

Staple



IPBYS
International
Pure Bhakti-Yoga
Society

IPBYS Prison Outreach
13400 NW 140th St. #1502
Alachua, FL. 32615

Postage
\$.49

Mail To:

THE JOURNEY TO PREMA

~ A Course in the Science of Bhakti-Yoga ~

Lesson 7

Please Chant:

Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Kṛṣṇa - Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Hare Hare
Hare Rāma Hare Rāma - Rāma Rāma Hare Hare

IN THIS LESSON:

- Promises - Offending the Holy Names
- Offenses, Numbers 7, 8, 9, 10
- Decision Time - Names with a Capital N
- Why the Mahā-Mantra?
- Kṛṣṇa - The Supreme Personality
- Sugar or Thunder - The Mystery Devotee
- X28 - It's Got Rhythm - Promises to Keep
- Pocket Aide - Altar Pictures

By the way

Do you have more questions?

Would you like to receive free books on bhakti-yoga?

Would you like a bhakti-yoga pen pal?

We're here to help!

Contact us at the above address



His Divine Grace

Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja
(Affectionately called Śrīla Gurudeva)

changeaheart.com



2016 IPBYS Outreach Inc.

THE JOURNEY TO PREMA – LESSON 7

Dear servant of God,

Hello old friend. It's good to see you again. Welcome back to our journey. Please allow us to humbly offer our respects to you. All glories to Śrīla Gurudeva.

At the end of last month's lesson we told you what to expect this month, so there probably won't be much room for surprise. But that's okay. Sometimes it's easier to become greedy for something if we have an idea of what we're waiting for.

There's that word again, greed. As this course begins to shift its focus from basic teachings toward subjects that deal with the more advanced levels of bhakti-yoga, this quality, greed, will in many ways become just as important as faith.

Śrīla Gurudeva is one of the most merciful gurus ever. There are some gurus who feel that a person needs to reach very advanced levels of purity before they become qualified to hear about the subjects that we will be discussing in later lessons. Śrīla Gurudeva, however, tells us again and again that the only really critical quality that we must possess, in order to qualify to hear these subjects, is greed.

So, even though it was unintentionally done, the fact that you've had to wait this extra month, for what basically amounts to part 2, of Lesson 5, may have worked out for the best. We want you to become greedy to hear about Śrī Kṛṣṇa and the other personality you will soon meet. Remember, when it comes to the price you will have to pay to study these later lessons, our payment plan is simple, your greed, indeed, is all we'll need.

Before we pick up where we left off last month; before we finish up our discussion on the dilemmas that we faced and the one that we have put you in; and before we tell you more about Śrī Kṛṣṇa and introduce you to Hare, we're going to spend a few moments doing something that you know we just love to do. We're going to do a little review, offer you a little encouragement, and challenge you to take this great opportunity that you've come across very seriously.

We know we do this, in one way or another, every lesson, and that's okay, because we all can use a little encouragement sometimes. (Even if it comes as a good-hearted push from behind.)

So this month we're going to talk a bit about what you may be expecting out of this course, and what it may take for you to reach those expectations.

Promises, Promises

When you receive this lesson you will have been associating with us at the International Pure Bhakti Yoga Society for about six months. You may feel that this span of time is an accurate measure of how long you have been on your journey to prema, but this is almost surely not the case.

No matter where you first heard about us, or why you decided to contact us, the fact that you were originally interested enough to do is a strong indication that you had come into contact with sādhus or performed acts of bhakti-yoga in past lives. These activities created the spiritual saṁskāras that caused you to be attracted to this course. You probably began your journey to prema many, many lifetimes ago.

Fortunately for you, you have now come into contact with a line of true gurus who can teach you the science of bhakti-yoga. With sincere effort to follow this science, you can complete your journey in this lifetime.

Now that you are receiving this course we hope you have been devoting some of your time and thoughts into following and understanding the things we are sharing with you. As you study this course & read about prema we hope you will come to accept that it's the greatest treasure you can ever attain.

However we are realists as well. We know that some of you may be feeling things like, "If prema is in my heart, why can't I feel it?" or "This all sounds good, but show me the money." We are aware that some of you may be feeling like all of we have given you so far is promises, promises.

The fact of the matter is this; and this is something we have always been honest with you about; to fully uncover your treasure of prema will require effort and patience. Only in the rarest of cases is this a quick process.

The Vedas do contain stories of people who, at least from what could be observed, seemed to receive instant prema. In Lesson 3 we told you that Lord Caitanya often used His unlimited, all powerful mercy to give people instant prema. What we do not know however, is the history of those souls. Some may have been on their journey for many lives and their past practices led them to be born in a time and place where they would eventually meet up with the Lord and complete their journey.

This may not have been the case for all those that He gave prema to. The rule of "as you sow, so shall you reap" does not apply to God's mercy. Lord Caitanya's mission included giving prema out freely, without considering who was qualified to receive it, so He surely gave life's greatest treasure to some souls who had not traveled far on their journey.

No matter what your past is, you are now on your way to success. Śrīla Gurudeva's chain of gurus all dedicated their lives to helping people reach their goal of prema, so if we take shelter of them and follow their instructions we can succeed.

