



Home Deity Worship Course

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 11 Canto, chapter 27



ISKCON Deity Worship Ministry

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 11 Canto, chapter 27

Text 1

*śrī-uddhava uvāca
kriyā-yogaṁ samācakṣva
bhavad-ārāadhanam prabho
yasmāt tvāṁ ye yathārcanti
sātvatāḥ sātvatarṣabha*

Śrī Uddhava said: My dear Lord, O master of the devotees, please explain to me the prescribed method of worshiping You in Your Deity form. What are the qualifications of those devotees who worship the Deity, on what basis is such worship established, and what is the specific method of worship?

Purport

In addition to performing their prescribed duties, devotees of the Lord engage in regulated worship of the Lord in His Deity form in the temple. Such worship acts powerfully to cleanse the heart of both the lust to enjoy one's material body and the material family attachment that results directly from this lust. To be effective, however, the process of Deity worship must be performed in the authorized way. Therefore Uddhava now inquires from the Lord about this subject.

Text 2

*etad vadanti munayo
muhur niḥśreyasaṁ nṛṇām
nārado bhagavān vyāsa
ācāryo 'ṅgirasah sutaḥ*

All the great sages repeatedly declare that such worship brings the greatest benefit possible in human life. This is the opinion of Nārada Muni, the great Vyāsadeva and my own spiritual master, Bṛhaspati.

Text 3-4

*niḥsṛtaṁ te mukhāmbhojād
yad āha bhagavān ajah
putrebhyo bhr̥gu-mukhyebhyo*



devyai ca bhagavān bhavaḥ

*etat vai sarva-varṇānām
āśramāṇām ca sammataṁ
śreyasām uttamaṁ manye
strī-śūdrāṇām ca māna-da*

O most magnanimous Lord, the instructions on this process of Deity worship first emanated from Your lotus mouth. Then they were spoken by the great Lord Brahmā to his sons, headed by Bhṛgu, and by Lord Śiva to his wife, Pārvatī. This process is accepted by and appropriate for all the occupational and spiritual orders of society. Therefore I consider worship of You in Your Deity form to be the most beneficial of all spiritual practices, even for women and śūdras.

Text 5

*etat kamala-patrākṣa
karma-bandha-vimocanam
bhaktāya cānuraktāya
brūhi viśveśvareśvara*

O lotus-eyed one, O Supreme Lord of all lords of the universe, please explain to Your devoted servant this means of liberation from the bondage of work.

Text 6

*śrī-bhagavān uvāca
na hy anto 'nanta-pārasya
karma-kāṇḍasya coddhava
saṅkṣiptaṁ varṇayiṣyāmi
yathāvad anupūrvaśaḥ*

The Supreme Personality of Godhead said: My dear Uddhava, there is no end to the innumerable Vedic prescriptions for executing Deity worship; so I shall explain this topic to you briefly, one step at a time.

Purport

Here the word karma-kāṇḍa refers to the various Vedic methods of worship, culminating in Deity worship of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Just as the



means of sense gratification and material renunciation are innumerable, the transcendental pastimes and qualities the Supreme Personality of Godhead enjoys in His own abode, called Vaikuṇṭha, are also innumerable. The various concepts of piety and methods of purification in the material world ultimately cannot be reconciled amongst themselves without accepting the Absolute Truth, the Personality of Godhead, since without appreciation of Him there is no definitive understanding of what is actually obligatory for a human being. Even though almost all human beings are engaged in various processes of worship, the Lord will now summarize this topic, describing how one should worship Him in His Deity form.

Text 7

*vaidikas tāntriko miśra
iti me tri-vidho makhaḥ
trayāṇām īpsitenaiva
vidhinā mām samarcaret*

One should carefully worship Me by selecting one of the three methods by which I receive sacrifice: Vedic, tantric or mixed.

Purport

Vaidika refers to sacrifice performed with mantras from the four Vedas and auxiliary Vedic literature. Tāntrika refers to such literatures as the Pañcarātra and the Gautamīya-tantra. And “mixed” indicates utilization of both literatures. It should be remembered that superficial imitation of elaborate Vedic sacrifices will not bring one the actual perfection of life. One must perform sacrifice according to the prescription of the Supreme Lord, who recommends for this age the chanting of His holy names: Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare.

Text 8

*yadā sva-nigamenoktaṁ
dvijatvaṁ prāpya pūruṣaḥ
yathā yajeta mām bhaktyā
śraddhayā tan nibodha me*



Now please listen faithfully as I explain exactly how a person who has achieved twice-born status through the relevant Vedic prescriptions should worship Me with devotion.

