

Steadiness in Devotional Service - Part 9

Hare Krishna Prabhujis and Matajis,

Please accept our humble obeisances. All glories to Srila Prabhupada and Srila Gurudev.

This is in continuation of the previous topic, "Steadiness in Devotional Service", wherein we were meditating on the wonderful verses spoken by Sri Narada Muni to Dhruva Maharaj, describing the form and glories of Supreme Lord. In the previous offerings we saw the following points which will help us to become steady in devotional service.

- a) We should surrender to Krishna, fully dependent on Him without any reservations.
- b) Lord is tolerance personified and is mercifully tolerating our inebrieties. Remembering this we should learn to be tolerant to other living entities.
- c) Lord's beauty is matchless and by sincerely hearing His glories from pure devotees, we will be able to meet the Lord.
- d) Lord is shaantah - calm, quite and peaceful. When we practise tolerance and satisfaction, then we also become *shaantah*.
- e) Lord is pleasing to eyes and mind. Remembering this we should always be smiling and pleasing in our behaviour to others.
- f) If we constantly see the Lord's beautiful form, we will be freed from material contamination.
- g) Deity Worship regulates our life and instills cleanliness in us.
- h) Offerings to the Lord (leaves, fruits, flowers and vegetables) should be pure, fresh and should be done with loving devotion.

In Srimad Bhagavatam verse 4.8.58 Narada Muni says,

*paricaryā bhagavato yāvatyah pūrva-sevitāḥ
tā mantra-hṛdayenaiva prayuñjyān mantra-mūrtaye*

One should follow in the footsteps of previous devotees regarding how to worship the Supreme Lord with the prescribed paraphernalia, or one should offer worship within the heart by reciting the mantra to the Personality of Godhead, who is nondifferent from the mantra.

In this shloka Narada Muni reveals to Dhruva Maharaj about the simplicity and potency of devotional service unto Lord. He says that in situations wherein one is not able to worship physical form of the Lord, one can still worship the Lord within the heart, by reciting mantras and the merciful Lord who is also non-different from the mantras accepts such kind of mental worship as well. In his wonderful purport to verse 7.5.23, while describing the arcanam process, His Divine Grace Srila Prabhupada mentions, "*In the Narada-pancaraatra it is stated by Lord Narayana that worship of the Deity within the mind is called maanasa-puja, One can become free from the four miseries by this method. Sometimes worship from the mind can be independently executed. According to the instruction of Avirhotra Muni, one of the nava-yogendras, as mentioned in Srimad-Bhagavatam, one may worship the Deity by chanting all the mantras. Eight kinds of Deities are mentioned in the shaastra, and the mental Deity is one of them.*"

His Divine Grace also mentions about the description given in Brahma-vaivrata purana about a poor, innocent brahmana who lived in the city of Pratisthaana pura. Once in the assembly of brahmanas he heard about how the Deity is worshiped in the temple and how worship could be done within the mind as well. After this incident, the brahmana, having bathed in the Godavari River, began mentally worshiping the Deity. He would wash the temple within his mind, and then in his imagination he would bring water from all the sacred rivers in golden and silver waterpots. He collected all kinds of valuable paraphernalia for worship, and he worshiped the Deity very gorgeously, beginning from bathing the Deity and ending with offering arati. Thus he felt great happiness. After many years had passed in this way, one

day within his mind he cooked nice sweet rice with ghee to worship the Deity. He placed the sweet rice on a golden dish and offered it to Lord Krishna, but he felt that the sweet rice was very hot, and therefore he touched it with his finger. He immediately felt that his finger had been burned by the hot sweet rice, and thus he began to lament. While the brahmana was in pain, Lord Vishnu in Vaikuntha began smiling, and the goddess of fortune inquired from the Lord why He was smiling. Lord Vishnu then ordered His associates to bring the brahmana to Vaikuntha. Thus the brahmana attained the liberation of *saamipyā*, the facility of living near the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

On the battlefield of Kurukshetra also when Bhishmadev was lying on the bed of arrows, he was unable to use any physical paraphernalia to welcome or worship the Lord and all the wonderful sages and devotees who had come to meet him. But according to time and place, he received all of them and offered wonderful prayers to the Supreme Lord. One should not do mental worship, out of laziness or miserliness. Lord is omniscient and so He can very well detect the motive and mood of the person doing the offering and He will reject such offerings. So the point to be learnt is that we should offer the best of things to Lord for worshiping Him, but in cases where facilities are not available, we can still worship Him mentally by offering prayers. In any case the worship or connection with Lord should not stop, but should continue with full velocity.

Krishna willing we shall continue more on this topic in subsequent offerings.

Thank you very much.

Yours in service of Srila Prabhupada and Srila Gurudev,
Kalacakra Krsna das and Sudarshana devi dasi.