurma, etc. All these incarnations are different forms of the same Visnu principle and are ornamented with sixty transcendental characteristics. The saktavesaavataras are jiva-tattva; in them the potency of the Lord has descended. They are Lord's separated expansions or

vibhinnamsa and are exemplified as Parasurama, Buddha, Prithu, and so on. [End of footnote 1]

The Supreme Lord's separated parts or vibhinnamsa are of two categories. The ordinary jivas possess only fifty of the Lord's transcendental characteristics, and these in lesser degree. But in the second category of jivas, including the demigods, the same fifty characteristics are found in full potency. Additionally, five more qualities are partially evident in Siva. These five qualities are exhibited in full potency only by the Visnu category. Thus the Visnu forms are adorned to the fullest degree with the fiftyfive qualities of the demigods. They furthermore display an extra five qualities for a total of sixty, which are visible to a degree of absolute fullness in Lord Narayana alone. Siva and the other demigods are the Supreme Lord's servitors. Though the demigods are superior jivas, the Supreme Lord Visnu is the master and controller of the jivas and demigods alike.

Out of sheer ignorance, people equate the Supreme Lord with the demigods

People who are ignorant of the Visnutattva principle try to equate the Supreme Lord with the demigods, but Siva and the other demigods are simply the order carriers of the Supreme Lord Visnu.

Mayavadis say that Brahman is really impersonal and formless, and that the worshipable forms of God (i.e. the three predominating deities of the modes of goodness, passion and ignorance) are material. But the scriptures unequivocally declare that Brahma only creates the material world and Siva only destroys it, while Lord Narayana or Lord Visnu maintains everything eternally, including Brahma and Siva and their cycles of creation and destruction. Therefore only He is the eternal worshipable Lord. Whoever worships other demigods and disregards Vasudeva, the Supreme Lord Narayana, rots eternally in the hell of material existence.

On the basis of the Vedas, some persons, accepting Lord Visnu as the all-pervading Absolute Truth, argue that since the Lord is present in all the demigods, the worship of demigods is equivalent to the worship of Lord Visnu. This argument is fallacious. The scriptures do not support the notion that the worship of the demigods is the same as the worship of Lord Visnu. In truth, Lord Visnu's worship accomplishes the worship of all the demigods. Hence, separate worship of demigods is not required.

The correct interpretation of the Vedic truth is: if Lord Visnu is omnipresent, then worship of Him is automatically worship of all the demigods. By watering the roots, a tree prospers, but by watering the limbs, leaves and branches, the tree withers and dies. Only foolish people who have forgotten all Vedic principles can commit such a mistake. They fail to understand that worship of Lord Visnu is an eternal activity in pure goodness, beyond the three material modes.

Due to the advent of Kali Yuga and the contamination of Mayavada, people disregard the supreme position of Lord Visnu and worship the demigods

independently of Him. Individual demigods offer only specific benefits, while the Supreme Lord Visnu alone can offer all benedictions. He is the maintainer of everyone. If only these greedy materialists could realize the advantage of worshipping Lord Visnu, they would abandon that kind of demigod worship.

A householder Vaisnava's responsibilities

The householder Vaisnava should simply worship Krsna in all of his duties and not worry about transgressing the Vedic codes. For example, in all samskaras from insemination (garbhadhana) to funeral rites (antyesthi), he should worship Krsna through the Vedic mantras. The real purport of the Vedic injunctions is that one should worship Visnu and the Vaisnavas directly and worship the forefathers and demigods by offering them the remnants of Visnu and Vaisnava worship.

If on the other hand the householder devotee worships the demigods or forefathers directly, as is the Mayavadi method, he commits the second offense to the holy name and is immediately disqualified from the path of pure bhakti.

Another dangerous form of this same namaparadha is to consider demigods like Siva to be separate supreme divinities. Such polytheism is a heinous offense. "Lord Visnu is the Supreme Godhead, but Lord Siva and the other demigods are also individual supreme godheads" such thinking is completely wrong.

One can, however, worship the demigods as gunaavataras, saktyavesaavataras or as Lord Visnu's servants. No one is independent of the Visnu's control, for He is the Supreme Controller and master of all energies. Demigods like Siva, Brahma, Ganesa and Surya have been invested with the Supreme Lord's potencies. Hence, they are powerful. The Supreme Lord is one, the rest are His energies.

The householder devotee should abandon outright all materialism in the execution of his duties. He should increase his mood of pure devotion while satisfying his social and religious obligations according to the varnasrama system. He should be convinced that just by worshipping Krsna and His devotees, all results will be attained.

[Footnote 2 by Bhaktivinoda]

Human society should conduct itself according to the guidelines of the varnasrama system; such a lifestyle is called sanatanadharma or 'eternal religion'. India is the land of piety (punyabhumi), and the varnasrama religious system was introduced and implemented there by great sages of yore. In other countries varnasrama is also present in some form, though it never evolved into the perfected socio-religious system that was established in India. Human nature cannot find full expression nor attain consummation without the social divisions of varna. [End of footnote 2]

Even the lowborn outcastes are fully eligible to enter devotional service to Krsna. But they must live their lives free from sin and offenses; they will do that only by submitting to the duties of householder life prescribed at least for the sudra class. Without situating oneself in one of the four varnas, there is no question of dharma or religious life. Even those desiring just their own material welfare respect the customs of varnasramadharmā. On the strength of worshipping Krsna in full surrender, one is gradually elevated through varnasramadharmā to the platform of saintliness. But if one follows the varnasrama system without worshipping Lord Krsna, he is doomed. Every householder is obliged to fulfil his varnasrama responsibilities. He should therefore live with restraint and accept only what is essential for serving Lord Krsna, and fulfill the formal rules and responsibilities of his varna. One easily accomplishes all this simply by chanting the holy name and engaging in devotional service. Moreover, one attains bhava or spiritual ecstasy by these same devotional practices. With the advent of bhava, one transcends the jurisdiction of rules and regulations.

As long as one needs a regulated, formal social life, he must remain within the bounds of varnasrama. But after the first stirrings of love of Godhead with the attainment of bhava, the jiva's own divine nature becomes apparent: he will then require no further inspiration from the external guidelines of varnasramadharmā. The mood of bhava is incomprehensible to materialistic persons because it is transcendently dynamic, appearing in a person by its own volition regardless of that person's varna or asrama. The Vaisnava householder who follows this path of Krsna conscious varnasramadharmā with singlemindedness, shunning the Mayavadi contamination, thus transcends the limits of varna and asrama.

Lord Visnu's name and qualities are not different from Him; lack of this knowledge is namabhasa

Lord Visnu's name, form, qualities and so on should never be viewed as being separate from the Lord Himself. He is nondual (advayatattva); as the complete whole, He is the Supreme Absolute. If due to ignorance someone has a dualistic concept of God, he can at best rise to the namabhasa stage of chanting, but he will never reach prema. Then again, if he can get the mercy of a bona fide spiritual master and can overcome his anarthas, he will attain the pure name by the progressive clearing process.

[Footnote 3 by Bhaktivinoda]

Selfopinionated philosophers fall into duality when they try to conceptualize God with their tiny brains. Imposing duality upon Lord Visnu is an offensive tendency that is very difficult to overcome. Mayavadi philosophers propose that Brahman is formless and impersonal, and that Lord Visnu's name, form etc are all products of illusion; with the lifting of the veil of illusion, they expect to perceive Lord Visnu as impersonal Brahman and nothing more. But such arguments are foolish and nihilistic. The Mayavadi viewpoint stems from madness and a

stubborn ignorance of the fact that the Supreme Lord is endowed with omnipotency. 'Omnipotent Brahman' is verily a name for the Supreme Person, Lord Visnu. [End of footnote]

The intelligence of the Mayavadi philosopher is extremely demented. Seeing that the material existence is variegated, he concludes that the spiritual existence, being opposite to the material realm, must be void. This incomplete, immature theorizing leads him to imagine Brahman as dry and impersonal. In its original state, Brahman has a name, form, qualities, pastimes and so on but the Mayavadi is incapable of accepting this truth. If he would accept it, Brahman would appear before him as Lord Visnu.

Mayavada is the wretched condition of human existence, and the pure devotee is the scourge of this mischievous philosophy. He establishes the correct scriptural viewpoint that the Supreme Lord is nondifferent from His name, form, pastimes and qualities.

Nirvisesa and Savisesa Visnu versus the Mayavadi notion of Brahman

Both the personal and impersonal features are inherent in Lord Visnu's divine Being. The Lord's acintyasakti (inconceivable potency) harmoniously displays His personal and impersonal aspects (savisesa, with variety, and nirvisesa, without variety). The Supreme One, by His acintyasakti, exhibits allattractive beauty and pastimes that silence all contradictory speculations about Him.

Human intelligence is limited and puny. It cannot easily fathom the Lord's inconceivable potency. So when a human being tries to conceive of a supreme truth with his inadequate brain, he can only come as far as the impersonal Brahman, which is a partial representation of the Absolute Whole. In this way he is diverted from the supreme goal of worship, Lord Visnu, whose lotus feet are worshiped even by the great demigods. Ignorant of the benefit he has lost, he becomes attached to the worship of impersonal Brahman. But anyone who comprehends the transcendental nature of the name, form and qualities of the Supreme Lord, knowing them to be not different from Him, can perceive Lord Krsna in His divine fullness by chanting His holy name purely.

Duality exists only on the material plane here a name is different from the object it identifies. But as this is not the case on the spiritual platform, it is a gross blunder to imagine such a difference between the Lord and His name, form, qualities and so on. The same pitfall entraps those who consider Siva and other demigods to be independent of the Supreme Lord's control.

Why devotees do not mix with Mayavadis

The devotee who has taken singleminded shelter in the holy name is a truly elevated soul. He worships Krsna and no one else as the Supreme Lord. He does not attack the deities of other scriptures, but worships and respects them as

servitors of Lord Krsna. He always refrains from dry speculation. When different scriptures try to establish the superiority of other demigods, it is only to facilitate the limited ability of a particular mentality to grasp the absolute truth. These scriptures are actually trying to elevate their followers to become devotees of Krsna. Therefore one should never criticize other scriptures and the demigods described therein, for such criticism is an offense.

A devotee should not accept remnants of food or garlands from a Mayavadi, even if they were offered to Lord Visnu, because a Mayavadi's worship is impure. A Mayavadi's chanting of the holy name is likewise offensive. The Lord never accepts the Mayavadi's offerings or worship. It is also an offense for the devotee to accept garlands and other remnants of demigod worship, for this is detrimental to the development of pure devotion. But if a devotee worships Krsna and offers His remnants to the demigods, it will not be offensive to receive these remnants, nor will one's spiritual development be hampered in any way.

A pure devotee must always avoid the second offense to the holy name and chant the name constantly. Thus he attains prema. His entire success is found in the holy name.

The remedy for the offense

Illusion and madness blind the jiva, and thus he thinks that others are also on the same platform as Lord Visnu. The only remedy is to repent intensely and meditate on Lord Visnu, Krsna, for by this remembrance all offenses are dissolved. Thereafter, one must meticulously avoid committing the same offense again.

Remembrance of the Lord is the most effective penance; the Vedas always recommend imperiled brahmanas to meditate upon the lotus feet of Lord Visnu for protection. Remembering the Lord's name is the same as meditating upon His lotus feet. The holy name can disperse all previous offenses, for it acts as the devotee's best friend. The Lord is an ocean of mercy and forgiveness. Like a dear friend, he forgives one for previous mistakes.

In conclusion, the devotee must disassociate himself from demigod worshippers and polytheists and seek the company of Vaisnavas who exclusively worship Krsna as their Supreme Lord.

One who is blessed with love and devotion and takes pleasure in serving Srila Haridas Thakura's lotus feet will find this book Harinama Cintamani as valuable as life itself.

CHAPTER SIX TO DISRESPECT AND DISOBEY THE SPIRITUAL MASTER (GURUAVAJNA)

IS THE THIRD OFFENSE

All glories to Sri Pancatattva and Sri Sri RadhaMadhava. All glories to Navadwipadhama, Vrajadhama, Jamunadevi and all the Vaisnava devotees.

Srila Haridasa Thakura said, "O Lord, kindly allow me to explain the third namaaparadha. This aparadha is to disobey the orders of the spiritual master and thus to disrespect him."

The soul travels through many lifetimes in different bodies and at last gets a chance at the rare human birth, which is auspicious in every respect. The soul has rotated through 8,400,000 different species, It is by ajnatasukriti or unintentional pious activities that the soul finally attains a human body. A birth in the human form is most uncommon, because only in that body are spiritual activities possible to perform, unlike any other species.

A demigod or denizen of the heavenly planets is destined only to enjoy the reactions of his past good karma. He cannot voluntarily initiate any spiritual activities. Animals are likewise bound by karmic reactions and are too steeped in gross ignorance to undertake any pious activities independently. The human birth alone is most conducive for spiritual life and service to the Supreme Lord.

A spiritual master is essential for everyone

Yet the fact remains that this body is transient. If one does not carefully endeavor for selfrealization, which is the greatest benediction, then he returns again to the endless cycle of birth and death. An intelligent person will therefore utilize this rare opportunity. He will search out a spiritual master who can lead him to the Supreme Lord Krsna.

[Footnote 1 by Bhaktivinoda]

Such a spiritual master is the only helmsman who can help the drowning jiva get across the ocean of material nescience. Only the most foolish persons will attempt to cross this ocean by their own intelligence. The achievement of any success in this world requires the help of a teacher's instructions. How, then, will one obtain perfection in the best of all subjects, spiritual science, without the aid of a teacher? He is who fit to teach this science is he who is self-realized and fully proficient in Krsna consciousness. [End of footnote 1]

A few of the characteristics of a bona fide spiritual master are that he is peaceful, unperturbed and a pure devotee of Krsna. He should be approached with humility. The jiva should satisfy him with service and receive from him formal initiation into the worship of Lord Krsna. Herein lies his best chance to surmount the material entanglement. The jiva's inherent love for Krsna lies dormant in the heart and can easily be revived by a qualified spiritual master.

But the jiva can just as easily lose this chance by challenging the spiritual master through speculative debates and mischievous logic. He must evade such pitfalls, surrender to the spiritual master's instructions and receive the proper mantra from him. As for householders, they should take shelter of a bonafide spiritual master and remain within the varnasrama system.

A good brahmana is fit to be a spiritual master

A brahmana is fit to be a spiritual master for all the other varnas or social orders as long as he is a devotee of Lord Krsna. But if a brahmana spiritual master is not available then a spiritual master from another varna should be searched out. If there is a choice, the householder would be best advised to accept initiation from a spiritual master in the brahmanavarna.