Purport

The word *sva-nigamena* refers to the particular Vedic injunctions relevant to one's social and occupational status. Members of the *brāhmaṇa*, *kṣatriya* and *vaiśya* communities all achieve *dvijatvam*, twice-born status, by initiation into the *Gāyatrī* mantra. Traditionally, fully qualified *brāhmaṇa* boys may be initiated at age eight, *kṣatriyas* at eleven and *vaiśyas* at twelve, provided the proper conditions are met. Having achieved twice-born status, one should faithfully worship the Supreme Personality of Godhead in His form of the Deity, as the Lord Himself will describe.

Text 9

*arcāyām sthaṇḍile 'gnau vā
sūrye vāpsu hr̥di dvijaḥ
dravyeṇa bhakti-yukto 'rcet
sva-guruṁ mām amāyayā*

A twice-born person should worship Me, his worshipable Lord, without duplicity, offering appropriate paraphernalia in loving devotion to My Deity form or to a form of Me appearing upon the ground, in fire, in the sun, in water or within the worshiper's own heart.

Text 10

*pūrvam snānam prakurvīta
dhauta-danto 'ṅga-śuddhaye
ubhayair api ca snānam
mantrair mṛd-graṇādinā*

One should first purify his body by cleansing his teeth and bathing. Then one should perform a second cleansing by smearing the body with earth and chanting both Vedic and tantric mantras.

Text 11

sandhyopāstyādi-karmāṇi



*vedenācoditāni me
pūjām taiḥ kalpayet samyak-
saṅkalpaḥ karma-pāvanīm*

Fixing the mind on Me, one should worship Me by his various prescribed duties, such as chanting the Gāyatrī mantra at the three junctures of the day. Such performances are enjoined by the Vedas and purify the worshiper of reactions to fruitive activities.

Text 12

*śailī dāru-mayī lauhī
lepyā lekhyā ca saikatī
mano-mayī maṇi-mayī
pratimāṣṭa-vidhā smṛtā*

The Deity form of the Lord is said to appear in eight varieties — stone, wood, metal, earth, paint, sand, the mind or jewels.

Purport

Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī explains that certain Deity forms, such as those made of sand, are manifested for a brief time to fulfill a personal desire of the worshiper. Those, however, who desire to attain pure love of God should worship the permanent form of the Deity (made, for instance, of marble, gold or brass), and they should maintain continual worship. In Kṛṣṇa consciousness there is no scope for neglecting the worship of the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

Text 13

*calācaleti dvi-vidhā
pratiṣṭhā jīva-mandiram
udvāsāvāhane na staḥ
sthirāyām uddhavārcane*

The Deity form of the Lord, who is the shelter of all living entities, can be established in two ways: temporarily or permanently. But a permanent Deity, having been called, can never be sent away, My dear Uddhava.



Purport

The devotees of the Lord understand themselves to be the Lord's eternal servitors; recognizing the Deity to be the Lord Himself, they permanently install the Deity and engage in perpetual worship. The impersonalists, however, regard the eternal form of the Lord as a temporary manifestation of illusion. In fact, they regard the Deity form as a mere stepping-stone in their ambitious program to become God. Materialistic persons of whatever stripe consider the Lord to be their order supplier, and so they make temporary arrangements for religious ceremonies to achieve temporary material sense gratification. This temporary mode of worship is favored by those desiring to exploit the Personality of Godhead for their personal ends, whereas the loving devotees in Kṛṣṇa consciousness eternally engage in worship of the Personality of Godhead. They install permanent Deities meant to be worshiped perpetually.

Text 14

*asthirāyām vikalpaḥ syāt
sthaṇḍile tu bhaved dvayam
snapanam tv avilepyāyām
anyatra parimāṛjanam*

The Deity that is temporarily established can optionally be called forth and sent away, but these two rituals should always be performed when the Deity is traced upon the ground. Bathing should be done with water except if the Deity is made of clay, paint or wood, in which cases a thorough cleansing without water is enjoined.

Purport

Various classes of devotees worship the Deity of the Personality of Godhead according to their various stages of faith in the Lord. An advanced devotee of Lord Kṛṣṇa understands his eternal loving relationship with the Lord and, seeing the Deity as the Lord Himself, establishes an eternal relationship with the Deity based on loving servitude to Him. Understanding Lord Kṛṣṇa to be the eternal form of bliss and knowledge, a faithful devotee makes a permanent arrangement for Deity worship, installing the Lord's form made of, for example, stone, wood or marble.