What we must do is put in an honest effort to practice bhakti-yoga. In our future lessons we will tell you more about what we meant when we said that bhakti-yoga is a spiritual discipline, but it should be clear that this word, discipline, involves making an effort to do something. To reach our goal we must enthusiastically move forward each day, even if it seems to us that our progress is slow. Later in this lesson we will discuss some of the things that can impede our progress, things we must avoid if we want our practices to bear fruit. We must learn to crawl, and then to walk, before we can run on our journey to prema.

We should also learn to recognize the progress that we are making toward our goal. This will help us maintain our patience while we await the final result of all our efforts. If we are able to see that we are doing better, that we are beginning to gain control of the mind, and that our spiritual understandings and love for God are growing, even if its bit-by-bit, then our confidence and our faith in the process will grow.

The sādhus have broken the journey to prema down into nine steps. The first three we have already shared with you; faith, associating with sādhus, and practicing bhakti-yoga.

Let's take a few moments to look at this first step, faith. We hope that the following examination of faith will help you see that you are making progress in developing this foundational factor of your journey. The first definition of faith that we gave you was based on a honest-hearted attempt to reach out to the Lord. Do you feel that this course is increasing your desire to reach out to the Lord? If this desire is increasing, you are making progress.

We also told you that faith means a confidence in the teaching of the Vedas. Have the teachings we have shared with you made sense to you? Have they rung true to your intelligence and sat well in your heart? It may be hard to accept that the things we are so used to doing are a waste of our lives, but can you doubt that watching TV, gossiping, or reading magazines are fruitless activities? Did it make sense to you that the mind is full of saṁskāras that have a great deal of influence on the way we lead our lives? Did it seem logical to you that you are not the body or the mind, and that we must gain control of our senses, including the mind, if we want to lead peaceful lives?

If most, or all of these things made sense to you, and if you have begun to accept them as true, then this is proof that your faith in the Vedas is growing, and again, this is a strong indicator that you are moving toward life's goal.

Let's look at the second step on the journey as well. Are you getting to the point where you look forward to and enjoy these

Staple

lessons? These lessons are a way for you to associate with sādhus, so if you are spending time reading and studying them you are making progress.

Of course it is very easy to gauge the progress we have made on step three. Do you practice more bhakti-yoga now than you did when you started this course? More than 2 months ago? More than a week ago? Every increase is a sure sign of progress.

So if you honestly notice progress on these three important early parts of the journey, then you should feel like some of promises of this course are beginning to be fulfilled.

There is another aspect of the promises involved in the science of bhakti-yoga that we also need a good look at. When we first learn about the hidden treasure of prema that we can uncover, many of us will put so much focus on the promised reward, that we will lose sight of the promises that we must keep ourselves.

Instead of asking, “Where is my prema?”, we should be asking, “Did I keep my promises today? Did I worship Śrīla Gurudeva? Did I study my lesson?” If we want to reach the promised goal we must keep our own promises to make a daily effort to reach it.

In Lesson 1 the main practice that we asked you to take up was to try to remember God as much as possible. We gave you some suggestions of how you could do that and we told that this was the most important of all the processes. Did you put your heart into following that teaching?

In Lesson 2 we spoke a great deal about associating with sādhus and about the guru. We gave you instructions on taking shelter of and worshipping Śrīla Gurudeva as well. Did you start that practice? Do you make daily offerings of love and affection to him? Taking shelter of the guru is a critical step on the journey to prema. Without the guidance and mercy of a true guru we cannot uncover our prema. Are you sincerely dedicated to accepting the guidance of a guru?

In Lesson 3 we introduced you to the Pañca-tattva and a mantra to worship them with. Do you know this mantra yet? If not, do you work on learning it every day? Do you worship the Pañca-tattva in the ways we told you to worship Śrīla Gurudeva?

In Lesson 4 and 5 we gave you a lot of information on the mind and at the end of Lesson 4 we pointed out the mahā-mantra and asked you to learn it and begin to chant it with feelings of loving separation from God. Have you tried to do that yet? Did you make the list of attachments that we asked you to make? Do you know the mahā-mantra? Do you chant it every day?

Every time you answered “no” to these questions you were admitting to yourself that you were breaking the promises that we have been asking you to make.

The teachings that this course contains are not just suggestions of things that you may or may not want to do. This course contains the instructions of all true gurus. If we want to uncover the promised treasure we must be willing to make promises to ourselves, to our guru, and to the Lord, to seriously follow the ways of the sādhus. If we do not make and keep these promises then we cannot expect to complete our journey to prema.

There are many things that will affect the speed at which each of us will move along on our journey. Among these factors are the sincerity of our efforts, our dedication, our enthusiasm, the association and mercy of the guru and the sādhus, our saṁskāras, and the level of spiritual advancement that we were at when we entered this material body.

No matter what speed we feel that we are moving at, we must never allow a failure to experience prema as quickly as we would like to, cause us to think that prema is not the goal of our life or that bhakti-yoga is not the best means to achieve our goal.

