



Home Deity Worship Course

Harinama Cintamani, chapter 14



ISKCON Deity Worship Ministry

Chapter 14 Offenses in Serving the Deity

*jaya gaura-gadadhara jahnava-jivana
jaya sitapati srivasadi-bhakta-gana*

Mahaprabhu said: "Listen, Haridasa, you have revealed the truth about offenses to the name. By this the jivas of Kali-yuga will become fortunate. You are the acarya of the holy name. When I hear the description of the name from you, I feel great joy. You are the acarya in conduct and learned as a preacher, and your character is decorated by the jewel of the name. Ramananda Raya taught Me about rasa and now you have taught Me the glories of the name. Now discuss the different offenses in serving the Deity (sevaparadha). Hearing this, the darkness in the heart of the jivas will be dissipated."

Haridasa said: "Those who are serving the Deity know about this. I have simply taken shelter of the name, so how can I know? However, not to violate Your order, I will elaborate. Concerning service to the murti of the Lord, there are many offenses listed in the scriptures. In one place thirty two offenses are mentioned, and elsewhere, fifty. The learned have divided these offenses into four types: offenses in directly serving the Deity, offenses in establishing a Deity, offenses in taking darsana of the Deity, and general offenses committed against the Deity. "The thirty-two offenses listed in the Bhagavatam are as follows:

1. Entering the temple with shoes on.
2. Entering on a palanquin.
3. Not observing festivals.
4. Not paying obeisances.
5. Reciting prayers in an unclean state.
6. Bowing on one hand.
7. Circumambulating in front of the Deity.
8. Spreading one's legs before the Deity.
9. Sleeping before the Deity.
10. Eating before the Deity.
11. Speaking lies before the Deity.



12. Talking loudly in the temple room.
13. Gossiping.
14. Cursing or using harsh words.
15. Thanking others in front of the Deity.
16. Fighting in the temple.
17. Crying in front of the Deity.
18. Criticizing others.
19. Covering oneself in a blanket before the Deity.
20. Praising others before the Deity.
21. Using obscene language.
22. Belching or passing gas.
23. Not offering the best articles possible.
24. Eating food not offered to the Deity.
25. Not offering fruits in season.
26. Offering already enjoyed food.
27. Sitting with one's back to the Deity.
28. Sitting directly in front of the Deity.
29. Paying respects to others before the Deity.
30. Not glorifying the guru.
31. Praising oneself.
32. Criticizing Deities or demigods.

"Other offenses are:

1. Eating the food of a materialist.
2. Touching the Deity in a dark room.
3. Approaching the Deity without proper etiquette, as being unclean.
4. Opening the Deity doors without musical instruments sounding.
5. Offering food seen by a dog.



6. Speaking unnecessarily during puja.
7. Going outside the Deity room during the course of doing puja.
8. Offering incense without a fragrant flower.
9. Offering unsuitable flower during puja.
10. Commencing puja with unwashed mouth.
11. Having sex before puja.
12. Touching a woman during her period.
13. Touching a lamp.
14. Touching a dead body.
15. Wearing unsuitable cloth.
16. Seeing a dead body.
17. Passing air.
18. Becoming angry.
19. Coming directly from a cremation.
20. Doing puja with yet undigested food in the stomach.
21. Eating onions, kusumbhasaka.
22. Chewing betel nuts.
23. Touching the Deity after massage with oil and not bathing.
24. Offering flowers from an unclean pot.
25. Doing puja at an inauspicious time.
26. Sitting directly on the floor.
27. Touching the Deity with the left hand while bathing Him.
28. Offering old fruit.
29. Boasting during puja.
30. Spitting.
31. Wearing horizontal tilaka.
32. Not washing the feet.
33. Offering food cooked by non-Vaishnavas.
34. Allowing non-Vaishnavas to be present during puja.

35. Not worshiping Vishnu.
36. Talking to a Siva or Durga worshiper.
37. Bathing the Deity with water touched by the fingernails.
38. Worshiping while perspiring.
39. Making oaths before Krishna.
40. Stepping over articles of the Deity.

"All these offenses in serving the Deity will obstruct one's bhakti. Anyone worshiping the Deity should avoid these offenses. The devotees avoid both seva and nama-aparadhas, and thus taste the nectar of devotional service. When a devotee commits a seva-aparadha, he should rectify it immediately. With the nama-aparadhas he must constantly be rectifying, improving and avoiding. One who is on the level of bhava worships the Deity day and night in solitude. He makes no offenses against the name or in service because his service is performed in his mind."

On the order of Haridasa, the devotees chant the touchstone of the holy name.