The śālagrāma-śilā is considered to be automatically installed even without the formal ceremony, and so it is forbidden to call the Deity with mantras or ask the



Deity to leave. On the other hand, if one prepares a Deity form by drawing on sanctified ground or by constructing a sand image, one must call the Deity with mantras and then ask the Deity to leave the external form, which will soon be demolished by the natural elements.

The general principle is that a pure devotee of the Lord understands his relationship with the Deity to be eternal. The more one surrenders in loving devotion to the Deity, the more one can understand the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Lord Kṛṣṇa is a person, but He is the Supreme Person, possessing His own unique feelings. One can easily please the Lord by devotional service offered to His Deity form. By pleasing the Lord one can gradually progress in the mission of human life and eventually go back home, back to Godhead, where the Deity personally appears before the devotee and welcomes the devotee to His personal abode, known throughout the world as the kingdom of God.

Text 15

*dravyaiḥ prasiddhair mad-yāgaḥ
pratimādiṣv amāyinaḥ
bhaktasya ca yathā-labdhair
hr̥di bhāvena caiva hi*

One should worship Me in My Deity forms by offering the most excellent paraphernalia. But a devotee completely freed from material desire may worship Me with whatever he is able to obtain, and may even worship Me within his heart with mental paraphernalia.

Purport

A devotee still troubled by material desire tends to see the world as an object of sense gratification. Such a neophyte devotee may misunderstand the Lord's supreme position and may even consider the Lord an object of his own enjoyment. Hence the neophyte must offer opulent paraphernalia to the Deity so that he may constantly remember that the Deity is the supreme enjoyer and that he, the neophyte, is simply the worshiper and is actually meant for the Deity's pleasure. In contrast, an advanced devotee, one fixed in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, never forgets that the Supreme Lord is the actual enjoyer and controller of everything. The pure devotee offers his unalloyed love to the Personality of Godhead along with whatever paraphernalia is easily obtained. A Kṛṣṇa conscious devotee does not



waver in his devotion to Lord Kṛṣṇa, and even with the simplest offering he completely satisfies the Personality of Godhead.

Text 16-17

*snānālaṅkāraṇaṁ preṣṭham
arcāyām eva tūddhava
sthaṇḍile tattva-vinyāso
vahnāv ājya-plutaṁ haviḥ*

*sūrye cābhyarhaṇaṁ preṣṭham
salile salilādibhiḥ
śraddhayopāhṛtaṁ preṣṭham
bhaktena mama vāry api*

In worshipping the temple Deity, my dear Uddhava, bathing and decoration are the most pleasing offerings. For the Deity traced on sacred ground, the process of tattva-vinyāsa is most dear. Oblations of sesame and barley soaked in ghee are the preferred offering to the sacrificial fire, whereas worship consisting of upasthāna and arghya is preferred for the sun. One should worship Me in the form of water by offering water itself. Actually, whatever is offered to Me with faith by My devotee — even if only a little water — is most dear to Me.

Purport

The Supreme Personality of Godhead is present everywhere, and Vedic culture prescribes various ritualistic methods for worshipping the Lord in His various manifestations. The principal item is the faith and devotion of the worshiper, without which everything else is useless, as the Lord describes in the next verse.

Text 18

*bhūry apy abhaktopāhṛtaṁ
na me toṣāya kalpate
gandho dhūpaḥ sumanaso
dīpo 'nnādyāṁ ca kiṁ punaḥ*



Even very opulent presentations do not satisfy Me if they are offered by nondevotees. But I am pleased by any insignificant offering made by My loving devotees, and I am certainly most pleased when nice presentations of fragrant oil, incense, flowers and palatable foods are offered with love.

Purport

The Lord has stated in the previous verse that even a little water offered with love and devotion gives Him great pleasure. Therefore the words *kiṁ punaḥ* indicate the Lord's complete happiness when a suitably opulent offering is made with love and devotion. But an opulent offering made by a nondevotee cannot please the Lord. As Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī explains, the rules and regulations concerning Deity worship and the listing of offenses against the Deities are all meant for helping one avoid precisely this kind of disrespectful or neglectful attitude toward the Personality of Godhead in His Deity form. In fact, all offenses against the Deity are based upon irreverence and disregard for the Lord's position as master, and thus upon disobedience to His orders. Since one must worship the Deity with reverence, one should offer opulent presentations to the Deity with love, for such presentations both enhance the respectfulness of the worshiper and help him avoid offenses in his worship.