We want to assure you that each and every one of us at IPBYS are fully convinced that prema is life’s greatest treasure, and that it can be obtained, through the practice of bhakti-yoga. We are fully confident that these statements are true. Our confidence is based on our own faith in the Vedas, our observations of those, such as Śrīla Gurudeva, who have prema, and, for some of us, our

own personal glimpses of this treasure. This is why we are so dedicated to, and excited about, sharing this course with you.

Your treasure awaits. Don’t try to uncover it by digging for it with a plastic spork from the chow hall. Don’t put half your heart and a few moments of your time into your efforts and expect a full reward.

The promise of prema is in the Vedas. They promise that if we whole-heartedly follow a true guru, we will uncover our treasure. It may be a slow process, but it will be a sure process. At this point, your commitment should be starting to grow in its sincerity. Each day you should honor Śrīla Gurudeva, study these lessons, chant both the Pañca-tattva and the mahā-mantras, and put a great deal of effort into remembering God.

The promise of the Vedas does not apply to those who refuse to use the tools (bhakti-yoga) that the sādhus have given us to uncover our prema.

As this course moves forward we will discuss the next six steps on the journey to prema. Understanding these levels of advancement will give you additional ways to judge your progress on the path. By reflecting on your development of these qualities you will be able to accurately determine your rate of advancement. When you know for a fact, within your own heart, that these qualities are developing then you will no longer need anyone else to tell you, or assure you, that your experiments in the science of bhakti-yoga are leading you in a positive direction in life.

Just remember though, if we want to taste the sweetness of the promised reward, if we want to reach the promised goal, if we want to take a walk in the promised land, then we must make and keep some promises ourselves.

Offending the Holy Names

The Holy Names forgives all sins. Even the offenses that we are about to discuss, offenses against the Holy Names themselves, will eventually be forgiven if we go on chanting and chanting and chanting. But if we don’t stop committing those offenses, our chances of attaining prema anytime soon will be drastically reduced.

In order to help us understand these offenses, let’s go back to the bleach and cloth analogy. We want you to picture that piece of cloth hanging on a clothesline. You stand on one side of the cloth, armed with buckets full of bleach (the Holy Names). On the other side of the cloth, you stand with buckets full of dye (offenses against the Holy Names). Every time you say a Name (toss a bucket of bleach), the cloth (your soul) becomes perfectly white (sin free). Each time you commit an offense (toss a bucket of dye), the cloth (your soul) becomes dyed (covered by sin) again. And the battle rages on, white, dyed; pure, impure; sin free, sinful

That’s the scene that will take place inside your heart if you chant but also commit offenses to the Names.

Since, this is still one of the borderland sections, it is once again designed to be of benefit to both the faithful and those who are struggling to develop faith and devotion. For the faithful, this section will explain the things they need to become aware of, and to avoid, in order to keep their chanting effective. (Chanting which they started after Lesson 4, if they were truly faithful) For the faithless, this list will show them what they need to avoid if they are willing to conduct at least one last experiment in the science of bhakti-yoga, by taking up the chanting process. (Even if they haven’t started yet)

If you are one of the faithless, and you see things on this list that cause you to know, beyond any doubt, that you will commit these offences, then we recommend two things. First, chant anyway. Never, give up chanting, ever. When you chant you remember Kṛṣṇa, which is the number one rule of bhakti. So, if you are willing to chant, then even doing so offensively is better than no chanting at all.

If you continue to chant, then, over time, chanting will win out. Eventually, the impurities in your heart that cause you to be

offensive to the Name will decrease and as those offences decrease, the heart will become purified.

We want you to accept and understand this truth. We all have devotion in our hearts. It is as eternally present as the soul. It can never be killed; it can only be covered over. Devotion is the eternal condition of the soul. So, if you want devotion, even if it lies buried so deep in the heart that you don't feel any of this eternal quality now, you still have an excellent chance to uncover it. Just take life's best medicine, in as large a dose as you can handle, as many times a day as you possibly can. Oh, and by the way, it is impossible to overdose on the Holy Names, just take Them, and take Them and never stop taking Them.

The second thing that we must again recommend is this: if you feel you are sure to commit these offences, then chant, but stop taking this course. We will soon introduce you to the two great personalities that are addressed in the mahā-mantra, and offences to Them are even more serious than offences to the Holy Names.

The Vedas tell us that the Names are the most forgiving and hardest to offend of all of God's forms. That is why we use the Names as a means to seek forgiveness for our offences. But offences against God's personal forms, especially those against the personality named Hare, are incredibly tough to overcome. So, if you feel you will be offensive to the Names, there is every chance you will be offensive to the forms. That is why we suggest you stop the course before you know enough about Them to be offensive.

Along with chanting to overcome our offenses, our gurus have given us special steps we can take for some individual offenses as well. We will include those in our discussion of the offenses.

First we will give you a list of what are called the ten offenses to the Holy Names. Then, starting this month, and finishing next, we will go over each one individually. When we discuss them individually, you will find that some of them include multiple offences. There are two reasons for this.