A real spiritual master is one who is conversant with the science of Krsna consciousness. A spiritual master can be from any varna or asrama, but he must be a kalpataru or touchstone that can fulfill the spiritual needs of people from all varnas and asramas. He must be able to give the jiva suddharati (pure attraction) for Krsna.

The prestige of having a spiritual master from a superior varna is a material consideration, because that prestige simply depends on the caste status of the one who judges the spiritual master's caste. The factor of caste rarely has any bearing on spiritual realization.

Necessity demands that one must find a spiritual master who is bonafide and qualified. If he happens to belong to a higher varna, so much the better. A householder may look for a spiritual master from a higher varna, and if he finds one who is qualified then he need not look for one from a lower varna. It must be noted well, though, that in looking for a 'high class' spiritual master, one should not choose an unqualified person simply for the prestige of having a spiritual master from a higher varna.

A renunciate should accept a sannyasaguru

If a householder leaves home to embrace the life of a renunciate but has not yet been satisfactorily trained in Krsna consciousness, he naturally requires a qualified spiritual master. For one who is determined to renounce, a spiritual master in the sannyasa order is best. By receiving spiritual guidance and initiation from a sannyasaguru, the renunciate will very quickly relish the ecstasy of chanting the holy name. If the householder previously had a qualified spiritual master, he should not, when planning to renounce householder life, disrespect or neglect that guru. Indeed, while he is in the grhasthasrama, the householder is advised to take shelter of a householder guru who is qualified and pure. That spiritual master should always be honored.

But if such a householder spiritual master is not available, one can take initiation from a qualified sannyasi even before leaving home. In any case, the spiritual master must be qualified. Under his instructions, the neophyte householder begins Krsna consciousness and gradually advances to experience transcendental loving emotions in the service of the Lord.

Only when the neophyte householder develops distaste for material life is he ready to become a sannyasi. This is a natural development of the practice of Krsna consciousness. Once he has actually renounced sense gratification, he is obliged to accept a sannyasi spiritual master. He must be trained in the life of renunciation from the sannyasaguru and accept from him the clothes or vesa of a mendicant.

Both diksaguru and siksaguru must be equally respected

There are two kinds of spiritual masters: the initiating spiritual master or diksaguru, and the instructing spiritual master or siksaguru. Both gurus have to be respected equally. This is the key to success in Krsna consciousness.

The diksaguru initiates his disciple into the chanting of the holy name and gives diksamantra. The siksaguru imparts sambandhajnana or the knowledge of the jiva's relationship with the Supreme Lord and his energies. The diksaguru is one but the siksaguru can be many. In fact, all the pure Vaisnava devotees who benedict the world by distributing the holy name are siksa-gurus. Both the diksaguru and the many siksagurus are to be equally respected.

The Vaisnava sampradayas

The four Vaisnava disciplic successions (sampradayas) are the only real schools of saintly teachers. These sampradayas have since days of yore disseminated the bona fide mantras, the proper scriptural conclusions, the authorized devotional process and the ultimate goal of life. If one wants to be saved from the perils of false doctrines, then he should surrender to a saintly spiritual master from one of the four Vaisnava schools.

The teachings left by the founderacaryas of the four sampradayas are to be especially honored. Sri Ramanuja, Sri Madhavacarya, Sri Nimbarkacarya, and Sri Visnuswami are the four original acaryas of the Vaisnava schools. One should accept only their teachings and conclusions and not others. One should receive spiritual initiation in one of these four sampradayas and not others.

The founderacarya is the principal siksaguru

The founderacarya of the sampradaya is the principal siksa-guru for the entire disciplic succession. Speculations that contradict his teachings are to be immediately rejected. Only a saintly devotee who has understood the teachings of the principal siksaguru is eligible to be a diksaguru for others. If one thinks that

he can be initiated by an unauthorized guru or a Mayavadi into these teachings, he errs severely. He will never attain Krsna consciousness.

One should accept only a pure devotee as his spiritual master

He who imparts wrong teachings and he who receives them are both destined for hell. One who has accepted teachings and conclusions outside the line of pure bhakti has wasted his life. How then can such a person become a spiritual master? How can he save other conditioned souls? He himself is in illusion and is therefore imperfect, so how can he bring good fortune to others? One must understand that a pure devotee is not an ordinary soul. The scriptures declare that only he is eligible to be worshipped as the spiritual master.

The principle of the spiritual master

The diksaguru and the siksaguru are both intimate associates of Lord Krsna. They are eternally situated in the Vraja mood of service, and they are manifestations of Lord Krsna's own energy.

[Footnote 2 by Bhaktivinoda]

Never make the mistake of judging the guru as an ordinary mortal. The spiritual master is the representative of Lord Krsna's potencies, sent by the Lord as the eternal master of the disciples. He must always be worshiped as an eternal associate of the Supreme Lord, empowered by the Lord's superior spiritual potency.

On the other hand, the spiritual master must never be considered to be the Supreme Lord Himself, for this is Mayavadi philosophy and is not in line with the pure Vaisnava conclusions. The Vaisnava devotees are very wary of such misinterpretations because the Mayavadi whirlpool of word jugglery is so contaminating to the heart. The spiritual master must always be worshiped according to the scriptural conclusions, for when properly executed, this worship results in pure Krsna consciousness. [End of footnote 2]

Gurupuja and how to respect the spiritual master

Before one can worship Krsna, he must first worship the spiritual master. While doing gurupuja, upacaras like seat, footwash, arghya, bath, cloth, ornaments and so on are to be offered; then with the spiritual master's permission one may begin worship of RadhaKrsna vigraha. The Deity's prasadam is given to the spiritual master first, then to the demigods and forefathers. Just as the disciple is required to get the spiritual master's blessings before worshipping RadhaKrsna, before chanting the holy name the disciple should remember the spiritual master and his instructions.

One who disrespects the spiritual master commits a serious offense that will expel him from the path of bhakti. The spiritual master, Lord Krsna, and the Vaisnavas must be worshiped with equal attention. Undeviating faith in the spiritual master will lead to pure chanting and the final goal of Krsnaprema.

When to reject a guru

If by some misfortune the spiritual master falls into bad association, he may gradually lose his spiritual realization and potency. At the time the disciple accepted him, the guru was exalted, famous and greatly realized. But offenses against the holy name are so dangerous that even a highly qualified soul becomes bewildered. In that condition he comes to detest Vaisnava company and the chanting of the holy name. Gradually, he is enslaved by lust, greed, wealth and women. If by the mercy of Lord Krsna the disciple sees through all this, he must reject that guru, seek out a pure devotee and under his spiritual guidance cultivate the pure chanting of the holy name.

The spiritual master must be strict

The spiritual master must be strict with his disciples. He must straighten out the prospective disciples before initiating them, and punish the wayward initiated ones. This is the symptom of a responsible spiritual master. A disciple's spiritual life is rendered useless if he serves and worships a slack, irresponsible guru. But as long as the relationship between the spiritual master and the disciple is stable (i.e. each remains qualified in his position) then there is no question of one rejecting the other.

The gurudisciple relationship is eternal. If both maintain their pure positions and are bona fide, their eternal relationship is never jeopardized. However, if the spiritual master is later exposed as perfidious, the disciple must immediately repudiate him. The same is to be done by the spiritual master if the disciple is similarly exposed. If such repudiation is not carried out by both parties when it is necessary, then they stand to be condemned.

A spiritual master must be tested before acceptance to insure that he is a pure devotee

One who disrespects the bona fide pure Vaisnava spiritual master is a reprobate fit to be shunned by all. It is advisable, therefore, that before accepting a spiritual master one should carefully choose the right person. Basically, the spiritual master must be a pure devotee of the Lord.

[Footnote 3 by Bhaktivinoda]

The scriptures recommend that both the spiritual master and the disciple place each other under strict scrutiny before mutual acceptance. This, then, precludes the acceptance of a kulaguru or traditional family guru. Of course, if the kulaguru is qualified, it is of immediate convenience to accept him; but if he is not, a pure devotee should be searched out and taken as one's spiritual master.

Since even ordinary household items are tested before acquisition, it is only an unfortunate fool who will fail to go through a testing period in the selection of the his true spiritual master, who is his ever wellwisher. The unqualified kulaguru, after he is offered due respect and worship, should be requested to release the disciple from all duties of allegiance. Having abandoned his connection to the family guru, the genuine aspirant then must seek out a qualified spiritual master.

The point is that one must not bring upon himself the calamity of having to reject his spiritual master. If one is prudent then he can avoid such a situation. One must be very careful not to commit any offense against a pure devotee guru. This is so disastrous it will ruin both men and demigods alike. [End of footnote 3]

How to serve the spiritual master

Never disrespect the articles used by the spiritual master: for instance, his seat, bed, shoes, vehicle, footstool, bath water, etc. Stepping on his shadow, worshipping another person in his presence, giving initiation while he is still alive, showing off spiritual knowledge in his presence and trying to control him are to be totally rejected.

Whenever and wherever one sees his spiritual master, he should offer his prostrated obeisances to him with prayers. The guru's name must be uttered with great reverence. His orders are never to be disobeyed. Always be eager to honor his remnants and do not say anything that is displeasing to him. Fall humbly at his feet and beg shelter from him and in this way act to please him. Simply by behaving thusly, one can easily develop a taste for chanting, which in turn offers all perfection. All this is confirmed in the Vedas. But if one offends the namaguru, the spiritual master who initiates one into the chanting of the holy name of the Lord, he will surely fall into the sinful company of atheists.

[Footnote 4 by Bhaktivinoda]

The namaguru teaches scriptural conclusions and reveals the esoteric nature of the holy name, and he initiates the disciple in the mantra consisting of the holy name. The Vaisnava diksaguru is the namaguru, and the diksamantra is namatmika, receiving its life from the holy name. The mantra loses its meaning and purpose if it is separated from the holy name, and conversely, simply by uttering the holy name of the Lord, the mantra is automatically chanted. [End of footnote 4].

The remedy for guruavajna

The only way to be pardoned for this offense is to forsake sinful company, cast away blasphemous literatures and throw oneself at the spiritual master's lotus feet, repenting piteously. As a compassionate Vaisnava, the spiritual master will surely be forgiving and bestow prema upon the disciple through the holy name.

I, the wretched author of Harinama Cintamani, am a sinner.
My only hope of redemption is the dust of the lotus feet of Haridasa Thakura.

CHAPTER SEVEN CRITICISM OF THE VEDIC SCRIPTURES (SRUTISASTRA NINDA) IS THE FOURTH OFFENSE

All glories to Srila Gadadhara Pandit, Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, Sri Nityananda Prabhu, Sri Advaita Acarya and all the devotees of Lord Gouranga.

Srila Haridasa Thakura said, "My Lord! To criticize the Vedic literature and other literatures in pursuance of the Vedic version is a serious offense that denies a person the ecstasy of pure devotion."

The Veda (sruti) is the only proof

The srutisastra (the Vedic literature), which includes the four Vedas, the Upanisads, the Puranas and other collorary scriptures, has emanated from the Supreme Lord Krsna's own lips. This literature establishes and proves the Absolute Truth. It contains transcendental knowledge that is beyond the range of the material senses, and it can be understood by Lord Krsna's grace alone.

The senses are capable of experiencing only material objects; transcendence lies completely beyond their bounds. The science of Krsna consciousness is purely spiritual: hence it is transcendental. That knowledge of transcendence has been mercifully given by Lord Krsna in the Vedic literature for the ultimate benefit of humanity. The word veda specifically refers to scriptural knowledge received through the proper authorized disciplic succession or parampara.

Human beings are born with four natural faults: they commit errors, they are subject to illusion, they have the propensity to cheat, and they have imperfect senses. Everything they do is tainted by these faults. Vedic literature is free from any mistakes or discrepancies. It is the only means to spiritual salvation. The Vedic knowledge was originally revealed by the mercy of Lord Krsna. It was compiled by sages who had received this knowledge while in samadhi, or total spiritual absorption, far beyond the range of the four natural human faults.

The sruti teaches ten principles

The Vedic literature teaches that both mundane fruitive activities (karma) and empirical speculative knowledge (jnana) are inferior paths. The conclusion is that perfection is available only through bhakti. The Lord gives karma and jnana for preliminary purification of the jivas, and afterwards gives pure bhakti.

In the Vedic literature there are ten principle instructions. The first is that the proof or basis (pramana) of real knowledge is the sruti. The other nine principles are prameyas ascertained from the pramana. These ten principles destroy nescience and establish true spiritual knowledge.

The nine ascertainable principles: the first three pertain to Krsna

The first of the nine prameyas is that Hari, Krsna, is the only Supreme Absolute Truth. The second is that He is omnipotent. The third is that He is Rasamurti, the embodiment of all spiritual mellows. He is the source of bliss for all living entities and He eternally resides in His abode in the spiritual sky. These first three teaching pertain to the Supreme Lord, Krsna.

The second three pertain to the position of the jiva

The fourth prameya is that the jiva is the Lord's separated part and parcel. The jivas are the infinitesimal eternal spiritual sparks of pure consciousness who comprise the innumerable living entities. The jiva is of two types: eternally conditioned, who populate the material world, and eternally liberated, who populate the spiritual world.

The fifth prameya is that the conditioned souls are enamored by the glitter of maya's illusory potency. They have forgotten Krsna and remain eternally in this phenomenal world, enjoying and suffering material existence.

The sixth prameya is that the eternally liberated jivas are associates of Lord Krsna. They reside in the spiritual world and enjoy transcendental loving relationships with the Lord. These three, then, are the teachings about the jiva found in the sruti.

The seventh prameya is acintyabhedabhedasambandha

Everything material and spiritual is acintyabhedabheda-sambandha (simultaneously one and different). The jivas and matter are inconceivably manifested from Lord Krsna's internal potency. Once knowing acintyabhedabhedatattva, the jiva understands that he is the servant of Krsna and is like the spark or ray of the spiritual sun that is Krsna.

The transformations of the Lord's energy are beyond the mind's grasp (acintya), says the sruti. But the so-called transformations of the Supreme Lord Himself that the Mayavadis would like to have us all believe in are only mischievous and offensive postulations.

Thus, so far, the above seven prameyas comprise sambandha-jnana or knowledge of the eternal connection between the Lord and his energies. The sruti further points out abhideya, which is the means to achieve prayojana, the supreme goal. Abhideya is devotional service

The nine limbs of devotional service are: hearing, chanting, remembering, worshiping, praying, rendering service, carrying out the orders of the Lord, being a friend of the Lord and completely surrendering to the Lord. The chanting of the holy name is the most important devotional activity, and for this reason the Vedas glorify the chanting of the syllable om. Devotional service (sadhanabhakti) has two divisions: vaidhi and raga. Abhideya, the ninefold process of sadhanabhakti, is the eighth prameya.