Text 19

*śuciḥ sambhṛta-sambhāraḥ
prāg-darbhaiḥ kalpitāsanah
āsīnah prāg udag vārced
arcāyām tv atha sammukhaḥ*

After cleansing himself and collecting all the paraphernalia, the worshiper should arrange his own seat with blades of kuśa grass whose tips point eastward. He should then sit facing either east or north, or else, if the Deity is fixed in one place, he should sit directly facing the Deity.

Purport

The word *sambhṛta-sambhāra* means that before beginning the Deity worship one should place all necessary paraphernalia nearby. In this way one will not have to get up continually to search for different items. If the Deity has been permanently installed, then one should sit facing the Deity.



Text 20

*kṛta-nyāsaḥ kṛta-nyāsām
mad-arcām pāṇināmrjet
kalaśam prokṣaṇīyaṁ ca
yathāvad upasādhayet*

The devotee should sanctify the various parts of his body by touching them and chanting mantras. He should do the same for My Deity form, and then with his hands he should clean the Deity of old flowers and the remnants of previous offerings. He should properly prepare the sacred pot and the vessel containing water for sprinkling.

Purport

Before beginning the process of worship mentioned here, one should offer obeisances to one's spiritual master, the Deity and other worshipable personalities.

Text 21

*tad-adbhira deva-yajanaṁ
dravyāṇy ātmānam eva ca
prokṣya pātrāṇi trīṇy adbhis
tais tair dravyaiś ca sādhayet*

Then, with the water of that prokṣaṇīya vessel he should sprinkle the area where the Deity is being worshiped, the offerings that are going to be presented, and his own body. Next he should decorate with various auspicious substances three vessels filled with water.

Purport

Śrīla Śrīdhara Svāmī gives references from Vedic literature stating that the water meant for bathing the feet should be combined with millet seeds, dūrvā grass mixed in water, viṣṇukrānta flowers and other items. The water used for arghya should include the following eight items: fragrant oil, flowers, unbroken barleycorns, husked barleycorns, the tips of kuśa grass, sesame seeds, mustard seeds and dūrvā grass. The water for sipping should include jasmine flowers, ground cloves and kakkola berries.



Text 22

*pādyārghyācamanīyārthaṁ
trīṇi pātrāṇi deśikaḥ
hṛdā śīrṣṇātha śikhayā
gāyatrī cābhimantrayet*

The worshiper should then purify those three vessels. He should sanctify the vessel holding water for washing the Lord's feet by chanting hṛdayāya namaḥ, the vessel containing water for arghya by chanting śīrase svāhā, and the vessel containing water for washing the Lord's mouth by chanting śikhāyai vaṣaṭ. Also, the Gāyatrī mantra should be chanted for all three vessels.

Text 23

*piṇḍe vāyv-agni-saṁśuddhe
hṛt-padma-sthāṁ parāṁ mama
aṇvīm jīva-kalām dhyāyen
nādānte siddha-bhāvitām*

The worshiper should meditate upon My subtle form — which is situated within the worshiper's own body, now purified by air and fire — as the source of all living entities. This form of the Lord is experienced by self-realized sages in the last part of the vibration of the sacred syllable om.

Purport

According to Śrīla Śrīdhara Svāmī, the praṇava, or omkāra, has five parts: A, U, M, the nasal bindu and the reverberation (nāda). Liberated souls meditate upon the Lord at the end of that reverberation.

Text 24

*tayātma-bhūtayā piṇḍe
vyāpte sampūjya tan-mayaḥ
āvāhyārcādiṣu sthāpya
nyastāṅgaṁ mām prapūjayet*

The devotee conceives of the Supersoul, whose presence surcharges the devotee's body, in the form corresponding to his realization. Thus the devotee



worships the Lord to his full capacity and becomes fully absorbed in Him. By touching the various limbs of the Deity and chanting appropriate mantras, the devotee should invite the Supersoul to join the Deity's form, and then the devotee should worship Me.

Purport

The body of a devotee is pervaded by the Supreme Lord just as a house is pervaded by the glow of a lamp. Just as one gestures in a friendly way to indicate that a guest should enter one's house, one touches the body of the Deity, chants appropriate mantras, and enthusiastically invites the Supersoul to enter the form of the Deity. Since both the Deity and the Supersoul are the Supreme Personality of Godhead, they are not different. One form of the Lord can immediately become manifest in another.

