



Home Deity Worship Course

Need for purity



ISKCON Deity Worship Ministry

Bg 13.8-12

Cleanliness is essential for making advancement in spiritual life. There are two kinds of cleanliness: external and internal. External cleanliness means taking a bath, but for internal cleanliness one has to think of Kṛṣṇa always and chant Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare. This process cleans the accumulated dust of past *karma* from the mind.

SB 9.8.22

Unless one is situated in the transcendental loving service of the Lord, one is unable to understand the Supreme Personality of Godhead. The Lord is situated in everyone's heart. However, because the conditioned souls are influenced by material nature, they can see only the actions and reactions of material nature, but not the Supreme Personality of Godhead. One therefore must purify himself internally and externally:

*apavitraḥ pavitro vā sarvāvasthām gato 'pi vā
yaḥ smaret puṇḍarīkākṣam sa bāhyābhyantaraḥ śuciḥ*

To keep ourselves externally clean we should bathe three times daily, and for internal cleanliness we must cleanse the heart by chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra*. The members of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement must always follow this principle (*bāhyābhyantaraḥ śuciḥ*). Then it will one day be possible to see the Supreme Personality of Godhead face to face.

Room Conversation -- August 24, 1976

They take initiation from the Vṛndāvana Goswamis and they follow strictly rules and regulations. Cleanliness is very essential. In English also it is said cleanliness is next to godliness. Everything should be, especially temple. It will attract them.



And we are singing daily, *śrī-vigrahārādhana-nitya-nānā-śṛṅgāra-tan-mandira-mārjanādaḥ*. *Tat-mandira-mārjana*. *Mārjana* means cleanliness. And want of cleanliness means laziness. If you are lazy you cannot keep clean. "Ah, let me sleep for the time being." That is mode of ignorance. *Tamo-guṇa*. So we have to conquer over *rajo-guṇa*, *tamo-guṇa*. *Tadā rajas-tamo-bhāvāḥ* [SB 1.2.19]. Then there is question of coming to the platform *śuddha*, *sāttvika*. *Sattvaṁ viśuddham vasudeva-śabditam* [SB 4.3.23].

Bg 16.7

One should always be careful to keep his body clean by bathing, brushing teeth, shaving, changing clothes, etc. As far as internal cleanliness is concerned, one should always remember the holy names of God and chant Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare.

SB 4.7.17

A *viṣṇu-yajña*, or an offering to Lord Viṣṇu, cannot be performed uncleanly. To offer anything in an unclean state is called a *sevāparādha*. The worship of the Viṣṇu Deity in the temple is also *viṣṇu-yajña*. In all Viṣṇu temples, therefore, the priest who takes care of the *arcanā-vidhi* must be very clean. Everything should be always kept neat and clean, and the foodstuffs should be prepared in a neat and clean manner. All these regulative principles are described in *The Nectar of Devotion*. There are thirty-two kinds of offenses in discharging *arcanā* service. It is required, therefore, that one be extremely careful not to be unclean. Generally, whenever any ritualistic ceremony is begun, the holy name of Lord Viṣṇu is first chanted in order to purify the situation. Whether one is in a pure or impure condition, internally or externally, if one chants or even remembers the holy name of the Supreme Personality of Godhead Viṣṇu, one immediately becomes purified.



Madhya 8.55

After finishing His evening bath, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu sat down and waited for Rāmānanda Rāya to come. Then Rāmānanda Rāya, accompanied by one servant, came to meet Him.

A Vaiṣṇava who is supposed to be advanced in spiritual understanding — be he a householder or a *sannyāsī* — must bathe three times a day: morning, noon and evening. When one is engaged in the service of the Deity, he must especially follow the principles of the *Padma Purāṇa* and take regular baths. He should also, after bathing, decorate his body with the twelve *tilakas*.

Letter, 29 December, 1970

Proper Deity worship, with all attention to cleanliness, is of the utmost importance. If you can please the Deity by your sincere service, then your temple will flourish. To be able to personally serve the Deity is a great privilege and such a person is very fortunate indeed. So you continue in this way and Krishna will surely bless you.

Letter, 22 June, 1970

I am so glad to know that Himavati is taking such nice care of the Deities. I have seen the pictures. It is far improved than before. The more you keep the Deity room and paraphernalia clean, the more your heart becomes cleansed from dirty things.

Letter, 20 April, 1970

The temple and altar should always be very clean and decorated with flowers and incense. We shall touch the Deity altar and Deity in very clean condition, after



taking bath and washing mouth nicely. Practice washing hands after eating and wash with soap and water after toilet. Cleanliness is next to Godliness, so this point should be very carefully observed, then you will advance very quickly to the perfectional stage of Krishna Consciousness.