Prayojana is Krsnaprema

By the mercy of Lord Krsna, the jiva who takes shelter of abhideya will attain Krsnaprema or love of Godhead. Krsna prema is the prayojana (necessity and ultimate goal) of the jiva; it is the ninth prameya.

[Footnote 1 by Bhaktivinoda]

Pure devotion is indicated by the human proclivity to always render favorable devotional service to Krsna. Such devotion strives only for further excellence in service, being satisfied with nothing else. Pure devotion is uncontaminated by fruitive activity or empirical knowledge. The Vedic literature recommends that we cultivate pure devotion by taking full shelter of the holy name. [End of footnote 1]

These nine basic principles were ascertained from the sruti by learned spiritual masters who taught them for the guidance of all conditioned souls. But those who criticize the sruti, the very source of spiritual knowledge, are offenders against the holy name and are known as the lowest among men.

Philosophers who opposed the sruti

Jaimini, Kapila, Nagna, Carvaka, Sugata Buddha and Gautama were philosophers who propagated theories based on mundane logic and reasoning. Some of them did some lip service to the teachings of the sruti, but they all rejected God. Jaimini proclaimed that the best knowledge the sruti has to offer is the fruitive ritualistic portion known as karmakanda. Kapila dared to argue that

God is imperfect. He accepted the process of yoga, but without understanding its real goal realization of Paramatma. Nagna spread poison by teaching tantric practices in the mode of ignorance. Carvaka Nastika was an atheist who never accepted the Vedic authority, and Sugata devised his own path of religion in place of the sruti. Gautama propagated logic and did not worship the Supreme Lord.

These mischievous interpretations are in fact offenses against the Vedic literature. Through sophism, such philosophers speak halftruths that are likely to confuse the ordinary listener, though a learned devotee knows their sole object is to defame the sruti. One who develops faith in these theories becomes an offender. Therefore the devotee avoids hearing them.

The Mayavadi philosophy is equally as dangerous, for it suppresses bhakti in the heart of the jiva. Mayavadi philosophy is factually camouflaged Buddhism. On the Lord's behest, Siva became its chief proponent in the Kaliyuga. As Jaimini seemingly upheld Vedic authority but practically propounded a warped version of the Vedic conclusions, similarly Mayavadi philosophers pervert Vedic proofs to establish their covert Buddhism. Thus they hide the essential message of the sruti, which is the science of devotional service.

Astavakra, Dattatreya, Govinda, Gaudapada, Sankaracarya and his followers are wellknown Mayavadi philosophers. In Buddhism, the principal teaching is the nonexistence of the soul, and there is no concept of Brahman. The theory of nothingness, the last word in Buddhism, is rendered by the Mayavadis into the concept of the formless, impersonal Brahman which they argue is beyond matter. Such ideas diametrically oppose the eternal science of devotional service. Any affiliation with such thoughts automatically makes the jiva commit namaparadha.

The direct meaning is the real meaning

When all the principle understandings of the Vedic philosophy are brought together, they add up to pure devotional service by which the jiva attains pure love of Godhead. Wherever the principle understandings are applicable, it is wrong to substitute secondary understandings in their place. These principle meanings all indicate the science of Krsna consciousness. To artificially impose secondary meanings upon the Vedic statements is a sin that distances one from the Absolute Truth.

From beginning to end, the srutisastra expounds the superexcellence of the syllable om. The omkara is a name of Krsna, and by chanting the Lord's name, the jiva attains the Lord's supreme abode. The Vaisnava devotees of the Sri Sampradaya chant om as a holy name of the Lord. The Vedas declare the holy name to be the transcendental form of the Supreme Lord in this material world; even namabhasa, the holy name's indistinct appearance, grants all perfection. Only unfortunate fools will purposefully disregard such Vedic teachings and thus ruin their lives by offenses.

The sruti teaches pure chanting of the holy name

The devotee who takes shelter of the pure name accepts the absolute authority of the Vedas, and quickly attains the nectar of the name, Krsnaprema. The sruti proclaims that by chanting the holy name of Hari, one experiences ecstatic bliss. Further, it is declared that the eternally liberated residents of the spiritual sky are always engaged in chanting the pure name.

Mayadevi engages the presentday critics of the sruti in sinful practices

As Kaliyuga degrades, more and more people worship maya, the material energy. Even so-called great devotees give up the opportunity to chant the Supreme Lord Krsna's holy name, which is full of ecstasy, and instead take up tantric worship in the mode of ignorance. Evercritical of the Vedic literature, they swerve from the real path of religion to eat meat, drink alcohol and perform other sinful activities. These offenders can never receive the shelter of the name, nor can they enter the Supreme Lord's eternal abode of Vrndavana.

Mayadevi engages such atheists in everincreasing sin, depriving them of the nectar of chanting the holy name. The superior spiritual energy is Lord Krsna's original and primeval energy. Maya (Durga, Kali) is its shadow. Her intention is to rectify the erring jivas who drift away from Krsna and bring them back to Krsna consciousness. Indeed, this is her prime duty to the Lord.

[Footnote 2 by Bhaktivinoda:]

Maya showers two kinds of graces - niskapata (honest and unrestricted) and sakapata (capricious and illusory). By her niskapata mercy she gives bhakti by way of jnana (bhaktijnanamisra). Her sakapata mercy gives temporary pleasures that overwhelm the jiva, bringing him under the control of illusion. And when she is thoroughly merciless, she casts the jiva into brahmasayuja liberation; thus he is doomed.

But she becomes pleased when someone renders service to a saintly Vaisnava, and showers him with her true mercy, connecting him to Lord Krsna's lotus feet. Maya is an eternal maidservant of Lord Krsna. She punishes the wayward jivas who drift away from Krsna's service, for those who want to serve maya are simply cheaters who can never know happiness. Yet Mayadevi rewards those who chant the holy name. She helps them cross over the ocean of material nescience. [End of footnote 2]

The remedy for srutininda

One must avoid committing the offense of criticizing the Vedic scriptures and constantly chant the holy name. If one inadvertently criticizes the sruti, he should

sincerely repent his error by properly glorifying the sruti. He should worship the Vedic literature and the Srimad Bhagavatam with great joy and respect, offering them flowers and tulasi. The Srimad Bhagavatam is the essence of the Vedic teachings and is the scriptural incarnation of Lord Krsna. The Bhagavatam will certainly shower mercy upon the offender, because the Bhagavatam is an ocean of mercy.

One who hankers for the dust of the lotus feet of Srila Haridasa Thakur will wear this gem necklace called Harinama Cintamani around his neck.

CHAPTER EIGHT TO CONSIDER THE GLORIES OF THE NAME AS IMAGINARY (ARTHAVADA HARINAMA KALPANAM) IS THE FIFTH OFFENSE

All glories to Lord Gauranga and Srila Gadadhara Pandita; all glories to Sri Sri Radha Madhava. All glories to the places of Lord Gauranga's pastimes and all the Vaisnava devotees of the Lord.

"O Lord Gauranga! The fifth namaparadha is to think that the glories of the holy name are exaggerated, as for example when one thinks, 'The scriptural presentation of the glories of the Lord's holy name is not entirely true, because hyperbole has been employed to increase the readers' faith in the chanting of the name.'"

It is a fact that in the karmakanda and jnanakanda sections of the Vedas, ritualism and philosophical speculation have been overly praised. Such praises are intended to elicit interest in these processes. But the same is not true in the case of the holy name. Therefore to think so is an abominable offense.

The glories of the holy name

The Puranas (smritisastras) say that anyone who chants the holy name, whether with faith or neglect, attracts the mercy of Lord Krsna. The holy name is the purest form of knowledge; it is the best of all vratas or vows and the highest meditation; it gives the most auspicious fruits; it is the greatest renunciation; it gives incomparable peace; it is the most pious of holy works; it is the supreme path of selfrealization; it is the greatest liberation and goal; it is the topmost destination; it is the best devotional service; it is the purest inclination; it gives love of Godhead and is the essence of remembrance of the Lord; it is the cause of all causes, the Supreme Absolute Truth; it is the most worshippable object and acts as the supreme spiritual master.

'A thousand names of Lord Visnu is equal to one name of Lord Rama, and

three names of Lord Rama are equal to one name of Lord Krsna': thus the holy name's transcendental nature is ever glorified in the scriptures. One goes to hell for thinking the the glories of the name are exaggerated

Only a hardened atheist thinks that the passages of the sruti and smriti scriptures describing the superexcellent qualities of the name contain exaggerations. Whoever commits such an abominable offense rots eternally in hell. Offenders claim that misrepresentations have been made to increase attraction for chanting. They have no idea of the purport of the scriptures and of what is beneficial for humanity, because they take everything backwards.

Because they have no reserve of previous pious activities (bhaktisukrti), they can never develop faith in the scriptural science of devotional service. The chanting of the holy name is the best form of devotional service. Without sufficient piety a person can neither acquire a taste for chanting nor have adequate faith in its results. Those who are attached to just one section of the scriptures (i.e. karmakanda) cannot perceive the essential meaning of the scriptures.

There is no appeal to selfishness in the methodology of the holy name

The exaggerations in the karmakanda section of the Vedas appeal to ambitious materialists. Concessions to selfishness are absent from the scriptural presentation of the method of chanting the holy name in pure devotion. The scriptures frankly declare that the results of the karmakanda process are merely transient sensual enjoyments, whereas the results of chanting the holy name and engaging in Krsna's service are eternal and permanent.

In the chanting of the holy name of the Lord, capriciousness, cheating and exaggeration are shunned. For instance, when a devotee inspires someone to chant, he does so without self-interested motives. He engages another in Krsna's service only for the pleasure of Krsna. Though attractive material results of chanting the holy name may be mentioned in some scriptures, a pure devotee pays no heed to them, for he is beyond material desire.

But the officiator of a ritualistic sacrifice displays explicit selfishness, for as a matter of course he expects remuneration. Since the scriptures declare that chanting begets unlimited auspicious results, why do such seekers of fruitive rewards minimize the glories of the holy name?

The follower of karmakanda is supposed to gradually realize that pious fruitive works, being material, give only unimportant fruits. He should then perform his duties free of self interest. This will purify his heart and help him to see the need for chanting the holy name. A purified heart strives for self-realization and is naturally repelled by material activities.

Thus the real success of karma kanda, when performed without material motivation, is attraction for the chanting the holy name of the Lord. Pious results that a brahmana could not accrue anywhere in the entire universe are easily

obtained by chanting Krsna's name. The supreme position of the chanting of the holy name cannot be diminished by the envious statements of stubborn karmis and jnanis.

Simply by namabhasa chanting one gains all the results of the paths of karma and jnana. So if mere namabhasa offers such wonderful results, then surely the pure name will offer so much more, unlimitedly. Therefore, whatever results the scriptures say are gained from chanting are easily obtainable by the devotee who is attached to the pure name.

There is no point in objecting to what the Lord Himself has wrought

One who doubts this fact is a sinner who is doomed because of committing namaparadha. All the revealed scriptures the Vedas, Ramayana, Mahabharata, the Puranas and others are filled with glorifications of the superexcellence of the holy name. What can the person who blatantly disregards this evidence expect? He is simply abominable.

The holy name and the Lord Himself are the same. Krsna personally positioned the chanting of His holy name at the very top of all auspicious activities. He is fully independent, autocratic and omnipotent. All processes have come into force due to His energy. He invested karma kanda with his material energy, and jnana kanda with his impersonal energy. Krsna then invested of His own accord His entire personal potency in the syllables of His holy name. There is no point in objecting to these arrangements. An intelligent person will therefore carefully avoid offending the allpowerful name of the Lord.

The remedy for the arthavada offense

If this namaparadha is somehow committed, the offender has to go humbly to the assembly of Vaisnavas and attentively listen to the narrations of the pastimes and qualities of the Supreme Lord from the lips of a pure devotee. Full of remorse, the offender must admit his transgression against the holy name and beg forgiveness from the Vaisnavas. The Vaisnavas are realized in the glories of the name, and they will mercifully deliver the offender from his sins by embracing him. The offender, now purified, will be protected from further onslaughts of maya.

If a devotee meets or even just sees the face of an unrepentent doubter of the power of the holy name, he should immediately plunge himself, fully clothed, into the Ganges for purification; if the Ganges is not nearby, he should bathe in some other pure water. In the event that this also is not possible, he should purify himself by bathing mentally.

One who takes shelter of the mercy of Krsna's dear companion, His flute, will be adorned by the glory of Harinama Cintamani.

CHAPTER NINE
TO COMMIT SIN ON THE STRENGTH OF CHANTING THE HOLY
NAME
(NAMNO BALAD YASYAHI PAPABUDDHI)
IS THE SIXTH OFFENSE

All glories to Sri Gadadhara Pandit and Lord Sri Gauranga; all glories to Lord Nityananda, the life of Srimati Jahnadevi; all glories to Sri Advaita Acarya and Mother Sita; all glories to Srila Srivas Pandit and all the devotees of Lord Caitanya.

Chanting destroys all anarthas

Srila Haridasa Thakur continued by explaining that the holy name is eternally situated in pure goodness. Those jivas who take shelter of Krsna's holy name are most fortunate, because chanting soon removes the anarthas from their hearts. Consequently, hridaya daurbalyam (weakness of heart) disappears.

As faith in the Lord's holy name becomes firm, the propensity to sin is totally extirpated. All previous sins are then dissolved, and the heart shines with positive purity. Sinful activities sprout from the seeds of sinful desire in the heart, and the sinful desire seeds are rooted in ignorance; these three (ignorance, the seeds of sin and sin) are the source of all suffering for the conditioned soul. Not being able to bear the sufferings of His dependent parts and parcels, the Lord in His infinite compassion gives them help through the process of bhaktiyoga by which the lust to enjoy the senses is driven from their hearts.

As one practices bhakti, he finds materialistic endeavor to enjoy wealth and women repulsive. He follows the path of righteousness, being satisfied in his service to the Lord. He accepts only what is favorable for executing devotional service and rejects that which is unfavorable. He has absolute conviction in all situations that Lord Krsna is his protector, savior and maintainer. He is free from attachments to the body and the notions of 'me' and 'mine.' In a humble state of mind, he constantly chants the holy name of the Lord. Such a person is never again inclined to sinful activities.