Text 25-26

*pādyopasparśārhaṇādīn
upacārān prakalpayet
dharmādibhiś ca navabhiḥ
kalpayitvāsanam mama*

*padmam aṣṭa-dalam tatra
karṇikā-kesarojjvalam
ubhābhyām veda-tantrābhyām
mahyam tūbhaya-siddhaye*

The worshiper should first imagine My seat as decorated with the personified deities of religion, knowledge, renunciation and opulence and with My nine spiritual energies. He should think of the Lord's sitting place as an eight-petaled lotus, effulgent on account of the saffron filaments within its whorl. Then, following the regulations of both the Vedas and the tantras, he should offer Me water for washing the feet, water for washing the mouth, arghya and other items of worship. By this process he achieves both material enjoyment and liberation.

Purport

According to Śrīla Śrīdhara Svāmī, religion, knowledge, renunciation and opulence are the legs of the Lord's sitting platform and occupy the four corners,



beginning with the southeast. Irreligion, ignorance, attachment and wretchedness are the intermediate legs, standing in the four directions beginning with the east. The nine śaktis, or potencies, of the Lord are Vimalā, Utkarṣiṇī, Jñānā, Kriyā, Yogā, Prahvī, Satyā, Īśānā and Anugrahā.

Text 27

*sudarśanam pāñcajanyaṁ
gadāsīṣu-dhanur-halān
muṣalam kaustubham mālām
śrīvatsam cānupūjayet*

One should worship, in order, the Lord's Sudarśana disc, His Pāñcajanya conchshell, His club, sword, bow, arrows and plow, His muṣala weapon, His Kaustubha gem, His flower garland and the Śrīvatsa curl of hair on His chest.

Text 28

*nandaṁ sunandaṁ garuḍam
pracaṇḍam caṇḍam eva ca
mahābalaṁ balaṁ caiva
kumudaṁ kumudekṣaṇam*

One should worship the Lord's associates Nanda and Sunanda, Garuḍa, Pracaṇḍa and Caṇḍa, Mahābala and Bala, and Kumuda and Kumudekṣaṇa.

Text 29

*durgāṁ vināyakaṁ vyāsaṁ
viṣvaksenaṁ gurūn surān
sve sve sthāne tv abhimukhān
pūjayet prokṣaṇādibhiḥ*

With offerings such as prokṣaṇa one should worship Durgā, Vināyaka, Vyāsa, Viṣvaksena, the spiritual masters and the various demigods. All these personalities should be in their proper places facing the Deity of the Lord.

Purport

According to Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī, the Gaṇeśa and Durgā mentioned in this verse are not the same personalities present within the material world; rather, they are



eternal associates of the Lord in Vaikuṇṭha. In this world Gaṇeśa, the son of Lord Śiva, is famous for awarding financial success, and the goddess Durgā, the wife of Lord Śiva, is famous as the external, illusory potency of the Supreme Lord. The personalities mentioned here, however, are eternally liberated associates of the Lord who reside in the spiritual sky, beyond the material manifestation. Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī quotes from various Vedic literatures to prove that the name Durgā may also indicate the internal potency of the Lord, who is nondifferent from Him. The external, or covering, potency of the Lord expands from this original Durgā. The Durgā of the material world, called Mahā-māyā, assumes the function of bewildering the living entities. Thus a devotee should not fear becoming polluted by worshiping the Durgā mentioned here, who has the same name as illusion, but rather the devotee must show respect to these eternal servitors of the Supreme Lord in Vaikuṇṭha.

Text 30-31

*candanośīra-karpūra-
kuṅkumāguru-vāsitaiḥ
salilaiḥ snāpayen mantrair
nityadā vibhave sati*

*svarṇa-gharmānuvākena
mahāpuruṣa-vidyayā
pauruṣeṇāpi sūktena
sāmabhī rājanādibhiḥ*

The worshiper should bathe the Deity every day, as opulently as his assets permit, using waters scented with sandalwood, uśīra root, camphor, kuṅkuma and aguru. He should also chant various Vedic hymns, such as the anuvāka known as Svarṇa-gharma, the Mahāpuruṣa-vidyā, the Puruṣa-sūkta and various songs of the Sāma Veda, such as the Rājana and the Rohiṇya.

Purport

The Puruṣa-sūkta prayer, beginning om sahasra-śīrṣā-puruṣaḥ sahasrākṣaḥ sahasra-pāt, is contained within the Ṛg Veda.



Text 32

*vastropavītābharāṇa-
patra-srag-gandha-lepanaiḥ
alaṅkurvīta sa-prema
mad-bhakto mām yathocitam*

My devotee should then lovingly decorate Me with clothing, a brāhmaṇa thread, various ornaments, marks of tilaka and garlands, and he should anoint My body with fragrant oils, all in the prescribed manner.