The first is that some of the offences were originally listed that way. The second is that we will be presenting the viewpoints of several gurus from our chain of gurus. It is not that any one of their various views is "right", while others are "wrong", in fact to think a true guru's view is "wrong" is one of the offenses.

The variations may occur, in part, due to the difficulties that go along with translating Sanskrit to English. For example, one guru's teaching may be translated as "disrespect" and another's as "disobey." Obviously these terms are very similar. Clearly you disrespect someone if you disobey them, but disrespect can cover other things as well.

Another possibility for the variety of translations may just be the unlimited nature of Śrī Guru.

If you look at a diamond that is under a bright light, it may well flash red from one angle of view, blue from another, green from another, as well as any and all the other colors contained in the spectrum of light. The diamond is one. It is only the angle of vision that causes it to appear differently. A person who saw a blue flash from his angle of vision, and described the diamond as a sparkling blue stone, would be no more right or wrong than someone who saw a red glimmer and described it that way.

Similarly, Śrī Guru manifests in many forms and each one may see the diamonds of Vedic truths from their own unique angle of vision. This does not mean that they can present teachings that they have created on their own, teachings that are completely different from the truths of the Vedas, it just means that their descriptions or presentations of these truths may have some variety. All of the offenses we will present come from our line of gurus and each of them needs to be avoided.

Making offenses against the Holy Names can lead to disaster, so we want to do all that we can to help you avoid making them. That is another reason that we are presenting these various viewpoints. We want you to consider each one separately, and in combination with other similar offenses, so that you develop a broad and deep understanding of the various ways that the Names

can be offended.

The Vedas mention the following ten offenses in relation to the Holy Names:

1. To blaspheme devotees and sādhus.
2. To consider the demigods to be equal to or independent of the Supreme Lord.
3. To disobey a true guru who reveals the truth about the Holy Names.
4. To criticize the Vedas, especially those portions which describe the glories of the Holy Names.
5. To consider the glories of the Holy Names to be an exaggeration or to create one's own interpretation of Them.
6. To consider the Holy Names and their glories to be products of the imagination.
7. To commit sinful activities on the strength of chanting the Holy Names.
8. To think that chanting the Holy Names is equal to other types of activities designed to bring about positive material results
9. To instruct faithless persons on the glories of the Holy Names.
10. To not have faith in the Holy Names and remain attached to material things even after hearing the glories of the Holy Names.

We won't have enough room in this lesson to cover all of these offenses in detail, so we've chosen the last four for now.

We're going to discuss offense number 7 first, because after what we told you last month about the sin forgiving powers of the Names, we need to make you aware of how those powers become limited if we abuse them.

Offense number 8 deals with the fact that chanting the Holy Names is the best practice available for bringing about positive spiritual results in our life. To think that any other process can bring us equal results is offensive.

We're going to go ahead and make a few comments on offense number 9, even though we dealt with this offense when we discussed the dilemma we faced in developing this course. This offense deals with the fact that we are not to instruct faithless people on the glories of the Holy Names.

We've also decided to discuss offense number 10. We picked this offense because it is one that is tough to overcome, so the sooner we're aware of it, the sooner we can begin to work on avoiding it.

Offense Number 7 **To Commit Sinful Activities on the** **Strength of the Holy Names.**

In offenses 5 and 6 we find out that we should not consider the glories of the Names to be exaggerations, nor should we consider them to be products of the imagination.

Unfortunately, even if we fully accept the glories of the Names, we can get ourselves into trouble. This is especially true when it comes to Their ability to burn away the stains of past sins.

A person may accept that all their sins can be forgiven by the Names. They may therefore decide that they can lie, cheat, steal, fail to do their duties in life, or commit any other type of sin, and then, just by chanting the Names, be forgiven.

This is not the case. The sins that we committed before we became aware of the sin forgiving powers of the Name are indeed forgiven when we first chant the Lord's Name. However, once we are aware of this glory, and this offense, we must not think that we can continue to intentionally sin, relying on the mercy of the Lord's name for forgiveness.

When it comes to intentional sins we are not allowed to commit a sin, chant, be forgiven, sin, chant, be forgiven. In fact, if we knowingly commit a sin, specifically thinking that we will chant and be forgiven for that sin, we have actually put ourselves into an even worse position. Now, when we say the Names in order to be forgiven for that sin, we are being offensive to the Names. On top of that, instead of having the reactions that we were to face for that sin removed from our record, they are multiplied. Then, on top of that, we must chant-and chant-and

Staple

chant to eliminate the offense against the Names.

This should help us to understand why it is so important to give up our sinful ways once we come into contact with the Names.

In order to help you gain a more full understanding of this offense and to keep you from feeling like you will always be committing it, because you are not yet able to live a sin free life, we want to share some deeper understandings with you.

Although chanting the Lord's Name a single time rids us of all the reactions that we were going to face for our sins, it does not eliminate our saṁskāras; the likes, dislikes, and other mental impressions that we have held with us for lifetime upon lifetime.