Previous sin and its faint residue are also destroyed

Chanting gradually diminishes the propensity to sin and simultaneously purifies the consciousness. As the inclination to commit sinful activities vanishes, taste for the holy name appears, though a faint residue of previous sinful activity still lingers on in the consciousness. The receding sinful reactions leave an odor of sinful habit (papa gandha), but the chanter's contact with the name engenders a strength of willpower and a purity of mind that overcomes this clinging smell of sin. Lord Krsna promised Arjuna that His devotees will never be in danger of

destruction. If there are reverses He personally comes to His devotees' rescue. The devotees' sins are annihilated by the Lord's mercy alone. The empirical philosopher or jnani may subdue his sins with great efforts and penance, but as soon as he leaves or denies the shelter of Lord Krsna's lotus feet, he immediately falls down. The scriptures testify that whoever simply embraces the Lord's protection is an elevated soul, and his progress will never be impeded by obstacles.

There is no need for ritualistic penances or prayascitta

By chance, a devotee may commit some sin, but still he does not have to undertake the penance of prayascitta. Such sins are a passing phase that will be drowned in the nectar of the holy name. The devotee is never lost from the path of pure devotion.

However, if a devotee again commits another sin, this time calculating that the strength of holy name will counteract the reaction, then he is not fixed on the path of pure devotion. Rather, he is a deceitful person doomed by his offenses to the holy name. Scripture affirms that there is a vast difference between sin committed due to sudden weakness or mistake and due to premeditation.

Just being inclined to this namaparadha is utterly ruinous

For karmis, the means to get free of sinful reaction is the performance of prayascitta in repentance. But if someone even contemplates relieving himself of the reaction of deliberate sin by exploiting the purifying strength of holy name, he is utterly ruined, and no amount of prayascitta will help him. Even after untold retribution in hell, he will not be absolved from this mental namaparadha. If just the inclination to commit sin on the strength of chanting results in such tribulations for the soul, the fate of one who acts on that inclination is too terrible to envision.

This namaparadha is inevitable for the cheaters

The scriptures declare the holy name to be so potent that it can eradicate a burden of sins that even in ten million lifetimes could not be committed. Even the gravest of sins are counteracted just in the 'namabhasa' stage of chanting. And that is precisely why the cheats and charlatans are attracted to the chanting of the holy name. They forsake the responsibilities of honest labor as being drudgery and, disguised in the renunciate's attire, travel from country to country, their hearts smoldering with desires for wealth and women. Such persons are called markata vairagis or 'monkey renunciates'.

These unfortunate fellows dress as sannyasis but nurture the householder mentality. They are nothing more than dead weights upon mother earth and human society and must be avoided. A devotee who has taken shelter of the holy name can live in any situation in household life or in the forest as a hermit. If the

household situation is conducive to chanting, then the life of a mendicant is unnecessary, but if household life is unfavorable, the devotee is dutybound to forsake it. In either case, it is a terrible offense to commit sins on the strength of chanting. Such an offender is forever banished from the path of devotional service.

Devotees in the namabhasa stage of chanting must beware of such cheating company because that company will have an evil influence on them they will also fall down into committing this dreaded namaparadha. As for those who are chanting the pure name, they are always free from this namaparadha.

Pure devotees are free from the ten namaparadhas

Devotees who have taken complete shelter of chanting the pure name are never prone to commit any of the ten namaparadhas. The holy name Himself protects these pure devotees who have surrendered themselves to chanting. But as long as the pure name has not dawned in the heart of the devotee, he is always threatened by the danger of committing namaparadha. Therefore devotees in the namabhasa stage have to particularly avoid this offense of committing sin on the strength of chanting.

Vigilance is required in the namabhasa stage

A devotee must seek the association of pure devotees who chant the holy name without offense, and he should personally be very alert against committing offenses. One who chants the name purely is of fixed mind and consciousness, since he never deviates from thinking about Krsna for even a moment. As long as one has not strengthened his chanting to the point of full surrender to the holy name, he must be very vigilant to avoid offenses. He must especially guard against the offense of committing sin on the strength of chanting. He should continuously chant the holy name and thus attract his spiritual master's mercy, which yields sambandhajana. This knowledge reveals the science of pure devotion and the pure holy name.

The remedy for this namaparadha

If by some error one commits this namaparadha, one must go before an assembly of pure Vaisnavas. The propensity to sin is like a highway robber, and the pure devotees are like the guardians of the path who come to one's aid when the someone calls aloud for their help. Just hearing that call, the robber immediately runs away, fearing that the guards will come. The guardians, the pure Vaisnavas, will console the devotee with soothing words and assurances of their protection.

I, the author of Harinama Cintamani, am a useless wretch. I recite this composition having taken shelter of the pure Vaisnavas.

CHAPTER TEN
TO INSTRUCT THE GLORIES OF THE HOLY NAME TO THE
FAITHLESS
(ASRADDADHANA VIMUKHE'PY ASRNVATI)
IS THE SEVENTH OFFENSE

All glories to Lord Sri Gauranga, the life of Sri Gadadhara Pandit; all glories to Lord Nityananda, the heart of Srimati Jahnavadevi; all glories to Sri Advaita Acarya, the Lord of Mother Sita; all glories to Srila Srivasa Pandit and all the devotees of Lord Caitanya.

With his hands folded and in a soft voice Srila Haridasa Thakur said, "Now please hear about another namaparadha". Sraddha (faith) is essential for chanting the holy name

The foremost requirement for chanting Krsna's holy name is sraddha or firm faith. One who is bereft of it cannot hear the name and is therefore unfit to chant. High birth, respectable family, knowledge, strength, learning or wealth are not qualities that make a person eligible to chant the name. The scriptures extol sraddha to be the one indispensable ingredient for proper chanting. Lord Krsna's name is the jiva's most valuable treasure. Faith means to have complete conviction that chanting Lord Krsna's name will automatically fulfill all duties and complete all pious activities. Those who do not possess such faith are unfit to chant.

It is an offense to instruct the faithless on the holy name

According to Vaisnava etiquette, a person who does not have faith in the name should not be initiated into chanting. If a faithless person is initiated into chanting or is instructed about the glories of the holy name, then he will only defile and neglect the name. This is the statement of scripture. The swine will crush the pearls strewn before it and the monkey will tear the cloth it is given; the faithless person will likewise increasingly offend the holy name and thus invite his doom. Simultaneously, the initiating guru will be dragged down by his share in these offenses. Very soon, he will be forced off the path of devotional service.

What is to be done if a faithless person wants to be initiated

The faithless person sometimes slyly comes to the Vaisnavas to beg initiation into chanting. The devotee should see through this pretentious cheating and refuse him initiation. The pretender thinks, "The holy name of Krsna is the allpurifying agent, and once I've received the name I will not have to worry about committing sins. Besides, when I chant people will respect and worship me as a Vaisnava then I can extract a goodly amount of service from them. The prestige I

have lost by my bad deeds will be regained fully by chanting; such a loss will never occur again. I shall at last become very happy in material life", etc. The devotee should demand of the pretender his full renunciation of dishonesty. To become worthy of initiation, he must at once neglect his desires for distinction and adoration, and should instead try to develop sraddha for the holy name.

Only when faith in the holy name is present in the heart can one be initiated into chanting. The holy name then carries the chanter across the material ocean of nescience. But as long as one has not developed sufficient sraddha, he is unfit to chant. One should hear the glories of the holy name from a saintly Vaisnava. Becoming humble by hearing his instructions, he should cast aside material desires and begin to chant. When the Vaisnava spiritual master perceives the proper degree of sraddha in the candidate, he initiates him into the greatest spiritual treasure Krsna's holy name. But to initiate a faithless person is an abominable offense. The guru goes to hell if he gives initiation to a faithless person for remuneration.

If the guru knows that a person who has approached him for initiation is an insincere, faithless pretender, and yet he still heedlessly initiates this unfit person out of consideration for the material gain it may bring him, he is condemned as a namaparadhi. If the guru was unable to make a correct assessment and gave the candidate initiation only to later discover that he is a pretender, he must make immediate redress for his mistake.

The remedy for this namaparadha

If it was due to inadvertence and lack of experience that the mistake of instructing and initiating a faithless person occurred, the initiating spiritual master should be filled with fear and remorse. He has to publicize his offense before the Vaisnava community and reject that insincere disciple, excommunicating him. If the guru fails to act promptly, he will gradually sink into the depths of moral depravity and illusion, and be disenfranchized from the path of devotion.

Lord Caitanya's instructions to preachers

Srila Haridasa Thakur said, "O Lord Caitanya, in Your instructions to those You have ordained to propagate the holy name, You specifically give warning about this. Preachers may instruct the glories of the holy name only to the sraddhavan (persons with sraddha).

"This the way by which the whole world will be inundated with the chanting of the holy name: with loud congregational chanting, the holy name is to be propagated widely among the masses. Those who are faithful will come forward and choose a bona fide spiritual master, receiving instructions and initiation in the name from him. By sincere chanting they will surely obtain love of Godhead, Krsnaprema.

"Prostitutes, criminals, cheaters and other sinful people should first be made to give up their unrighteous, harmful ways. Sincere faith should then be implanted in their hearts by good association. When their faith in Krsna's holy name matures, only then may they receive initiation. This is the duty of a preacher as he goes from place to place.

The result of this namapardha

"If, without paying heed to Your instructions, a guru initiates an insincere pretender, he commits a grievous offense for which he goes to hell. The namapardhas committed by the charlatan disciple slowly but surely diminish the guru's spiritual potency, and finally the guru is ruined. This offense has a devastating effect on both the guru and the disciple they both must enter hell.

Sraddha first, then initiation

"My dear Lord, You were very merciful to Jagai and Madhai. These brothers were born in a brahmana family, their original names being Jagadananda and Madhavananda. They became known as the worst rascals in Navadvipa due to their virulent and violent acts. First You invoked faith in them and then You gave them the holy name. O Lord, Your character and activities are exemplary, and they spread illumination throughout the world. Let everyone follow Your wonderful example."

Those who are servants of the servants of the Vaisnavas are entitled to wear the precious gem of this Harinama Cintamani.

CHAPTER ELEVEN TO EQUATE CHANTING WITH OTHER PIOUS ACTIVITIES (DHARMA VRATA TYAGA HUTADI) IS THE EIGHTH OFFENSE

All glories to Lord Gauracandra, the avatara Who delivers the holy name; all glories to the holy name, the essence of all Vedic conclusions.

Srila Haridasa Thakur continued, "O Lord, other pious activities can never be equal to chanting the name."

The original form of the holy name

The Supreme Lord is like a transcendental sun Whose potency is unlimited, everpure and allpervading consciousness. All His endless expansions exhibit this

absolute transcendental consciousness, as do His name, abode, and pastimes. Unlike forms of inert matter which are separate from their names, his direct names are not different from Him.

Descending from Goloka, having been summoned by the chanting of the pure devotee, the holy name enters that devotee's soul. The pure name then emanates out of the soul and permeates his entire body, dancing on the tip of his tongue. One who chants understanding this is actually chanting the holy name, but one who nourishes a material concept of the name is drowned in despondency and suffers eternally in hell; a devotee should never see the face of such an offender.

The scriptures declare Lord Krsna to be the only object of research for seekers of the Absolute Truth. According to their abilities, different researchers adopted their own means to find that one goal. Thus different paths like karma, jnana and bhakti are delineated. Those who are attached to gross materialism are recommended the path of karma for purification. For souls attracted to the illusionism of maya, the suggested path is the cultivation of monistic philosophy. But for all jivas, pure devotional service is the best and most suitable.

What is subhakarma?

Persons pursuing mundane existence take to the worship of the Supreme Lord out of fear of death. The Lord's lotus feet are the perfect shelter, free from all anxiety, and are the only means to cross over the ocean of nescience. But when the process to obtain the protection of the Lord becomes colored by material motives, then the process itself becomes mundane. Even though it is the Lord who is being worshiped, because the process of worship is mundane, the worship becomes materially pious activity or subhakarma.

Subhakarma includes: altruistic work, fire sacrifices, ablutions, charity, yoga, the practice of varnasramadharmas, pilgrimages, vows, offerings to forefathers, meditation, cultivation of empirical knowledge, propitiation of demigods, penances, austerities, etc. All these activities are means to mundane objectives. But after a long period of practice of subhakarma, the performer gradually obtains the real goal of all his endeavors—the shelter of the lotus feet of the Supreme Lord. At this juncture, he must abandon the temporary ways of subhakarma, for he now knows the genuine essence of all religious duties—bhakti, devotion to the Lord.

Subhakarma is indeed a viable path for conditioned souls to attain the ultimate goal, i.e. love of Godhead. Yet one fact must be clearly stated—reaching perfection through subhakarma is a time-consuming affair. The ultimate objective is Krsna-prema, which is fully spiritual, but on the subhakarma path, the means to attain it is mundane. Thus there is a gulf of difference between the means and the objective.

[Footnote 1 by Bhaktivinoda]

The evolution of the jiva from mundane religiosity to Krsna consciousness is the master plan of Providence, which impels the jiva to aspire for perfection. The conditioned souls cannot exist without contacting matter. All their thoughts and activities are intimately woven into the fabric of materialism. Pious activities (subhakarma) provide a means for the jiva to approach pure devotion through skillful efforts of material contact. Simultaneously, this contact with matter gives rise to discontent and suffering. Therefore, to achieve the bliss of Krsna consciousness, in the end the jiva must give up subhakarma. [End of footnote 1]

Chanting the holy name is not subhakarma

Out of His causeless compassion, the Supreme Lord incarnated as the holy name, making Himself immediately available to the jivas; thus the holy name is accepted by the intelligent and righteous jivas as their only means of perfection. The scriptures recommend chanting the Lord's name as the most effective process of obtaining the supreme goal, but some persons understand this to mean that chanting is one of many subhakarmanas. This misconception is similar to Lord Visnu being seen as just another demigod like Siva or Brahma.

The holy name is fully spiritual and transcendental to material nature. It is untainted by matter. Though the jiva is likewise spiritual, he thinks himself material due to gross ignorance. Consequently, he thinks that everything, including the holy name of the Lord, is also material. Thus the chanting of Lord Krsna's holy name came to be categorized as subhakarma, and the jivas with Mayavadi leanings are convinced that this is right and proper. But those who adhere to this view are excluded from the path of devotional service.

The holy name is both the means and the end

The holy name is the repository of spiritual bliss. He has descended to this material world to be the means by which He, the summum bonum of bhakti, is attained. The scriptures eulogize His divine glories, for Krsna's name is both the means to prema and prema itself. According to the individual jiva's degree of spiritual perfection, he considers the Lord's holy name to be either the means or the end. As long as one has not attained full Krsna consciousness, the name appears as the means to reach that goal.

Subhakarma is the secondary means; the holy name is the primary means

There are two means to the supreme goal: primary and secondary. Subhakarma is the secondary means and the Lord's holy name is the primary means. Though the holy name is counted as a 'means', it is nevertheless eternally the principle means. Once this point is clearly understood, the differences between the holy name and subhakarma will be clearly seen. The scriptural verdict is that the holy name is the essence of spiritual bliss, and is thus incomparable to any

other subhakarma. One who chants purely experiences how the insurpassable joy of the Lord and His pastimes enters the heart and makes it soar with sublime delight: such is the nature of the holy name of Krsna.