Purport

Śrīla Śrīdhara Svāmī quotes Lord Śrī Viṣṇu’s instructions to Ambarīṣa Mahārāja in the Viṣṇu-dharma Upapurāṇa as follows: “Absorbing your mind completely in the Deity, you should give up all other shelter and consider the Deity your intimate well-wisher. You should mentally worship Him and meditate upon Him while you walk, while you stand, while you sleep and eat. You should see the Deity in front of you, behind, above, below and on both sides. In this way you should constantly remember My Deity form.” In the Gautamīya-tantra one is enjoined to give the Deity of the Lord a brāhmaṇa thread, if possible one made of gold. In the Nṛsimha Purāṇa it is stated, “If one offers to Lord Govinda a yellow sacred thread containing three strands of silk, he will become an expert in Vedānta.”

Text 33

*pādyam ācamanīyaṁ ca
gandhaṁ sumanaso 'kṣatān
dhūpa-dīpopahāryāṇi
dadyān me śraddhayārcakāḥ*

The worshiper should faithfully present Me with water for washing My feet and mouth, fragrant oils, flowers and unbroken grains, along with incense, lamps and other offerings.

Text 34

*guḍa-pāyasa-sarpīṁṣi
śaṣkuly-āpūpa-modakān
saṁyāva-dadhi-sūpāmś ca
naivedyaṁ sati kalpayet*



Within his means, the devotee should arrange to offer Me sugar candy, sweet rice, ghee, śaṣkulī [rice-flour cakes], āpūpa [various sweet cakes], modaka [steamed rice-flour dumplings filled with sweet coconut and sugar], saṁyāva [wheat cakes made with ghee and milk and covered with sugar and spices], yogurt, vegetable soups and other palatable foods.

Purport

One can acquire detailed information of proper and improper foods to offer in Deity worship by consulting Śrī Hari-bhakti-vilāsa, eighth vilāsa, verses 152-164.

Text 35

*abhyaṅgonmardanādarśa-
danta-dhāvābhiṣecanam
annādya-gīta-nṛtyāni
parvaṇi syur utānv-aham*

On special occasions, and daily if possible, the Deity should be massaged with ointment, shown a mirror, offered a eucalyptus stick for brushing His teeth, bathed with the five kinds of nectar, offered all kinds of opulent foods, and entertained with singing and dancing.

Purport

Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura describes the process of Deity worship as follows: “First the Deity’s teeth should be cleaned and His body massaged with fragrant oil and rubbed with vermilion, camphor powder and so forth. Then He should be bathed with fragrant water and the five kinds of nectar. Next one should offer valuable silk garments and jeweled ornaments to the Deity, smear His body with sandalwood paste, and offer Him garlands and other gifts. After this, one should hold a mirror in front of the Deity and then offer fragrant oil, flowers, incense, lamps and scented water for refreshing the mouth. One should offer all types of palatable foods, fragrant water, betel nuts, garlands, āratī lamps, a bed to rest on, and so on. One should also fan the Deity and perform instrumental music, singing and dancing. This Deity worship must be performed on special occasions like religious holidays or else, if one can afford it, daily.” According to Śrīla Śrīdhara Svāmī, Ekādaśī is an appropriate day for performing special Deity worship.



Text 36

*vidhinā vihite kuṇḍe
mekhalā-garta-vedibhiḥ
agnim ādhāya paritaḥ
samūhet pāṇinoditam*

In an arena constructed according to scriptural injunctions, the devotee should perform a fire sacrifice, utilizing the sacred belt, the sacrificial pit and the altar mound. When igniting the sacrificial fire, the devotee should bring it to a blaze with wood piled up by his own hands.

Text 37

*paristīryātha paryukṣed
anvādhāya yathā-vidhi
prokṣaṇyāsādyā dravyāṇi
prokṣyāgnau bhāvayeta mām*

After spreading kuśa grass on the ground and sprinkling it with water, one should perform the anvādhāna ritual according to the prescribed rules. Then one should arrange the items to be offered as oblations and should sanctify them with water from the sprinkling vessel. The worshiper should next meditate upon Me within the fire.

Purport

Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī mentions that one should meditate upon the Lord as the Supersoul within the sacrificial fire.