Letter, 20 March, 1970

Deity worship means to be very, very clean. You should try to bathe twice daily. The Deities should never be approached without having bathed first and changed to clean cloths after passing stool, etc. Keep teeth brushed after each meal, fingernails clean and trim. Be sure that your hands are clean before touching anything on the altar or the Deities. And cleanse the Deity room, altar and floor daily thoroughly. Shine the various Aratrik paraphernalia after Aratrik. This is described in the booklet for pujaris written by Silavati Dasi. The idea is summit cleanliness -- that will satisfy Krsna.

Letter, 22 April, 1972

Always remember that cleanliness and promptness are two very important requirements in Deity worship.

Letter, 28 August, 1973

One thing is that I do not know how practical it is to carry deities in the truck, by the jarring of the vehicle there may be some damage and also I think that it is not possible to keep the top standard of worship, cleanliness, punctual offerings etc. We must be very careful about deity worship, if it is neglectful then it is very offensive and that will not help us, we should not do it simply for show.



Letter, 31 January, 1973

One thing though, the deity worship must be completely pure in terms of cleanliness and punctuality, otherwise there will be some offense.

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 6.1.16 -- Denver, June 29, 1975

Kṛṣṇa, or God, is pure. Arjuna said, *param brahma param brahma pavitraṁ paramam bhavan* [Bg. 10.12] "My Lord Kṛṣṇa, You are the supreme pure." So unless we are pure, we cannot approach Kṛṣṇa. That is the statement in the *śāstra*. Without becoming fire, you cannot enter into fire. Similarly, without becoming completely pure, you cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That is accepted by all religious system. The Christian system is also like that, that without becoming pure you cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 7.9.1 -- Māyāpur, February 8, 1976

Pavitraṁ paramam bhavān. Kṛṣṇa is the supreme pure, *pavitraṁ paramam*. *Paramam* means "extreme." So nobody can approach Kṛṣṇa while he is impure. That is not possible. Just like some rascals, they say, "It doesn't matter what you are eating, what you are doing. There is no hindrance for your spiritual advancement." These rascals, these fools, misleading the whole world that in the matter of understanding the Supreme Person one can behave like the low-grade persons. No. That is not possible. *Param brahma param dhāma pavitraṁ paramam bhavan* [Bg. 10.12].

So if you have to approach the supreme pure, you have to become pure. Otherwise there is no possibility. Without being fire, you cannot enter into the fire. Then you'll be burned. Similarly, although you are also Brahman... Part of Para-brahman is also Brahman. *Ahaṁ brahmāsmi*. This is our identification. But what kind of Brahman? But minute particle of Brahman, small particle. Just like spark and the whole fire both of them are fire, but spark is spark, and the big fire is big fire. So



the spark cannot become big fire. If he wants to become so, then he falls down. Then whatever little light was there, fire, it becomes extinguished.

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 2.9.4 -- Japan, April 22, 1972

If simply we remain like hogs and cats and dogs, then how it is possible to realize God? *Param pavitram*. If I do not become *pavitra* myself, pure, how I can see the supreme pure? It is impossible, person within this universe.

Bhagavad-gītā 13.16 -- Bombay, October 10, 1973

You cannot understand the supreme pure, Absolute Truth, keeping yourself impure. It is not possible. You can understand God when you are pure. *Yeṣām anta-gataṁ pāpam*. It is stated in the *Bhagavad-gītā* [7.28]. You cannot understand God if you are sinful.

Bhagavad-gītā 7.2 -- San Francisco, September 11, 1968

Therefore *bhakti*, devotional service, means purifying the senses. To be employed in the service of the supreme pure. The Lord is supreme pure. In the *Bhagavad-gītā*, in the Tenth Chapter, you'll find that Kṛṣṇa is described by Arjuna *pavitram paramam bhavān* [Bg. 10.12]: "You are the supreme pure." So if we want to serve the senses of the supreme pure, then we have to become pure also.

Bhagavad-gītā 7.1 -- Sydney, February 16, 1973

Because without being pure, you cannot understand the Supreme Pure. God is Supreme Pure. It is stated in the *Bhagavad-gītā*, *yeṣām anta-gataṁ pāpam janānām puṇya-karmaṇām*. Anyone who is completely free from the reaction of sinful life, *yeṣām anta-gataṁ pāpam janānām puṇya-karmaṇām* [7.28].



Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 6.1.22 -- Honolulu, May 22, 1976

Arjuna says Kṛṣṇa, *param brahma param dhāma pavitraṁ paramaṁ bhavān* [Bg. 10.12] "Kṛṣṇa, You are the Supreme Brahman," *param dhāma*, "the supreme resort of everything, and" *pavitraṁ paramaṁ bhavān*, "and the supreme pure." So nobody can approach Kṛṣṇa if he's impure. That is not possible. In the *Bhagavad-gītā* still it is said, *yeṣāṁ tu anta-gataṁ pāpam*: "One who is free from all contamination of sinful activities," *yeṣāṁ anta-gataṁ pāpam janānām puṇya-karmaṇām*, "simply engaged in pious activities only," *te*, "such persons," *dvanda-moha-nirmukta*, "without any doubt and duality," *bhajante mām dṛḍha-vratāḥ*, "with fixed-up mind, he can become Kṛṣṇa conscious."

Room Conversation with Mister Popworth and E. F. Schumacher -- July 26, 1973, London

God consciousness cannot be achieved without being pure. In the *Bhagavad-gītā* it is said, *param brahma param dhāma pavitraṁ paramaṁ bhavān* [Bg. 10.12]. God is the supreme pure. You cannot approach God, you cannot understand God, in impure condition. And without God consciousness, there cannot be any purification.

SB 10.14.8

Just as one cannot approach the sun without becoming fire, one cannot approach the supreme pure, Lord Kṛṣṇa, without undergoing a rigid purificatory process, which may appear like suffering but which is in fact a curative treatment administered by the personal hand of the Lord.



Śrī Śrī Rukmiṇī Dvārakānātha Deity Installation -- Los Angeles, July 16, 1969

So Kṛṣṇa consciousness is so nice, it opens the door of highest perfectional platform for everyone, provided he follows the rules and regulation. That's all. That is the only condition. Otherwise, if simply by imitating, if somebody thinks, "Oh, I can become a..." like that: "If such and such person can become, I can do..." No. That is warned by Rūpa Gosvāmī,

śruti-smṛti-purāṇādi-pāñcarātrikī-vidhīm vinā aikāntikī harer bhaktir utpatayaiva kalpate [Brs. 1.2.101]

If we simply imitate, oh, that will not do. So do not try to imitate. Follow the simple rules and regulations—it is very nice—and above all, chant Hare Kṛṣṇa. You'll become purified.

Without being purified you cannot touch Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa. In the Vedas it is stated, "Without becoming Brahman, you cannot approach Brahman." Just like without becoming fire, you cannot approach fire, because the inconsistency of temperature. It will burn. Just like here is fire, and I am feeling temperature, but the fire flames within the fire, they do not feel, because the temperature is the same. Similarly, without becoming Brahman, without understanding oneself, realizing himself, nobody can...

Kṛṣṇa is the Parambrahman. *Param brahma param dhāma pavitraṁ paramaṁ bhavān* [Bg. 10.12].

That is stated in the *Bhagavad-gītā. Puruṣaṁ śāśvatam*. Therefore one has to keep himself very purified; otherwise you cannot touch Kṛṣṇa. That is not possible. It is fire, so you have to become fire. And how to become fire? Fire, you are also fire, but now you are covered fire, covered by this material body. Therefore you have to spiritualize this body by purificatory process. The same example, just like the iron rod, it is iron, but you put into the fire, it becomes warm, warmer, warmer, then red hot, then it is fire. Similarly, by this process, chanting process, by regulative



process, you are becoming warmer, warmer, warmer, warmer. And when you fully become red-hot warm, then your body is as good as Kṛṣṇa's.

So we have to keep ourself always in the fire of Kṛṣṇa consciousness; then everything is all right. [laughs] Otherwise, it will become dull, and it will be simply idol worship. That's all. That is the difference between idol worship and Deity worship. If there is no life, then it is idol worship, hedonism. And when there is life, feeling, "Where is Kṛṣṇa? Here is Kṛṣṇa. Oh, I have to serve Kṛṣṇa, I have to dress Him, I have to serve Rādhārāṇī, She is here. Oh, I must do it very nicely. And as far as possible decorate Her to the best capacity," in this way, if you always feel Kṛṣṇa conscious, then you are fire. The same example, keeping with the fire. And if you think it is a brass-made doll, I mean to say, idol... *Ye yathā mām prapadyante tāṁs tathaiva bhajāmy aham* [Bg. 4.11].

If you think this is a brass-made idol, then it will remain a brass-made idol to you forever. But if you elevate yourself to higher platform of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, then Kṛṣṇa, this Kṛṣṇa, will talk with you. This Kṛṣṇa will talk with you.