The joy of sayujamukti is insignificant

Even the bliss of selfrealization through jnana or yoga cannot be compared to that of chanting the holy name, for the state of joy in impersonal liberation is merely the cessation of material suffering.

The wonderful quality of the holy name is that during the sadhana (practice) period it is the means, and in the perfected stage, it is the ultimate goal. Even while being utilized as the means, the holy name remains always the goal. This cannot be said of other subhakarmas, which are all mundane activities. The holy name is purely spiritual, being selfmanifested from the realm of suddhasattva. Even during the practice of sadhana, the holy name is situated in pure goodness; the sadhaka's imperfections and anarthas only seem to color it.

The holy name must be chanted in the association of devotees: then all the material inebrities and anarthas disappear, being replaced by the pure name of Krsna. The practice of subhakarma must be discarded upon attainment of the shelter of the ultimate destination. But chanters have never to give up the holy name. They simply chant the pure name in the perfected stage.

The Lord's holy name is diametrically opposite in nature to mundane subhakarma activities. In the sadhana stage, the devotee should, by the grace of his spiritual master and on the basis of Vedic proofs, comprehend the difference between the holy name and subhakarma.

[Footnote 2 by Bhaktivinoda]

Sraddha, when sufficiently mature, brings one to the association of devotees. In that association, one begins devotional service. The heart is cleansed of all anarthas by chanting the holy name of the Lord. As much as the heart is cleansed of anarthas, to that degree the chanting becomes pure. Progressively, one is fixed in devotion and develops taste for the holy name. The knowledge of these developmental stages must be preliminarily understood and believed in by the sadhaka through the grace of his spiritual master. Otherwise, his anarthas will multiply due to his committing namaparadha. But with this proper understanding and faith, the pure name manifests very quickly. [End of footnote 2]

The remedy for this namaparadha

This namaparadha of equating the holy name with subhakarma is committed

because of sinful activities, especially the sin of offending the devotees of the Lord. Immediate countermeasures must be undertaken, because as a result of these offenses, the jiva acquires the perverted Mayavadi understanding of the holy name. Only the association of devotees can exculpate such offenses.

To rid himself of this namaparadha, one must approach a householder Vaisnava who originally came from a very low caste; this is to stamp out any false understandings of designation and caste distinctions. The offender should then smear all over his own body, with great respect and faith, the dust of the feet of that Vaisnava. He must also eat the remnants of this Vaisnava's food and drink the water that washed his feet. In this way, the proper attitude towards the pure name will again develop within the offender's heart. The whole world sings of how Kalidasa was saved from this namaparadha by the mercy of the Lord.

Srila Haridasa Thakur's attachment to the holy name

"My dear Lord, my consciousness is thoroughly mundane. Though I mouth the names of the Lord, I am too unfortunate to experience their transcendental touchstone qualities. O Lord! I beg You to please appear as the holy name and dance on my tongue.

I fall at Your lotus feet and pray: if You like, You can keep me in this material world or place me in the spiritual sky. Whatever desire is Yours, You are free to fulfill, but please let me taste the divine nectar of Krsna's holy name. You have descended amongst the conditioned souls to distribute the holy name, so kindly also consider me, an insignificant jiva. I am a fallen soul and You are the savior of the fallen. Let this be our eternal relationship. O Savior! On the strength of this relationship, I am begging from You the nectar of the holy name.

Why the name is the religion of the age

"In Kaliyuga all other processes except the holy name are incapable of redeeming the fallen souls. Therefore the chanting of the holy name is the yugadharma. Actually, it is the most efficient religious practice throughout all the ages. But in Kali Yuga, unlike other ages, there is no other religion available. Thus the holy name appears as the only religion that can redeem the fallen souls."

Only one who is blessed with loving devotion as the servant of Srila Haridasa Thakura, and who thinks himself devoid of qualification, is fit to recite this Harinama Cintamani.

CHAPTER TWELVE TO CHANT INATTENTIVELY (PRAMADA) IS THE NINTH OFFENSE

All glories to Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu and all His devotees; by their causeless grace alone, I perform congregational chanting of the holy name of the Lord.

The offense known as pramada or inattentive chanting

Srila Haridasa Thakura then said, "O Lord Caitanya, to Srila Sanatana Goswami here in Jagannatha Puri and Srila Gopala Bhatta Goswami in South India, you taught that the holy name must be chanted attentively. Inattention in chanting is namaparadha. One may carefully avoid all other namaparadhas, yet still not experience the ecstasy of the pure name. This is an indication of another type of namaparadha known as pramada, which prevents the chanter from reaching the stage of nistha, or firm faith. This in turn blocks the further growth of bhakti to the flowering of Krsnaprema."

Three kinds of inattention

Pramada means 'madness', but 'inattention' and 'carelessness' are also synonyms of this word. Inattentive chanting sows the seeds of anarthas which soon develop in the heart. Inattention is of three kinds. The first is called audasinya, or 'apathetic devotional service', meaning a lack of fixed resolve in sadhana. The second type is jadya, 'laziness' or even 'inertia'. The third kind is viskepa, which means 'distraction' or 'misplacing one's attention in engagements other than sadhana-bhakti.'

It is essential to give special attention to chanting while anuraga is undeveloped

By a special stroke of good fortune, a jiva develops enough sraddha to take shelter of the holy name. By regularly chanting a fixed number of holy names with special care and attention, he may, by degrees, progress to anuraga, or spontaneous attraction for the Lord's name. He should chant his prescribed number of rounds on a Tulasimala and increase his rounds with time. Before he reaches the stage of anuraga, he must be very cautious about offenses in chanting.

Most people are naturally very attached to material things, their memories always absorbed in matter. They may indeed chant the holy name of the Lord, but their minds may be far away from the chanting. Even if they daily chant one lakha (one hundred thousand) holy names on the japamala, not a drop of taste for the Lord's name will be produced in their hearts. It is difficult to restrain materialistic hearts from such offenses.

The process of overcoming apathy

One must make it his daily routine to chant for an hour in the company of

saintly Vaisnavas in a sacred, undisturbed place.

Taking note of the Vaisnavas' devotional attitude and their relish for the holy name, the neophyte should try to emulate this mood and gradually rid himself of his apathy to chanting. Step by step, his mind and attention should become fixed in the holy name. By constant chanting, the sweetness of the holy name makes him anxious to taste more of that nectar.

Advanced Vaisnavas advise that chanting is best performed in the presence of Tulasidevi and in a place of Lord Krsna's pastimes. The chanter should always seek the association of saintly devotees and emulate their discipline. He must follow in the footsteps of previous acaryas in the joyful method of worshiping the Lord through His holy name. He may begin with an hour of such chanting, then two, then increase it to four until finally he will chant not less than three lakhas of holy names a day. This helps him to soon sever his links with materialism.

Another effective method for ridding oneself of apathy towards the holy name is to sit in a closed room alone and meditate on the name as did the previous sages. Or one can cover the head and face with a cloth and concentrate on the sound of the holy name. This will immediately fix the mind firmly on the holy name; slowly, one develops attraction for the name, and the offense of apathetic inattention will vanish.

Overcoming laziness

Inattention arising from laziness (jadya) prevents a person from relishing the nectar of the holy name. He is slow to chant and remember the holy name. Even after trying, he very soon finds the effort unendurable and wants to sleep or otherwise engage himself in frivolity.

Advanced devotees are cautious against such an offense. They never waste a single moment in useless talks or activities. Their meditation on the Lord's holy name is unbroken. They are so absorbed in the nectar of the holy name that they do not want anything else. One must therefore aspire to associate with such rare devotees and follow their example, thus ridding himself of his laziness.

It is the nature of saintly Vaisnavas to be always engaged in devotional activities. They never waste time uselessly. One should become attracted to this devotional trait. One should ask himself how he also can become like these devotees, immersed in meditation upon the holy name; how, from this very day, he can increase his chanting step by step until such time as he can actually chant three lakhas of holy names with inspiration and eagerness. When Lord Krsna sees such enthusiasm, He reciprocates by removing the neophyte's mental inertia with the power of His name, and by allowing him to remain in the association of His advanced devotees.

Overcoming distraction

Distraction in chanting breeds illusion which becomes the cause of further serious offenses against the holy name. This illusion, difficult to overcome, engenders attraction to wealth, women, position, success and the cheating propensity. When these attractions cover the heart, the neophyte becomes neglectful of the chanting of the holy name.

One must make a constant effort to try and drive such attractions away from the mind by diligently following the ways of Vaisnava culture. This will bring back his good fortune. For instance, he should nicely observe the Ekadasi vows, the appearance days of the Lord and other such important festival days.

He should spend the entire festival day and night chanting and singing the glories of the Lord in association of saintly devotees. The ideal way to observe these festivals is to be in one of the dhamas (Navadvipa, Vrindavana, Puri etc.) with sadhus (pure devotees in the line of Srila Rupa Goswami) reading and discussing sastra (Vedic literatures like Bhagavadgita, Srimad Bhagavatam and other Vaisnava scriptures). He should wholeheartily participate in the festival programs without anxiety and hesitation. These festivals will rekindle the dying spark of spiritual taste. Thus he will be attracted to the pastimes of the Supreme Lord.

Tasting the superior flavor of pure Krsna consciousness, he will naturally be disgusted by his inferior material attachments. He will be enraptured by sweet songs of the Lord's pastimes sung by the devotees, and his ears will fill up with nectar that dislodges his mind from matter and fixes it upon the holy name again. The devotee can then chant steadily in a joyous and peaceful mood.

Good advice for chanters

One must diligently complete the chanting of the daily prescribed number of holy names according to one's vow. But another kind of distraction occurs when one is too eager to complete the fixed number of holy names even at the sacrifice of quality. One must therefore always insure that he chants his rounds sincerely. Also, one should better improve the quality of his chanting rather than try to increase his daily number of rounds for show. The name of the Lord should be always be pronounced distinctly. Only by the grace of the Lord can this be achieved. Thus one should pray to the Lord that he never falls victim to the wiles of the illusion of distraction, and that he can continue to taste the full nectar of the holy name.

The secret to success is humility

The devotee should make it a regular practice to spend a little time alone in a quiet place and concentrate deeply on the holy name. He should utter and hear the name distinctly. It is impossible for the jiva to singlehandedly avoid and overcome the illusion of distraction. By the mercy of the Lord, however, this is accomplished with ease. Therefore it is essential to prayerfully beg for the Lord's

grace with great humility, for this is the only means to salvation from this offense.

The necessity of developing enthusiasm

"O Lord Caitanya!" cried Thakur Haridasa. "You are an ocean of compassion! I wholeheartedly beg for Your mercy. Indeed, if I was unable to pray to You in this way, then no one would be more unfortunate than I.

"Those who attempt to take up devotional service on the merits of their individual intelligence and mental expertise will find that all their endeavors are fruitless. Lord Krsna's mercy is the prime cause of all successful work. One who does not aspire to obtain the Lord's mercy is indeed a very unfortunate soul."

A note about the vow of nirbandha

Srila Haridasa Thakur advised that we concentrate deeply on the holy name of Krsna. Lord Caitanya's teachings on this matter are found in the Caitanya Bhagavata, Madhya 23.650: "Hare Krsna Hare Krsna Krsna Krsna Hare Hare, Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Rama Hare Hare. The Lord said, 'This is the maha-mantra; now go and do japa meditation, chanting these holy names a prescribed number of times (nirbandha) each day. You will achieve all desirable perfection from this chanting. Just chant the holy name constantly, because no rules or regulations can restrict chanting.'

The word nirbandha needs elaboration. The sadhaka should chant the mahamantra on a japamala of 108 Tulasi beads. Four rounds on the beads makes a granthi. By gradually increasing his chanting, the sadhaka should aspire to chant 16 granthis or one lakha of holy names: this number is considered as nirbandha. If chanting is then even further increased to three lakhas of names, the devotee will always be immersed in the Lord's holy name. All the previous acaryas and mahajanas have followed this instruction of Lord Caitanya and attained perfection. Even now, anyone can attain perfection by proper chanting. Everyone, including the pure devotees, the salvationists, and the materialistic persons are eligible to chant the holy name of the Lord.

Two different moods of Krsnaprema are visible in pure devotees, but the nectar of the holy name is relished in both of these moods, in the happiness of meeting the Lord and in the pangs of separation from the Lord.

One who wears the gem of Harinama Cintamani as a crown upon his head will certainly find shelter at Srila Haridasa Thakura's lotus feet.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN TO MAINTAIN MATERIAL ATTACHMENTS OF 'ME' AND 'MINE'

IS THE TENTH OFFENSE

All glories to Sri Gadadhara Pandit and Lord Sri Gauranga; all glories to Lord Nityananda, the life and soul of Srimati Jahnadevi; all glories to Sri Advaita Acarya, the Lord of Mother Sita; all glories to all the devotees of Lord Caitanya.

Drenched in tears of ecstatic love, Srila Haridasa Thakura went on to explain, in a choked voice, the last of the offenses to the holy name. "My Lord, this last namaparadha is the worst kind of offense; its presence stops the flow Krsnaprema."

Even after having taken spiritual initiation, most materially attached persons cannot fully give up bodily designations. They maintain a 'me' and 'mine' mentality that sidetracks them from the path of devotion. Bodily designations, e.g. 'I am a brahmana', 'I am Vaisnava', 'I am king', or 'I am a rich man'; and possessiveness, e.g. 'This is my position, wealth, son, grandson and so on', symptomize immaturity of realization and are deterrents to proper cultivation of devotional service. This is a terrible offense that is only gotten rid of when one surrenders to the holy Name.

The necessity and symptoms of surrender to the holy name

Having given up first nine namaparadhas, every devotee must surrender completely to the holy name. According to the scriptures, the process of surrender (saranagati) has six limbs. It is impossible to explain them in detail here, but briefly they are as follows.

The vow to accept everything favorable for the execution of devotional service; likewise, to reject anything unfavorable; to be convinced that Lord Krsna will always give protection; to depend wholly on Krsna for everything; to always feel meek and humble; and to throw oneself at Lord Krsna's lotus feet in full selfsurrender - these are the six limbs of surrender .

Devotional service is possible only while alive. Hence one must accept that which keeps the body and soul together, and not more. Life must be molded to facilitate devotional service. Therefore one should develop a taste for objects that are connected to Lord Krsna. Simultaneously, a natural distaste for deterrents to devotional service will also arise within the heart. Lord Krsna becomes the only protector and maintainer, because no one is as dependable as He is. Knowing this, one should think, 'As His eternal slave, I am somehow also an insignificant member of Lord Krsna's family. My only aspiration is to act according to His will.'