Since some of these saṁskāras may be related to past sinful activities, they may drive us to perform those same types of acts again. For example, someone may have been a petty thief in a past life. They may have enjoyed this sinful activity because they liked the idea of "getting something for free", and perhaps they also enjoyed the adrenaline rush they got when they went out to do a little shoplifting. These experiences, which they foolishly accepted as being pleasurable, might very well create a tendency to steal in a future life.

Even after we begin to practice bhakti, and to chant the Holy Names, these type of tendencies can remain with us. How long they will remain can depend on many things, such as our sincerity of practice and the severity of the saṁskāra, but seldom will a deeply rooted saṁskāra immediately disappear. Sometimes these types of saṁskāras may drive us to commit sins.

It is not that we commit these sins totally unknowingly. Most all of us can admit that we have a sense of "doing something wrong" when we commit sins. The problem is, these powerful saṁskāras can overwhelm our desires to live righteously.

Going back to the offense we are discussing, let's use the example of someone who is honestly trying to practice bhakti, but who somehow still commits a sin. If this act was done intentionally, with the idea that, "I will steal this candy bar and then chant to be forgiven", then the sin cannot be easily forgiven through the Names.

Saṁskāras can be like smoke screens that completely cover over the rational side of our thinking process, thus causing us to do irrational things. A mind overwhelmed by a dominant saṁskāra can literally shut down all of our internal caution lights and warning signals. These type of desires can literally become uncontrollable, especially in a person with a weak and uncontrolled mind. They can barrel into, and totally dominate our consciousness, until they get fulfilled, even if the desire seems to be for something small, like stealing a candy bar.

It is not the candy bar that creates the desire in these types of cases, it is the deep rooted saṁskāras which are built up by the "pleasures" experienced from past thieving experiences. This does not give us an excuse to sin. What it does is help us to use the intelligence to control the mind. The intelligence may allow us to keep our caution lights and warning signals functioning, so that the intelligence can win this struggle against our saṁskāras.

The irrational behaviors of the mind can become so powerful that a person may temporarily, or in some cases permanently become criminally insane. When this situation causes a temporary shutdown of a person's ability to think rationally and control the mind, he may not be recognized as legally unaccountable for his actions. When this condition becomes permanent, a person may be deemed unsafe to society and kept in confinement for the remainder of their life.

Of course, when we use the term "permanently" we are referring to the span of one lifetime, not to an eternal condition. Although this type of depraved mind could carry over for several births as well.

We know all of this information on saṁskāras has been a bit off the subject of offenses to the Names, but we wanted to share these things with you. Throughout this course one of our objectives has been to keep our target audience in mind. We are

aware that many inmates are likely to be influenced by negative saṁskāras. This is not something that we are making judgments based upon, nor is it something that we hold against anyone who is thus affected, nor is it something that causes us to feel superior to anyone who has to struggle against this condition.

We also are in the same conditioned state of life, but after coming in contact with bhakti and a bona fide guru, we have become fortunate enough to, at times, be able to recognize these things in our thoughts and feelings, which aid us in dealing with our saṁskāras. When we see an individual who has trouble dealing with the mind, for any reason whatsoever, what it brings out in us is compassion. Our desire is to provide you with a means to overcome whatever troubles you may face. Our experience and our faith in the Vedas tells us that practicing bhakti, and especially chanting the Holy Names is the best medicine that we can prescribe.

We spent this extra time discussing some of the reasons that we sin because we want you to be aware that it can take time and effort to overcome our desires to sin and to cease all such activities. We have told you that your past sins are forgiven, and your future sins will be as well, and just as easily, as long as they are not knowingly committed, with the attitude that they can be forgiven through the power of the Names. We all may want to live sin free lives, that is our goal, but we should also know that this will be easier for some of us to do than it will be for others, and we should not judge or condemn those who struggle. What we should do is encourage them to take the best medicine that's available to cure the diseases of their hearts.

To rectify this offense we can also associate with pure devotees. Sinful desires are like thieves on the road to bhakti, and pure devotees are like protectors on that road. When we are in the company of these protectors, the thieves will flee and we will be able to chant without fear of committing the sins that can lead to this offense.

The Names are the greatest purifier. If we chant the Names, associate with the Names, and serve the Names with an open and honest heart, then the Names will eventually eliminate all of our negative saṁskāras, just as they instantly eliminated our past sins. We just need to go on chanting Them, while we carefully monitor our activities, until the day finally arrives where all of our desires to commit sins are burned out of our hearts. If we take the Names seriously, that day may come sooner than we could ever imagine.

Offense Number 8

To Think that Chanting the Holy Names is Equal to Other Activities that are Designed to Bring About Temporary Results.

The Vedas recommend various types of activities for those who are seeking material gains. These include things like giving in charity, performing all of your duties, and making offerings to the demigods. All of these activities are carried out on the material plane and can only bring about temporary material results. (We will explain the demigods in your next lesson. For now, all you need to know is that these are gods with a small "g" and they are worshipped in order to gain temporary things.)

The Holy Names are entirely spiritual. Even when They are present in the material worlds, They are situated on the spiritual plane. Everything about Them, including the results They bring about, are spiritual and therefore permanent.