Text 38-41

*tapta-jāmbūnada-prakhyam
śaṅkha-cakra-gadāmbujaiḥ
lasac-catur-bhujam śāntam
padma-kiñjalka-vāsasam*

*sphurat-kirīṭa-kaṭaka
kaṭi-sūtra-varāṅgadam
śrīvatsa-vakṣasam bhrājat-
kaustubham vana-mālinam*



*dhyāyann abhyarcya dārūṇi
haviṣābhīṣṭāni ca
prāsyājya-bhāgāv āghārau
dattvā cājya-plutaṁ haviḥ*

*juhuyān mūla-mantreṇa
ṣoḍaśarcāvadānataḥ
dharmādibhyo yathā-nyāyam
mantraiḥ sviṣṭi-kṛtaṁ budhaḥ*

The intelligent devotee should meditate upon that form of the Lord whose color is like molten gold, whose four arms are resplendent with the conchshell, disc, club and lotus flower, and who is always peaceful and dressed in a garment colored like the filaments within a lotus flower. His helmet, bracelets, belt and fine arm ornaments shine brilliantly. The symbol of Śrīvatsa is on His chest, along with the glowing Kaustubha gem and a garland of forest flowers. The devotee should then worship that Lord by taking pieces of firewood soaked in the sacrificial ghee and throwing them into the fire. He should perform the ritual of āghāra, presenting into the fire the various items of oblation drenched in ghee. He should then offer to sixteen demigods, beginning with Yamarāja, the oblation called sviṣṭi-kṛt, reciting the basic mantras of each deity and the sixteen-line Puruṣa-sūkta hymn. Pouring one oblation after each line of the Puruṣa-sūkta, he should utter the particular mantra naming each deity.

Text 42

*abhyarcyātha namaskṛtya
pārṣadebhyo balim haret
mūla-mantraṁ japed brahma
smaran nārāyaṇātmakam*

Having thus worshiped the Lord in the sacrificial fire, the devotee should offer his obeisances to the Lord's personal associates by bowing down and should then present offerings to them. He should then chant quietly the mūla-mantra of the Deity of the Lord, remembering the Absolute Truth as the Supreme Personality, Nārāyaṇa.



Text 43

*dattvācamanam uccheṣaṁ
viṣvakṣenāya kalpayet
mukha-vāsaṁ surabhimat
tāmbūlādyam athārhayet*

tāmbūlādyam athārhayet Once again he should offer the Deity water for washing His mouth, and he should give the remnants of the Lord's food to Viṣvakṣena. Then he should present the Deity with fragrant perfume for the mouth and prepared betel nut.

Text 44

*upagāyan gṛṇan nṛtyan
karmāṇy abhinayan mama
mat-kathāḥ śrāvayan śṛṇvan
muhūrtam kṣaṇiko bhavet*

Singing along with others, chanting loudly and dancing, acting out My transcendental pastimes, and hearing and telling stories about Me, the devotee should for some time absorb himself in such festivity.

Purport

A devotee engaged in regulative worship of the Supreme Lord should sometimes become ecstatically absorbed in chanting and hearing the pastimes of the Lord, dancing, and other festivities. The word *muhūrtam*, “for some time,” indicates that a devotee should be careful not to neglect his regulative principles and service to the Lord in the name of so-called ecstasy. Although one may be ecstatically engaged in chanting, hearing and dancing, he cannot give up the formality of regulated service to the Lord.

Text 45

*stavair uccāvacaiḥ stotraiḥ
paurāṇaiḥ prākṛtair api
stutvā prasīda bhagavann
iti vandeta daṇḍa-vat*



The devotee should offer homage to the Lord with all kinds of hymns and prayers, both from the Purāṇas and from other ancient scriptures, and also from ordinary traditions. Praying, “O Lord, please be merciful to me!” he should fall down flat like a rod to offer his obeisances.

Text 46

*śiro mat-pādayoḥ kṛtvā
bāhubhyāṁ ca parasparam
prapannaṁ pāhi mām īśa
bhūtaṁ mṛtyu-grahārṇavāt*

Placing his head at the feet of the Deity, he should then stand with folded hands before the Lord and pray, “O my Lord, please protect me, who am surrendered unto You. I am most fearful of this ocean of material existence, standing as I am in the mouth of death.”

Text 47

*iti śeṣāṁ mayā dattāṁ
śirasy ādhāya sādaram
udvāsayec ced udvāsyam
jyotir jyotiṣi tat punaḥ*

Praying in this way, the devotee should respectfully place upon his head the remnants I offer to him. And if the particular Deity is meant to be sent away at the end of the worship, then this should be performed, the devotee once again placing the light of the Deity’s presence inside the light of the lotus within his own heart.