One must then drop all false designations like brahmana, sudra, father, husband, king, subject, master, donor, maintainer; and attachments to money, body, sons, wife etc. Instead, one should enter the mood of the paraphernalia of Lord Krsna, thinking: 'He is the real Master and Lord, and His will is imperative. I am ready to act only to fulfil Lord Krsna's desire and will not even think about my own wishes. I will adjust my household affairs for the Lord's satisfaction. By His

wish I will cross the material ocean. Only by His desire will I feel genuine compassion for the suffering souls. In times of both joy and sorrow I remain eternally Lord Krsna's servitor. My moments of material enjoyment and my moods of renunciation are experienced only due to the Lord's will.' When these feelings arise spontaneously, one achieves the stage of atmanivedana (surrender of the soul).

The consequences of not surrendering

One unable to accept the six limbs of surrender is a prisoner of false ego who always thinks in terms of 'me' and 'mine'. He proudly declares, 'I am the master here. This household and family belong to me. The fruits of work are mine by right of labor, and I am their enjoyer, whether they be bitter or sweet. I am my own protector and maintainer. This woman is my wife, here is my brother, he is my son. By the sweat of my brow I earn my own living, and success is the reward of my endeavors.'

Intoxicated with such egoism, these materialistic persons overestimate their own ability and intelligence. Scientists propagate their theories and develop technology to flaunt their denial of God. Among atheists, these are the worst demons. They take credit for the so-called advancement of scientific technology and for the material comfort it brings. But factually, it all happens by the Lord's will: this they completely fail to see.

When the atheists hear the glories of the holy name they disbelieve them. Yet sometimes even they utter Krsna's holy name due to the pressure of social custom. But since this kind of chanting is bereft of faith, they never experience bliss. Such are the stereotyped ways of cheaters who make a mere show of religion. By repeating Krsna's name, even though in neglect, they earn a little piety, but they are deprived of the actual result of chanting - pure love of Godhead.

The cause of their offensiveness is material engrossment. They are so captivated by the illusory potency that they are blinded, and it is extremely difficult for them to get free of their offensive condition. Only one who acquires a taste for pure devotional service becomes disgusted with material life; leaving it, he takes full shelter of the holy Name.

How to rid oneself of this offense

Leaving aside all material attachments and accepting voluntary poverty, one should humbly worship Lord Krsna's lotus feet, taking full shelter of the chanting of the holy name. He should aspire for the association of devotees and serve them without material desires. Gradually his heart will become impregnated with attraction for the holy name. The egoistic mentality of 'me' and 'mine' will disappear and he will surmount the ocean of material nescience.

By hearing the glories of the holy name, the last traces of false ego will

dissipate, and the symptoms of a pure devotee will then blossom in his heart, and he will take to the six processes of surrender. He who finds complete shelter in the holy name is a great soul, for he becomes the recipient of the great treasure of Krsnaprema.

The symptoms of one who is free from the ten namaparadhas

In being warned to avoid the ten offenses to the holy name of the Lord, one is actually being ordered to positively implement the specific saintly qualities that render these aparadhas impossible. Therefore, one must: not criticize but serve the saintly Vaisnavas; worship Krsna as the Absolute Supreme Lord; give full respect to the spiritual master who initiates one into the holy name; regard the scriptures that reveal the glories of the holy name as preeminent; know within the heart that the holy name is eternally situated in pure transcendence; root out and destroy the desire to commit sins; preach the glories of the holy name only to the faithful; give up ritualistic pious activities entirely; chant with full attention and surrender fully to the holy name.

Bhava is attained quickly when the chanting is free from offenses

When one is thus free from offenses, he becomes the most fortunate soul in the three worlds. He acquires all good qualities and is eligible to receive Lord Krsna's causeless mercy. Very quickly, his chanting awards him the divine fruit of bhava, the first stage of prema. Thus the offenseless chanter is promoted from the sadhana or practice stage to bhava, or spontaneous pure devotional service. From bhava comes prema, which, according to the scriptures, is the mature fruit of pure devotion, the pinnacle of all perfection. Lord Caitanya personally guarantees that if any devotee chants the holy name free from offenses, he will quickly obtain Krsnaprema.

Pure bhakti is priceless; other attainments are imitation

If one continues to chant with offenses, then in spite of many endeavors, he will never attain pure devotion. The fruitive worker or karmi enjoys heavenly bliss through karma; the jnani obtains liberation as a result of empirical knowledge; but pure devotion to Krsna and Krsnaprema, which is very rarely attained, is had only through the proper execution of sadhanabhakti.

The bliss of heaven and liberation is compared to mother-of-pearl (the shining inner surface of a pearl oyster shell), and pure bhakti to Krsna is the priceless gem pearl. It is the jiva's prerogative and the success of his human birth to acquire pure devotion. If one sincerely and expertly practices sadhana-bhakti, he very soon receives the seed of pure devotion or prema. The meaning of expert practice is that one avoids the ten namaparadhas.

One must be greedy for pure bhakti to avoid offending the holy name

If one is sufficiently greedy for obtaining pure devotion, then he will chant free from the ten offenses. He must diligently avoid each of the offenses with feelings of deep repentance for having ever committed them. He should pray sincerely to the lotus feet of the holy name and chant with determination. Only then will he be blessed with the mercy of the holy name, which will destroy all of his offenses. No other activity or penance can possibly exculpate his offenses.

How to stop namaparadha

Offenses to the holy name of the Lord are dissolved only through constant chanting. When they are so destroyed, they can never reappear. Constant chanting means, apart from a minimal time for rest and other bare physical necessities, that one should chant throughout all hours of the day with intense contrition. No other penance or ritual is as effective as this. When the offenses are destroyed, the pure holy name blossoms within the heart. The pure name of Krsna delivers bhava and finally prema.

Srila Haridasa Thakura concluded, "O Lord Caitanya, I humbly pray at Your lotus feet that the ten offenses in chanting the holy name of the Lord never find a place in my heart. Please kindly grant that I may remain submerged in the nectar of the pure name."

Bhaktivinoda, the servant of the devotees, is able to recite Harinama Cintamani in great delight only on the strength of Srila Haridasa Thakura's causeless mercy.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN OFFENSES IN DEVOTIONAL SERVICE (SEVAPARADHA)

All glories to Sri Gadadhara Pandit and Lord Sri Gauranga; all glories to Lord Nityananda, the life and soul of Srimati Jahnadevi; all glories to Mother Sita and Sri Advaita Acarya; all glories to Srila Srivasa Pandit and all the devotees of Lord Caitanya.

Srila Haridas Thakura is Namacarya

Lord Caitanya said, "My dear devotee Haridasa, the conditioned souls of Kaliyuga will greatly benefit from this elaborate explanation of the offenses against the holy name that you have given. You are indeed a great spiritual master and acharya."

Srila Haridas Thakura is Namacharya, or the foremost spiritual authority on the chanting of the holy name of Krsna. He practiced everything he preached. He taught the jivas about suddhanama, namabhasa, and the glories of Krsna's name; he also instructed how one may stop committing namaparadha all this by his own example.

Lord Caitanya continued, "I much relished your dissertation on the holy name. As an acarya, you are exemplary and as a preacher, you are profound. You are always ornamented by the priceless gem of the Lord's pure holy name. Ramananda Raya taught me the sublime science of transcendental mellows, and now you have revealed the glories of the holy name. Kindly tell me something about the different kinds of offenses made in the execution of devotional service to the Deity."

Srila Haridasa Thakura replied, "You are asking about a subject that is known to a servant of the Deity. All my time is taken up in serving the holy name. I don't know how to reply, yet I cannot disregard Your instruction. I will speak whatever you make me say."

Varieties of sevaparadha

Offenses in devotional service (sevaparadha) are numerous. In some scriptures, thirtytwo such offenses are listed, and in others, fifty. By definition, sevaparadha is always related to Deity worship. Learned devotees identify four classifications of sevaparadha, which are: those pertaining to persons engaged in Deity worship; those pertaining to the installation of Deities; those pertaining to persons taking darsana of the Deity in the temple; and those that generally apply in all cases.

Thirty-two sevaparadhas

The list of thirtytwo offenses in Deity worship is as follows: 1) entering the temple with shoes on; 2) alighting from a vehicle before the Deity; 3) not observing the festival days; 4) forgetting to offer obeisances and prayers to the Deity; 5) offering worship to the Deity in an unclean or contaminated state; 6) offering obeisances on one hand; 7) circumambulating before the Deity; 8) extending the feet towards the Deity or sitting on one's haunches before the Deity; 9) sleeping or reclining in the presence of the Deity; 10) eating before the Deity; 11) speaking lies before the Deity; 12) speaking out loudly before the Deity; 13) talking with others before the Deity; 14) using abusive language before the Deity; 15) giving charity or giving thanks to others before the Deity; 16) quarrelling before the Deity; 17) Crying, howling or shedding false tears before the Deity; 18) criticizing someone before the Deity; 19) covering oneself with a blanket or quilt before the Deity; 20) praising someone before the Deity; 21) using obscene language before the Deity; 22) belching or passing air before the Deity; 23) offering substandard paraphernalia in the service of the Deity in spite of having better; 24) eating or drinking unoffered food; 25) not offering seasonal fruits and vegetables; 26) offering the Deity contaminated food, or food first eaten by someone else; 27)

sitting with one's back to the Deity; 28) acting immodestly before the Deity, as by sitting directly in front of the Deity; 29) respecting or worshiping someone else before the Deity; 30) not glorifying and offering obeisances to one's spiritual master before the Deity; 31) glorifying oneself before the the Deity; 32) slandering the demigods before the Deity.

More offenses listed in other scriptures

Other scriptural sources have listed additional offenses:

It is offensive to eat the food of materialists; to touch the Deity of Hari in darkness; to touch the Deity without proper rituals; to open the altar doors without an accompanying performance of music and song for the pleasure of the Lord; to offer food to the Lord that has been seen by a dog; to speak during Deity worship; to leave the altar during Deity worship; to offer arati without putting a flower garland on the Deities; to worship Lord Krsna with unattractive or nonfragrant flowers; to offer worship to Lord Krsna without first cleansing the face and mouth; to offer worship to the Deity after sexual relations; to touch a woman during her menstrual period; to touch fire during Deity worship; to pass air before the Deity; to offer worship wearing dirty or contaminated clothes; to offer worship while angry; to offer worship directly after having been at a cremation grounds, or having touched a dead body or seen a dead body's face; to offer worship while suffering from indigestion or dysentery; to eat garlic and onions; to chew betel and tobacco; to touch the Deity after having had a massage with oil; to offer flowers from an unclean pot; to worship at an inauspicious time; to worship while sitting on the bare floor; to touch the Lord with the left hand while bathing the Deity; to offer old or already offered fruits or flowers; to boast during worshipping; to spit habitual (r)ly; to worship the Deity after having applied smudged or horizontal (i.e. threelined) tilaka; to enter temple without washing the feet; to offer the Deity food cooked by a non-Vaisnava; to do puja in front of a non-Vaisnava; to not worship Visvaksena (in place of Ganesa) before the puja; to see or speak to a Siva or Durga worshipper; to bathe the Deity with water touched by the fingernails; to use water for worship into which sweat has fallen; to make oaths before the Deity; to step over the Deity's prasada.

Sevaparadha is to be avoided those serving the Deity; namaparadha is to be avoided by all devotees

One who is engaged in Deity worship must carefully avoid the sevaparadhas, and all Vaisnavas must strictly abstain from the namaparadhas and relish the taste of pure devotional service to Lord Krsna. The devotee himself is the best judge of which offenses in seva to be vigilant about, according to the service he is engaged in. But the responsibility of avoiding namaparadha is applicable to every Vaisnava at all times.

On the path of bhava-seva, or spontaneous devotional service, namaparadha

must be nonexistent

Especially, that devotee who worships the Lord in a secluded place in the ecstasy of separation from the Deity must be free of the ten offenses against the holy Name. In bhavaseva, service is performed in the mind; there is not even opportunity for sevaaparadha. Only when the devotee on this path is completely free of namaparadha can he attain bhava, spontaneous loving devotional service to Krsna.

Constant meditation upon the holy name of the Lord is the sadhana practice in bhava-seva, the offenseless stage of devotional service. By the grace of the Lord, each of the nine limbs of sadhanabhakti finally culminates in the prema of the pure holy name. One who has ascended to this stage of realization may then fully submerge himself in the nectar of chanting the holy name, leaving aside other services.

[Editor's footnote:]

Lord Caitanya instructed Srila Raghunatha das Goswami on the worship of Sri GovardhanSila thusly (as recorded in Caitanya Caritamrita, Antya 6.294-304):

"This stone is the transcendental form of Lord Krsna. Worship the stone with great eagerness. Worship this stone in the mode of goodness like a perfect brahmana, for by such worship you will surely attain ecstatic love of Krsna without delay. For such worship, one needs a jug of water and a few flowers from a Tulasi tree. This is worship in complete goodness when performed in complete purity. With faith and love, you should offer eight soft Tulasi flowers, each with two Tulasi leaves, one on each side of each flower."

'After thus advising him how to worship, Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu personally offered Raghunatha das the Govardhana-Sila with His transcendental hand. As advised by the Lord, Raghunatha das worshiped the Sila in great transcendental jubilation. Svarupa Damodara gave Raghunatha das two cloths, each about six inches long, a wooden platform and a jug in which to keep water.

'Thus Raghunatha das began worshiping the stone from Govardhana, and as he worshiped he saw the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Krsna, the son of Nanda Maharaja, directly in the stone. Thinking of how he had received the Govardhana-Sila directly from the hands of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, Raghunatha das was always overflowed with ecstatic love. The amount of transcendental bliss that Raghunatha das enjoyed simply by offering water and Tulasi is impossible to achieve even if one worships the Deity with sixteen kinds of paraphernalia.

'After Raghunatha das had thus worshiped the Govardhana-Sila for sometime, Svarupa Damodara spoke to him as follows: "Offer the Govardhan stone eight kaudis worth of the first-class sweetmeats known as khaja and sandesh. If you offer them with faith and love, they will be just like nectar.'" [End of editor's

footnote]

It is on the strength of Srila Haridas Thakura's instructions that a lowly person without means can recite the Harinam Cintamani.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN THE BHAJANA OF CONFIDENTIAL WORSHIP OF THE HOLY NAME (BHAJANA PRANALI)

All glories to Sri Gadadhara Pandita and Lord Gauranga; all glories to Lord Nityananda; all glories to Sri Advaita Acarya, the Lord of Mother Sita; all glories to all the devotees of Lord Caitanya. One who rejects all other processes of elevation and simply immerses himself in the chanting of the holy name is truly a magnanimous soul and is glorious in all respects.