To think that the Names and Their results are material, or to think that the results one can achieve through material activities is equal to the results obtained through the Names are both offenses to the Names. In this regard one of our gurus has commented that there is a vast difference between diamonds and glass.

We have also been taught that to try to use the Names to gain material benefit is an offense. To chant the Holy Names with the idea that you will use Them as a type of prayer for material profit is offensive. When we take shelter of the Holy Names we should

do so guided by spiritual intelligence and with only spiritual desires and goals in our hearts.

The sādhus have also included practices that are designed to connect a person with the impersonal energy of the Lord in this offense. This is usually done through meditation and/or the cultivation of knowledge related to this goal. Those who feel that these activities are equal to chanting the Holy Names are committing offenses as well.

It is also offensive to use the Holy Names during practices that are solely designed to help us escape the material worlds, or during those designed to unite one with the impersonal energy of the Lord.

Practices designed for escaping the material worlds, by uniting with the Lord's impersonal energy, are included in this offense, because even if one succeeds in reaching this goal, his results will be temporary. Those who escape the material worlds by this method are sure to have to return because they have neglected to serve the Lord, which is the true function of the **jīva +jee-vuh**.

Every living entity is a jīva. (More on jīvas in Lesson 7)

If we happen to commit this offense and we want to be relieved of this offense we should chant and seek the association of sādhus or devotees who can help us purify our intelligence. We can also eat the remnants of a pure devotee's food, smear his foot dust on our body, or drink the water used to wash a pure devotee's feet. In this regard, next month's lesson will include a story of how Lord Caitanya's mother was purified by the foot dust of a pure devotee.

Offense Number 9 To Instruct Faithless Persons on the Glories of the Holy Names.

Of all the instructions in the Vedas, the instructions on the Holy Names are the most important. As mentioned above, the Names are like diamonds. It is useless to give diamonds to someone who will think you have given them glass. They will disrespect them and fail to make good use of them.

When we give the Names to those who do not appreciate Their value we open them up to committing all of the offenses that we have listed here. When we do this, we become offenders ourselves. We must be careful about instructing faithless people on the Names and their glories.

Along with the faithless, our gurus have instructed us not to preach the glories of the Names to those who have no taste for hearing Them, and those who have no desire to serve God.

A taste for chanting usually develops along with the cleansing of a person's heart, so we have been a bit liberal on this point. If you have no real taste for chanting now, you can still chant anyway. It's not an offense to chant without taste. Just chant with a desire to please the Lord and the taste will develop.

Another thing that we are instructed to look for before we preach about the glories of the Names is a desire to serve God. As far as this desire goes, we have already explained that God has directed us to serve Him, by serving His servants. If you have been making offerings to Śrīla Gurudeva then you have been serving God, so we hope that most of you meet this criteria.

When it comes to preaching the Names and Their glories to faithless people; there is another interesting point that we considered as part of our dilemma, so we also want to share it with you.

Our gurus have told us that when a person reaches the highest point of devotional purity, which is the level all of our gurus are on, that they are actually able to transmit an energy that can purify others. Since faith is an aspect of purity, these advanced souls can actually transmit faith to another person. This can be done by the sound of their chanting, by the words they speak, by their presence in a room, or even through their written words.

Śrīla Gurudeva was one of these great personalities. He, along with all of our gurus, are therefore qualified to be more liberal in discussing and distributing the Names and Their glories.

All of us at the IPBYS are far below the level of these great

sādhus. That is why we tried to carefully follow their instruction to attempt to develop your faith, before going to deeply into the glories of the Names.

There is another interesting aspect to the faith-sparking ability of Śrīla Gurudeva. He can still use this spark to light the fire of faith in our hearts. That is why all of us should pray to him each day to receive his purifying spiritual energy.

There is an aspect to this offense that we must be extremely careful to avoid. Our gurus tell us if we ever give the Holy Names to a faithless person in order to gain wealth or material things, this offense is serious enough to send us to hellish planets where we will be punished for this offense.

We are also told that if we give the Names to a faithless person, even by accident, and we learn that they are faithless, we should confess this offense to a group of devotees and seek their forgiveness.

Giving the Names to faithless persons is a serious offense. This is why we have been cautious in presenting them to you. We pray each day to Śrīla Gurudeva and all of the gurus in our chain to forgive us if we have committed this offense.

We have sincerely tried to be properly cautious, and yet as merciful as we can be, in the presentation of this course. We pray that you will understand that we are giving you diamonds, so that you will not treat these teachings like glass. We ask you to join us in praying to all of our gurus that your faith in the Holy Names becomes strong.

10. To Not Have Faith in the Holy Names and to Remain Attached to Material Things Even After Hearing the Glories of the Holy Names.

In commenting on this offense we will once again admit that overcoming material attachments is seldom an overnight affair.

In last month's lesson we asked you to make a list of your attachments (Did you do that?). We then gave you a list of attachments that reflected the type of list that we should strive to achieve. We also told you that we understood that it would take some time to reach this type of goal, and we spoke quite a bit about overcoming material attachments, suggesting that the best way to do this is to replace material attachments with spiritual attachments.