Text 48

*arcādiṣu yadā yatra
śraddhā mām tatra cārcayet
sarva-bhūteṣv ātmani ca
sarvātmāham avasthitaḥ*

Whenever one develops faith in Me — in My form as the Deity or in other bona fide manifestations — one should worship Me in that form. I certainly exist both within all created beings and also separately in My original form, since I am the Supreme Soul of all.



Purport

The Supreme Personality of Godhead is worshiped according to the faith of a particular worshiper. The Deity form, *arcā*, is specifically mentioned here because Deity worship is essential for spiritual progress. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura mentions that inexperienced persons may think that the Deity is meant for the sense gratification of the worshiper, since superficially the Deity is made of external substances such as marble or brass. But through the process of installing the Deity by chanting of authorized mantras, one invites the Supreme Personality of Godhead to enter the Deity form. By regulated, faithful worship one gradually understands that the Deity is completely nondifferent from the Supreme Lord Himself. At that stage, on the strength of Deity worship, one rises to the second-class platform of devotional service. At this more developed stage one desires to make friendship with other devotees of the Lord, and as one becomes solidly established in the community of Vaiṣṇavas, one completely gives up material life and gradually becomes perfect in Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Text 49

*evam kriyā-yoga-pathaiḥ
pumān vaidika-tāntrikaiḥ
arcann ubhayataḥ siddhim
matto vindaty abhīpsitām*

By worshiping Me through the various methods prescribed in the Vedas and tantras, one will gain from Me his desired perfection in both this life and the next.

Text 50

*mad-arcām sampratiṣṭhāpya
mandiram kārayed dṛḍham
puṣpodyānāni ramyāṇi
Pūjā-yātrotsavāśritān*

The devotee should more fully establish My Deity by solidly constructing a temple, along with beautiful gardens. These gardens should be set aside to provide flowers for the regular daily worship, special Deity processions and holiday observances.

Purport

Wealthy, pious persons should be engaged in constructing temples and gardens for the pleasure of the Deity. The word *ṛḍham* indicates that the most solid means of construction should be employed.

Text 51

*pūjādīnām pravāhārtham
mahā-parvasv athānv-aham
kṣetrāpaṇa-pura-grāmān
dattvā mat-sārṣṭitām iyāt*

One who offers the Deity gifts of land, markets, cities and villages so that the regular daily worship and special festivals of the Deity may go on continually will achieve opulence equal to My own.

Purport

By placing tracts of land in the Deity's name, there will be regular income for opulent Deity worship, both from rent and from agricultural production. A worshiper who makes the arrangements mentioned above will certainly achieve opulence like that of the Personality of Godhead.

Text 52

*pratiṣṭhayā sārvabhaumam
sadmanā bhuvana-trayam
pūjādinā brahma-lokam
tribhir mat-sāmyatām iyāt*

By installing the Deity of the Lord one becomes king of the entire earth, by building a temple for the Lord one becomes ruler of the three worlds, by worshiping and serving the Deity one goes to the planet of Lord Brahmā, and by performing all three of these activities one achieves a transcendental form like My own.

Text 53

*mām eva nairapekṣyeṇa
bhakti-yogena vindati
bhakti-yogaṁ sa labhata*



evam yaḥ pūjayeta mām

But one who simply engages in devotional service with no consideration of fruitive results attains Me. Thus whoever worships Me according to the process I have described will ultimately attain pure devotional service unto Me.

Purport

The previous two verses were spoken by the Lord to attract those interested in fruitive results, and now the ultimate purpose of worshipping the Lord is described. The ultimate goal in life is Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself. Love for the Lord is the highest bliss, although ordinary people cannot understand this.

Text 54

*yaḥ sva-dattām parair dattām
hareta sura-viprayoḥ
vṛttim sa jāyate viḍ-bhug
varṣāṇām ayutāyutam*

Anyone who steals the property of the demigods or the brāhmaṇas, whether originally given to them by himself or someone else, must live as a worm in stool for one hundred million years.

Text 55

*kartuś ca sārather hetor
anumoditur eva ca
karmaṇām bhāginaḥ pretya
bhūyo bhūyasi tat-phalam*

Not only the performer of the theft but also anyone who assists him, instigates the crime, or simply approves of it must also share the reaction in the next life. According to their degree of participation, they each must suffer a proportionate consequence.

Purport

Stealing paraphernalia meant for worshipping the Supreme Lord or His authorized representatives should be avoided at all costs.