Lord Caitanya said, "My dear Haridasa, simply on the strength of your wonderful devotion, you are conversant with all knowledge. All the Vedic philosophical conclusions about the Absolute Godhead, the jiva, maya, the pure name of the Lord, namabhasa and namaparadha are revealed in your speech. It is therefore rightly said that the Vedas gleefully dance upon your tongue." The Lord, fully satisfied with His devotee, now desired to hear the precepts of namarasa, the rare spiritual science of the sweet mellows of the holy name, from the mouth of Srila Haridasa.

Lord Caitanya continued, "Now please instruct Me about namarasa. How can a jiva become eligible to receive it?" Srila Haridasa Thakur then prayed at the Lord's lotus feet, submitting with intense prema that whatever he would speak on this subject would be inspired by the Lord Himself.

The true Rasa

In the Vedas the Supreme Personality of Godhead is called Rasa. This rasa or the nectar of transcendental love permeates the spiritual Kingdom of God. Worldly poets dabble in a rasa that is totally mundane. Factually, theirs is not rasa but a perversion of it.

The rasa that is transcendental and ever situated in pure goodness, beyond the jurisdiction of the twentyfour elements of material nature, is in truth the real rasa. It is unknown even to the atmaramas, the self-satisfied mystics who have surpassed material nature but are yet unable to perceive transcendental variegatedness. Rasa is eternal, full of cognizance and ever-blissful, ever-sheltered

at Lord Krsna's lotus feet.

The Supreme Absolute Truth exists as saktiman or the Energetic and sakti or the Energy. Qualitatively, saktiman and sakti are the same, though differences between the two are to be appreciated. Saktiman is always the Supreme Controller, willful and independent; sakti always displays His full and supreme potency. His sakti or potency manifests in three ways: the cit potency or the spiritual nature, the jiva, and maya or the material nature.

The cit potency reveals the Supreme Truth, His name, abode, pastimes and beauty. Lord Krsna is that Supreme Truth. His exquisite dark complexion, syama, is His beauty. Goloka is His abode and the place of His pastimes. His name, abode, form, qualities and pastimes are everexistent features of the nondual spiritual substance, and the display of these transcendental varieties is the function of His cit potency.

Lord Krsna is the original form of all transcendental qualities. His eternal divine nature is His spiritual potency. There is no inherent difference between the form of Krsna and His divine nature. Yet spiritual variety (rasa) creates an impression of difference, which is exhibited in the spiritual world.

Mayasakti is the external potency

The reflection of the spiritual potency is called mayasakti or material nature. She is also known as the external potency. She has produced this material world or Devidhama as ordered by Lord Krsna.

There are two types of jivasakti

The marginal region (tatastha) of the spiritual potency manifests the jiva-sakti. The jiva is eternal and inconceivably one with and yet simultaneously different from the Supreme Lord. He is Lord Krsna's spiritual energy and is therefore meant to be part of the transcendental paraphernalia of the Lord's service.

There are two categories of jivas: nityabaddha and nityamukta, or eternally conditioned and eternally liberated souls. The eternally liberated jiva is entitled to render eternal devotional service. The eternally conditioned jiva is engrossed in material activities. He can also be said to be of two types: extroverted and introspective.

The introspective nityabaddha jivas are searching for the Absolute Truth. The extroverted jivas are totally absorbed in the external features of gross matter and thus are far removed from Krsna. They simply want to exploit things meant for Lord Krsna's service for their own enjoyment. The more fortunate and pious jivas amongst the introspective ones come into contact with devotees and in their association take to the chanting the Lord's holy name, which transports them through the portals of the spiritual world. The less fortunate introspective jivas

are attracted to the paths of karma and jnana by which they worship various demigods or finally merge into the impersonal Brahman.

The flowering of rasa

The holy name of Lord Krsna is the bud of the flower of rasa, which is the essence of pure transcendence. By the grace of Krsna, rasa is propagated in the material world in the form of His holy name.

With the first opening of the bud of the holy name comes the realization of the enchanting Syamasunder form of Krsna in Goloka Vrindavan. The Lord's sixty-four transcendental qualities are like the irresistible fragrance from the partially blossomed flower.

When this flower comes into full bloom, it manifests the eternal and confidential pastimes of Lord Krsna known as the asta-kaliya-lila, or the eightfold loving affairs of Sri Sri RadhaKrsna. And although this manifestation is transcendental, it still appears in the material world.

The bhaktisakti

Latent within the jiva are the miniscule spiritual potencies of ahlada (bliss) and samvit (knowledge). With the flowering of rasa, the svarupasakti (the internal potency of the Lord Himself) descends to contact and revive these tiny spiritual potencies of the jiva; all this is effected by the causeless mercy of the holy name. The svarupasakti descends as Bhakti-devi, who embodies the full mixture of the hladini and samvit potencies. This mixture is called the bhaktisvarupamsakti, the potency of the form of pure devotion. When his latent bliss and knowledge are infused with this bhaktisvarupamsakti, the spontaneous loving attitude required for entering the asta-kaliyalila appears in the heart of the chanter of the holy name.

The churning of rasa

Thus one reaches a state of perfection known as sthayibhava, or permanent emotion, which is also known as rati. Four bhavas combine to transform rati to rasa. The four bhavas are: vibhava, anubhava, sattvika, and vyabhicari (or sancari).

Vibhava, the element that excites loving sentiment, has two subdivisions: alambana and uddipana. Alambana or the root is again of two parts: the visaya (subject) and the asraya (recipient). The devotee of Lord Krsna is the asraya, and Lord Krsna Himself is the visaya. Lord Krsna's transcendental beauty and qualities are known as uddipana or the impetus. Thus where there is alambana (the root relationship of the devotee and Krsna) and uddipana (the impetus of the realization of Krsna's form and qualities), lila and rasa can occur.

Anubhava (the external symptoms of the internal permanent emotion) is what results from vibhava, or the effect of alambana and uddipana. When these emotions become more intense, they are transformed into sattvikabhava (loving emotions that cannot be checked). At this same time sancaribhava (emotions that set into motion the progress of rasa) come into play.

Rasa is like a machine. Rati, or permanent emotion, is the axle of this machine. Once the machine starts moving by the combined energy of the four bhavas, the permanent emotion (sthayi-bhava) is then converted into rasa. The devotee, who is the asraya (like a shelter or container), becomes the relisher of that rasa. And that rasa is the Vraja-rasa or the spiritual mellow of Vrindavan. That rasa is the essence of everything, and is for the jiva the highest goal. The Vedas expound four goals - dharma, artha, kama, moksha; but in fact the pinnacle of all these perfections is rasa. The fully realized and perfected beings are entitled to taste that rasa.

Elevation via the Hare Krsna mahamantra

Amongst the introspective jivas, he who is attracted to pure devotional service is the most evolved. The jiva can take up the path of bhakti only after he has accrued sufficient sukriti or piety from previous births. When such a jiva develops strong faith or sraddha, he comes into contact with a pure devotee spiritual master. By the grace of the spiritual master, he is initiated into the chanting of the Hare Krsna mahamantra -the holy names of the Divine Couple.

Though this jiva is blessed with sraddha, his desire for material gain poses an obstacle on his path of progress. The spiritual master graces the jiva with a disciplinary process suitable for overcoming this obstacle. Thus he gains spiritual strength from chanting. Chanting on Tulasi beads and meditating on a fixed number of holy names every day is the best form of worship, and will surely lead to success. Therefore, in the beginning, a little time should daily be spent in seclusion for full concentration upon the holy name. In degrees, as chanting increases, a more profound relationship with the holy name is developed, and the material impediments fall away.

The path of bhakti features two important engagements, one of which is Deity worship, the other chanting and meditating upon the holy name. Although both engagements are expedient, chanting and meditating on the holy name is preferred by the more deeply serious devotees.

Many elevated pure devotees at times chant aloud the holy names on their beads, and then at other times meditate upon Krsna's pastimes on the beads. The advantage of performing kirtan, or audibly chanting the maha-mantra on the beads, is that three kinds of devotional service - hearing, chanting and remembering - are accomplished simultaneously. Of course, all the nine limbs of devotional service reside in the holy name; of them, hearing, chanting and remembering are the best. Chanting automatically manifests the other limbs of devotional service, like pada-sevanam, dasyam, sakhyam, atma-nivedanam, and so

on. Thus the process of Deity worship is automatically accomplished by the devotee surrendered to the holy name. But the devotee attracted to Deity worship will have to acquire attraction for hearing and chanting in order to attain complete perfection in Krsna consciousness.

Who is eligible to chant the holy name?

Three kinds of jivas are captivated by external material phenomena: the gross materialists, the karmis and the jnanis. They are therefore extroverts all, chasing after false hopes for happiness in the realm of fleeting appearances. The gross materialist endeavors for sensual delights. The karmi aspires for ephemeral heavenly bliss in the hereafter. The jnani is wholly concerned with how to mitigate his existential suffering. After surpassing these stages, the jiva becomes truly introspective, seeking entrance into the realm of the internal spiritual energy. The introspective jivas are divided into three categories: kanistha, madhyama, and uttama (neophyte, intermediate, and advanced).

The neophyte devotee rejects demigod worship and worships only Krsna, but with certain material motivations due to lack of sambandhajnana. Simple and naive, he is not offensive; he is just selfpreoccupied. Therefore, although such neophytes are not considered to be pure Vaisnavas, they are certainly to be accepted as Vaisnava-praya or resembling Vaisnavas.

The intermediate or madhyama devotee is pure and is very firmly situated in faith. The uttama or advanced devotee is completely indifferent to material things and is fully surrendered to Krsna. The pure name avails Himself to those who have exclusive faith in Krsna. Stepbystep advancement in hearing, chanting, and remembering

The order of discipline (sadhanakrama) for realizing the identity of the holy name with the Lord is as follows. The devotee must in the beginning discard the ten offenses and simply absorb himself in the holy name by chanting constantly. He should distinctly pronounce the holy name and meditate upon the transcendental sound vibration. When his chanting is steady, clear and blissful, he will be able to meditate upon the Syamasundara form of the Lord. With chanting beads in hand, he should thus seek out the transcendental form of the holy name, which will appear when his vision is pure.

Another method he may employ to see this form is to sit in front of the Deities, drink the beautiful sight of the Lord with his eyes and meditate upon the holy name. After reaching the stage where the holy name and the form of the Lord become one, he must then absorb the transcendental qualities of Lord Krsna into his meditation. Thus the holy name and the qualities of Krsna merge to become one through constant chanting.

Next, he goes on to practice the remembrance of particular pastimes of the Lord. This remembrance, called mantradhya mayi upasana, facilitates further absorption into the holy name. This lila-smarana or pastime meditation also

gradually become one with the holy name, form, and qualities.

At this point, the first rays of namarasa, or the transcendental mellow of the holy name, dawn on the horizon of perception. Chanting the name in great delight, the devotee sees Krsna surrounded by cowherd boys and girls under a desire tree at the Yoga Pitha. Progressively, the devotee's practice of lila-smarana intensifies to the point where he begins to meditate on the most confidential pastimes of the Lord known as the asta-kaliya- lila, or the eightfold pastimes of RadhaKrsna. When he reaches maturity in this meditation, rasa rises in full glory.

The svarasiki process of worship

Asta-kaliya-lila smarana is also known as svarasiki worship. In this stage of bhajana, one is awarded the opportunity to accordingly serve Krsna in the times and places of his pastimes. Now the devotee realizes the full grace of his spiritual master, who, in his eternal spiritual form (siddha-svarupa), guides the disciple to a sakhi (confidential gopi) who in turn introduces him into the pastimes of the Lord. Of all the gopis, Srimati Radharani, the daughter of King Vrisabhanu, is the most excellent. She embodies the highest spiritual sentiment, mahabhava. Serving Krsna under Her leadership is the supreme spiritual experience.

The five main rasas or spiritual mellows are: santa (neutrality), dasya (servitorship), sakhya (friendship), vatsalya (parenthood), and sringara or madhurya (conjugal). Of these, sringara or conjugal is the highest. Devotees eligible to enter the conjugal rasa are the recipients of the special mercy of Sri Krsna Caitanya.

In the conjugal rasa, Lord Krsna has many yutheswaris or female group leaders; but everyone prefers Srimati Radharani. She is the direct manifestation of Lord Krsna's svarupa-sakti or spiritual potency, and all the other vraja-gopis are Her expansions. She is the Absolute embodiment of all the rasas. It is therefore the goal of devotional service to enroll in Her yutha or group. Service to Lord Krsna in Vraja is impossible without first taking shelter of the vrajagopis. One should furthermore aspire to enter Srimati Radharani's camp and serve directly under Lalitadevi.

When the material coverings are removed, the spiritual goal is achieved

As the devotee becomes disciplined in rasa, the gap between sadhana (practice) and bhajanasiddhi (perfection of worship) closes. Soon, the servitor's spiritual form begins to take shape. By the mercy of the yutheswari, he becomes easily overpowered by attraction to Lord Krsna. This strong spiritual attraction eradicates the gross and subtle material concepts of form that captured him when he turned away from Krsna. Thus the jiva gains entrance into Vraja in his original spiritual form.

Up to this point, the jiva's progress in spiritual life can be framed in words.

Beyond it, there are even higher stages of Krsna consciousness that are indescribable. These will be revealed by the grace of Krsna. The cultivation of the conjugal loving relationship with the Lord is the highest mode of service; by this, everincreasing Krsnaprema will be experienced. By adopting the bhaumavrajara, or the vrajara revealed on this material plane in Vrindavandhama, one becomes eligible to enter such conjugal love.

Sri Ramananda Raya said, 'Therefore one should accept the mood of the gopis in their service. In such a transcendental mood, one should always think of the pastimes of Sri Radha and Krsna. After thinking of Sri Sri RadhaKrsna and Their pastimes for a long time and after getting completely free from material contamination, one is transferred to the spiritual world. There the devotees attain an opportunity to serve Sri Radha and Krsna as one of the gopis. Unless one follows in the footsteps of the gopis he can not attain the service of the lotus feet of Krsna, the son of Nanda Maharaja. If one is overcome by knowledge of the Lord's opulence, he can not attain the Lord's lotus feet even though he is engaged in devotional service.' (Sri Caitanya-caritamrita, Madhya 8.228230)

Becoming a Gopi Means:

The devotee who is inclined to cultivate the conjugal rasa must accept the form of a gopi under the guidance of a superior vrajagopi. One can become a gopi when eleven transcendental sentiments adorn the heart. They are: 1) sambandha (relationship), 2) vayasa (age), 3) nama (name), 4) rupa (form), 5) yutha-pravesa (entrance into a group), 6) vesa (attire), 7) ajna (instructions), 8) vasasthana (place of residence), 9) seva (service), 10) parakastha (excellence), 11) palyadasi-bhava (the mood of a kept maidservant).