In this regard we will mention a statement made by Lord Caitanya in one of the eight verses that He composed. He speaks of some of the glories of the Names, and then He says, that even though we may know of these glories, we may still not become attached to the Names due to offenses that we commit against Them. So here we have a double reason to study this list of offenses and to try to give them up.

If we can chant with very few offenses, we will become attached to the Names. That attachment can then replace our material attachments and also help us to eliminate this tenth offense. So avoiding offenses creates a snowballing, win-win-win situation in our spiritual growth, as we give up material attachments and gain spiritual ones.

Another effective tool that we can use to help us make this switch in our attachments involves the two vows that we spoke of in Lesson 2. These are the vows related to the symptoms of highly developed faith. If we can begin to accept only those things that are beneficial to our spiritual growth, and our service to God and the guru, and to reject everything that hinders these things, then we will slowly but surely begin to put our attachments in to the proper perspective.

We know that this will take some time. You should never feel that you should not chant because you still have material attachments or because you feel you are committing any of these other offenses. If you are not chanting without offenses, then you should be all the more inspired to chant. In that way your offenses can be overcome and your heart purified.

Material attachments, just like some desires to sin, can be caused by deeply rooted saṁskāras. These can be cleared away by chanting.

Staple

Getting beyond this offense related to material attachments is similar to getting beyond the offense of sinning on the strength of the Names. As long as we consciously make an effort to stop forming new attachments, and as long as we make efforts to break the chains of our old attachments, then we will be able to overcome this offense. If however, we continue to focus on material things and develop new material attachments, on top of the ones we already have, then this offense will be a great obstacle for us to overcome.

The other aspect of this offense, failing to have faith in the Names, may be at the bottom of the list of offenses, but it could easily be put right at the top as far as its importance on our journey to prema. If you develop strong faith in the Holy Names then you will continue to chant them even if you do not yet “feel” the results, and even before the pudding of bhakti tastes sweet to you. By continuous chanting, even in the offensive stage, all obstacles will eventually be forced aside, in the wake of the most powerful bulldozer in existence, the Holy Names of the Lord.

Along with chanting to overcome this offense we are also advised to seek out devotees who have overcome all of their material attachments, who never think in terms of “I” and “mine,” and we should humbly serve them while we strive to give up our own material attachments.

We are almost done with this month’s section on the last four offenses against the Holy Names, but before we close it out, we want to share something with you that pertains to all of us here at the IPBYS Prison Program. We hope that sharing this with you will encourage you to get on the chanting bandwagon. Then we want to tell you the most important thing that we are trying to get you to do through presenting this course to you. (Can you guess what it is?)

All of us at IPBYS are offenders against the Names. We do not intentionally commit any of the offenses listed, in fact, thanks to the instructions and mercy we have received from Śrīla Gurudeva, we have gotten past most of these offenses, but the mind and heart have been under the influence of the material energy, buried under material desires and illusions for so long, that it takes even someone who desires to be sincere quite a while to become totally free of offenses.

The reason that we know we are all offenders, even though we may not be intentionally committing these offenses, is because the Vedas have given us a list of symptoms that appear when we chant without offenses, and we do not fit those descriptions. The Vedas tell us that if we chant without offenses we should experience a change of heart, tears should flow from our eyes, and the hairs on our body should stand on end. They tell us that if we do not experience these things, it is because our hearts have become very hard due to offenses.

Thanks to Śrīla Gurudeva’s mercy and the purifying powers of the Holy Names, some of us have occasionally had glimpses of these symptoms, but they are like flashes of lightning. They may momentarily strike our hearts and allow us a tiny taste of the nectar of the Names, but then they symptoms fade back into our hard hearts.

Although we all have this positive proof that we are offenders, we are fortunate enough to have the faith it takes to keep on chanting.

Often times it is the first half of the final offense, maintaining material attachments, that is the last to go. This can be such a subtle form of offense, and the mind, with its deep-rooted saṁskāras, can be very tricky and extremely reluctant to give up the things that it is convinced it wants or needs to make it happy. Notice again, we did not say to make us happy, we said to make it happy, the mind, the thing that is not us, the thing that willingly acts as our enemy when it sees that we are readying ourselves to do battle against it.

So we want you to know that we are as hard-hearted and fallen as anyone is, but if we keep our faith in Śrīla Gurudeva and the Names, then someday our hearts will become soft as warm butter.

Another thing we should mention about this offense is that it is rooted in the false ego, the “devil” that sits on one of our shoulders. It is the false ego that gives us a conception of “I” and “mine.” Without these concepts we would not become attached to things. Thinking things like, “I” want a cigarette, or “This car is mine,” are the root thoughts of material attachments.

Without the false ego, we would understand and accept that everything belongs to the Lord, and we would therefore never become attached to temporary things.

Did you guess the most important thing that we are trying to get you to do? **We want you to chant the**

Holy Names of the Lord.

The great sādhu that we told you about when we spoke of using things to serve your guru, Śrīla Prabhupāda, wrote many, many books on bhakti-yoga, and his followers distributed millions of copies of them all over the world. When asked why he wrote those books, Śrīla Prabhupāda said that the entire purpose, of all his books, was to convince people to chant the mahā-mantra.