Five stages of consciousness ascended in bhavasadhana

The cultivation of these eleven gopi sentiments develops through five stages. They are: 1) sravana-dasa (the stage of hearing), 2) varana-dasa (the stage of acceptance), 3) smarana- dasa (the stage of remembering), 4) apana-dasa (stage of application), and 5) sampati-dasa (stage of inheritance).

Srila Ramananda Raya says, 'One who is attracted by the ecstatic love of the gopis does not care about the regulative principles of Vedic life or popular opinion. Rather, he completely surrenders unto Krsna and renders service unto Him.' 'In this liberated stage the devotee is attracted by one of the five humors (rasas) in the transcendental loving service of the Lord. As he continues to serve the Lord in that mood, he attains a spiritual body to serve Krsna in Goloka Vrindavan.' (Sri Caitanyacaritamrita, Madhya 8.220, 8.222) So saying, Srila Ramananda Raya instructs us to first attain the form and mood of a vraja- gopi in order to obtain service in the conjugal relationship.

When a sadhaka devotee, having heard about Lord Krsna's pastimes, is

attracted to the conjugal mellow, he should take further instruction on rasa from a realized, saintly spiritual master. This is called the stage of hearing or *sravana-dasa*. When the *sadhaka* devotee anxiously and eagerly accepts the conjugal mellow, *varana-dasa* commences. Then, by pure remembrance of the sentiments of rasa, he desires to practice them: thus he reaches the third stage, *smarana-dasa*. When he is able to perfectly invoke these sentiments of rasa, he attains *apana-dasa* or *prapti-dasa*. Finally, when he can separate himself from all his temporary material designations and is steadily fixed in that original spiritual identity for which he yearns, he has reached *sampati-dasa*: the inheritance of his spiritual identity.

Bhajan from the stage of *sravanadasa* to *smaranadasa*

If, after having tested the disciple, the spiritual master determines that he is eligible to perform bhajan and serve in the *sringara rasa*, he then confidentially informs the disciple about his eternal spiritual form as a *manjari* in *Srimati Radharani's* camp, under the supervision of *Sri Lalitadevi*. The spiritual master teaches the disciple how to develop the eleven sentiments of the *gopis*, how to meditate on the *asta-kaliya-lila*, and how to properly be established in both.

So that he may fully understand them, the *sadhaka* is shown his *siddhadeha* or spiritual identity, viz. his spiritual name, form, qualities, service and so on. The spiritual master also discloses who the parents of the *sadhaka's* *manjari* identity are, at which house she was born, who her husband is, and so on. At this point, the disciple must spurn all Vedic religious pursuits and simply be a fully surrendered maidservant of *Srimati Radharani*, the camp leader; thereafter, the guru will reveal in detail the disciple's eternal service to *Srimati Radharani* in the *asta-kaliya-lila*. The *sadhika* (now a female *sadhaki*) embraces these revelations in *varanadasa*. He enters into *smaranadasa* when he actually remembers them for himself. In this way, the *sadhaka* prepares himself for spiritual birth as a *gopi* in *Vraja*.

A digression on the subject of *ruci*

But in the beginning the spiritual master and disciple must together sort out the disciple's natural inclination (*ruci*) for *rasa*. If the disciple finds his natural taste coincides with the identity indicated by the spiritual master, he should so inform his guru and embrace that identity as his life and soul. But if the disciple does not have a natural taste for the selected identity, he must frankly reveal this to his spiritual master, who will give him another identity. If the disciple has a taste for the new identity, he should accept it. His inherent nature will then manifest itself.

Ruci or taste is the natural devotional propensity born out of *bhaktisukriti*, or previous devotional service. It may therefore be long standing or only recently developed. But in either case *ruci* is natural to the soul. When this inclination is determined by the spiritual master, it must be confirmed by the disciple. If the inclination is not fixed, the spiritual master's instructions on *rasa* will not take effect.

Those who are not attracted to the sringararasa, preferring dasya, sakhya or vatsalya, must likewise receive instructions from the spiritual master on these relationships in order to get the fruit of their devotion, or else return to a life of anarthas.

The great devotee Syamananda at first was not aware of his own siddharuci or permanent devotional propensity; he was made to embrace the sakhyarasa or the mood of friendship. Later, by the grace of Srila Jiva Goswami, he attained his real position.

If an inappropriate ruci is falsely attached to the sadhaka, it is compared to the gopi identity's acceptance of a husband. But by the grace of his spiritual master, the sadhaka at last attains Krsna's service in the parakiya rasa or paramour relationship. Rasa comes to a full bloom only in the parakiya mood. The summit of Lord Caitanya's teachings is that the parakiya attitude is the permanent feature of the pastimes of the Lord, both in their appearance [when Krsna descends to Vrajabhumi] and their disappearance [into the invisible Vraja of the transcendental world].

The conjugal rasa is completely transcendental

Sringararasa is totally devoid of even an iota of materialism. The transcendental jiva, in order to enjoy and exchange pure rasa, becomes a transcendental gopi and renders devotional service to the transcendental personalities of Sri Radha and Sri Krsna in the transcendental realm of Vrindavana. There is not the slightest tinge of the mundane man-woman relationship in Vrindavana. Only the purest essence of conjugal love is manifested in the perfected identity of the soul. And realization of this is available only from a pure devotee spiritual master. Other than by his grace, this inconceivable truth can never be understood. It is beyond the realm of speculation and pedantic scrutiny. Its realization is extremely rare.

The transition from smaranadasa to apanadasa is crucial

Perfection eludes the disciple if he does not elevate himself from the stage of smarana-dasa to apana-dasa. The confidential process of apanadasa is most exalted, devoid of the false posturing of karma, jnana or yoga. Externally, the devotee engages himself fully in the chanting the holy name, leading a renounced and simple life. Internally, he keeps the splendid

Editor's note: refer to C.c. Adi 4.50, purport, for further elaboration on this topic. flames of rasa burning with pure intensity all the time.

Those sadhakas who are prone to a pompous external display of devotion or who fail to steady and properly direct their internal spiritual aspirations are unable to elevate themselves from the platform of smarana to apana-dasa. Thus the

sadhaka may linger, unaccomplished, through many lifetimes of devotional practice.

This path of worship or bhajana is the simplest, but if the purity of the bhajana is in any way disfigured by a tinge of the contaminated desires for recognition, distinction or preference, then the sadhaka is thrown off the path of vraja-sadhana or bhajana in the mood of Vraja. One must approach the spiritual master with simple humility and learn this pure process properly.

By always remembering that he is pure spirit soul, part and parcel of the Absolute Whole, that he has a transcendental original form that is allperfect, that He has forgotten his perfect spiritual state and come under the clutches of maya, that he is offensive to Lord Krsna, being inebriated with the false designations of his gross body, but by the mercy of his spiritual master he can regain knowledge of his real self the method for the reawakening of the disciple's original identity can be quickly accomplished.

Two methods of sadhana: vaidhi and raganuga

There are two methods of sadhanabhakti: one is vaidhi (rules and regulations) and the other is raganuga (spontaneous). In the beginning, these two methods appear to be contradictory, but upon comprehension of their real purpose, the differences between them are dissolved. The vaidhi method of sadhana arises from respect for the regulations of scripture. Raganugasadhana is born out of an intense attraction for the activities of the residents of Vraja. The first is the usual method, whereas the second is extremely rare and confidential.

To the stage of apanadasa via vaidhi sadhana

The vaidhibhakta cross checks all his activities of service to Krsna with scriptural injunction. Thus his beginning faith (sraddha) for the process of devotional service leads him step by step to nistha (firm faith), then to ruci (taste or attraction), then asakti (attachment). When he reaches the first stage of spontaneity and slight bhava, he discards his dependence upon scriptural directives as an impediment to his progress. After this, he is elevated to the stage of apana-dasa, where the difference between devotees following vaidhi and raganuga disappear.

To the stage of sampatidasa via raganugasadhana [continued from the section subtitled "Bhajana from the stage of sravanadasa to smaranadasa"]

In the smaranadasa stage of raganugasadhana, the eleven sentiments of the gopis are first remembered by the sadhaka; these sentiments must adorn his emotions before he can remember the astakaliyalila. There are five levels of remembrance in smaranadasa.

Initially, his remembrance will not be steady; this level is called smarana.

Sometimes he remembers the sentiments, his position and his service, and at other times he forgets. But by steady practice of smarana, gradually he reaches permanency of remembrance, or dharana. As one meditates on every aspect of the subject of remembrance, part by part, minutely, dharana develops into fixed meditation - this is dhyana. When dhyana becomes continual, it is called anusmriti. Following anusmriti is the fifth level of remembrance, samadhi, when the devotee has no interest in anything other than perfect absorption in the pastimes of Lord Krsna.

From the samadhi level of smarana-dasa, the crucial ascension to apana-dasa or the stage of application takes place. For one who is not adept, elevation through the five stages of smarana-dasa to apana-dasa may require many yugas of effort; for a dexterous sadhaka, reaching apana-dasa is accomplished quickly. In the apana-dasa stage, identification with the psychophysical body is reduced to insignificance. His spiritual identity (svarupa) becomes more and more predominant. Intermittently, it manifests and he experiences sublime ecstasy in rendering devotional service to Sri Sri RadhaKrsna in Vraja. These experiences develop until he spends long periods of time in Vraja interacting with the residents in his vraja-svarupa, seeing the dhama and the transcendental pastimes within.

The devotee's constant namabhajana inevitably brings about a face to face meeting with Lord Syamasundera. By the Lord's merciful will, all trace of the devotee's subtle body of mind, intelligence and false ego are extinguished with the demise of the gross body of five elements. Thus he enters the sampati-dasa stage. This is when the devotee's pure spiritual form fully manifests, free of material coverings. In the mood of pure bhava, he takes up his eternal service to Sri Sri RadhaKrsna in the transcendental dhama. He thus becomes a sadhana-siddha or a perfected soul now reinstated in his svarupa through practice of sadhana and bhajana. He now serves the Lord in the company of the nityasiddhas, the eternal associates of the Lord who were never conditioned.

Summary

The holy name is the greatest and yet the easiest obtainable spiritual treasure. This treasure is obtained by the jiva who chants with faith and devotion, not caring for karma, jnana and yoga. That jiva quickly and easily ascends to the highest perfection by following the method of namabhajana described above.

This method is the best of methods, better even than other methods of bhakti. The basic requirement for successful accomplishment of namabhajana is that the sadhaka must totally shun bad association and engage in the practice of devotional service in the company of saintly devotees of the Lord. Pure love of Krsna is the expression of unalloyed devotional service.

Only a pure devotee's heart has the inclination and capability of receiving prema; the non-devotee's heart denies it. Prema refuses to enter the heart of one who does not keep the company of pure devotees. The jiva's decision to accept

either good or bad association has a powerful and lasting influence on his destiny.

There are three essential traits that must be cultivated to obtain success in chanting the holy name of the Lord: saintly association, isolation from the disturbances of mundane life, and determined, confident enthusiasm.

After saying this, Srila Haridasa Thakura declared himself to be very low and materially engrossed, bereft of good association and always engaged in self-deception. Although Srila Haridasa is himself a nityasiddha associate of the Lord, he expressed himself in this humble way. Humility is the ornament of prema.

The Lord's special favor upon Srila Haridasa Thakur

Srila Haridasa continued, "O Lord, kindly shower upon me Your causeless mercy (ahaitukikripa). I pray that You grant me entry into the realm of bhakti-rasa." Saying this, Srila Haridasa fell unconscious in loving ecstasy, fully self-surrendered at the Lord's lotus feet.

Ahaitukikripa means 'causeless mercy'. By saying this, Srila Haridasa implied that he was spiritually unaccomplished and therefore had no hope for the kind of mercy Lord Krsna bestows upon His pure devotees. In his mood of utter helplessness he simply prayed for Lord Caitanya's unconditional grace.

Srila Haridasa Thakur is famous for nama-bhajana and his teachings on the glories of the holy name, yet he is also the recipient of Lord Caitanya's special mercy. He is such an authority on the philosophy of namarasa that once, when Lord Caitanya was relishing the topics of RadhaKrsna lila with Sri Ramananda Raya and Sarvabhauma Bhattacharya in the courtyard of Srila Haridasa Thakur's bhajana-kutir, Srila Haridasa repeatedly expounded at length on the glories of nama-rasa to the rapt attention of the other exalted persons present.

Lord Caitanya was moved by divine loving emotions upon hearing Srila Haridasa's Thakura's plea for mercy. Lifting Srila Haridasa up in His embrace, the Lord then spoke in confidence to him. "O Haridasa! Listen attentively to what I have to say. The truth about the holy name will be hidden by mischievous rascals who will create a dark shroud of ignorance over the entire world. At that time, these excellent and unrivalled instructions of yours about chanting in the association of saintly persons shall be understood only by a remaining handful of devotees."

What did Lord Caitanya mean by 'mischievous rascals'? The prime candidates for this appellation are the various upstart sects like the sahajiyas, aulas, baulas and so on, who propagate bogus mundane doctrines disguised as Mahaprabhu's own teachings; they indeed conceal from the world the pure philosophy of Krsna consciousness expounded by the Lord Himself in His Siksastaka.

The Lord continued, "The true path of the holy name will be followed by

saintly souls who are totally detached from material life. They will chant the holy name with bhava and will therefore be known as rasikabhaktas. Their bhava will be that of separation; by their chanting they will relish the pastimes of RadhaKrsna and the eight principal gopis.

"The jiva is blessed with pure bhakti only on the strength of his sukriti, or piety and faith. Not everyone is entitled to have such devotion, but in order to instill such devotion in the hearts of the faithful, I have descended to propagate the chanting of the holy name as the religion for this age. The chanting of Hare Krsna Hare Krsna Krsna Krsna Hare Hare, Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Rama Hare Hare is factually the jiva's inherent and eternal religion.

"My dear Haridasa, in the accomplishment of this mission I depend upon your help, and thus I am hearing from you the glories of the holy name."

The Harinama Cintamani, this touchstone of the Lord's holy name, is an unfathomable mine of divine nectar. Whoever tastes it is truly fortunate and is blessed by Krsna; he is a great soul and always blissfully serves Lord Krsna in spontaneous loving devotion. I am a fallen soul; I clasp his feet and humbly pray that the remnants of this nectar should be distributed profusely, thus spreading divine bliss to everyone.

Thus Ends Sri Harinama Cintamani