The Holy Names are our only hope. They are our savior and They can relieve us of material sufferings. They are the best tool available to uncover our prema. In the degraded age we live in our only means of spiritual advancement is the Holy Names of the Lord.

So, if you feel that have some faith and devotion chant the Names, begin to study this list and do all you can to overcome any offenses you may be committing. You may also continue on with this course because you are in a position where you are less likely to offend the personalities that we are about to introduce you to.

On the other hand for those of you who feel you have no faith or devotion, you should feel content knowing that the mahā-mantra is made up of God’s Names, and you should chant, chant, chant, with as much sincerity as you can. You do know a little about Lord Kṛṣṇa. You know He was a great warrior king who spoke the Bhagavad-Gītā, and you also know that Rāma is another one of His many names. As far as Hare goes, for now, until you have some faith and devotion, it’s best that you just think of Hare as one of the many unlimited aspects of God.

No matter what level your faith and devotion are currently at, we again beg you to begin chanting the mahā-mantra. The mahā-mantra is God’s most merciful form. Lord Caitanya has assured us that it can purify us even if we do not have full faith in it. That is why It can help us over even offensive chanting.

If a person does not believe a drop of bleach will remove all the color from a piece of cloth, but the bleach comes into contact with the cloth, it works anyway. The person’s belief did not affect its potency. Similarly even if we do not have complete faith in the Names, if They come into contact with our tongue, our ears, the mind, or our hearts, they will begin to bring the purifying mercy of the Lord into our lives.

Śrīla Prabhupāda used to tell a story about a couple. The wife would tell the husband, “Chant! Chant! Chant!” But the husband would tell the wife “Can’t! Can’t! Can’t!”

What we beg you to do is to get over any reservations that you may have about the process of calling out the Holy Names. Please don’t be a can’ter, please become a chanter.

Please chant the Holy Names of the Lord.**Decision Time**

Have you solved your dilemma? Have you checked your heart to see if you have faith and devotion? If you have these qualities, if you truly have them, then you will not commit offenses against the personalities you are about to meet.

If, on the other hand, you know that you lack these qualities, we again ask you to consider going back to the beginning of this course to study, and follow, the teachings and practices it presents, before you proceed any further.

If you lack these qualities, but you decide to proceed anyway, then we ask you to please be very careful about saying, or even

thinking negative or offensive things about these personalities.

In order to help you fully understand the risks you face, we want to share one last teaching on this subject with you. The Vedas make it clear that even those who are very advanced spiritually will become fully attached and addicted to material desires if they commit offenses to the personal form of the Lord.

The dilemma is yours. The reward for faithfully serving the Lord with devotion is prema. The risk is addiction to material desires. Risk versus reward. Do you have what it takes? The decision is yours.

Names - With a Capital "N"

So we are just about ready to introduce you to the two personalities that we call to when we chant the mahā-mantra. But before we do, we want to point out something we started doing last month, to tell you why we did this, and why we waited till now to point this out to you.

You may remember that it was not until very near the end of our sections on the mind that we pointed out how we had always referred to the mind as just that, "THE" mind. We never called it your mind or our minds. We told you we waited till the end to tell you that, because it was something we wanted you to be very aware of when you reviewed all that we had told you about it. We hoped this would allow you to always recognize the fact that we were talking about something that was not a part of what you are really made of.

In a similar way, in these last two lessons, we have always capitalized the Holy Names. Even when we referred to Them as just "the Names" or by pronouns like "They" or "Them." We did this because **the Holy Names ARE GOD**. This is a difficult fact for most of us to grasp, but it's an important one. When you review this lesson (which we know you always do, right?), take note of these capitalized references to God.

When we talk about God we always capitalize the "G" and we capitalize the "H" when we write "Him." So in the same way, since "His Names" are "Him," we have capitalized Them. We did not do so in earlier lessons because we were waiting until these lessons on the Names to make this point, but now we will continue to do so throughout this course because we want to do all we can to help you remember and understand that **God is His Name**.

Why the Mahā-Mantra?

The Vedas are full of mantras. There are mantras that praise the demigods, mantras that praise the avatārs, and even various mantras that praise God in his original form. The Vedas and Lord Caitanya tell us that in this degraded age the only way to make spiritual advancement is through the powers of chanting His Holy Names, but, of all the mantras, and all His Names, why is it the mahā-mantra that we focus our practice on?

The Vedas tell us that there are specific mantras for each age, and they provide us with a list of these superior mantras. At the end of this list we are told that the mantra, Hare Kṛṣṇa – Hare Kṛṣṇa – Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa – Hare Hare – Hare Rāma – Hare Rāma – Rāma Rāma – Hare Hare, which consists of 16 names and 32 syllables, is the proper mantra for this age. We are also told this mantra can deliver all souls. In this quote, the mantra is given exactly as we have given it to you, and it is specifically referred to as the "mahā-mantra."

This exact same mantra is given, in this same order, and referred to as the mahā, the great mantra, in many other places in the Vedas as well.

The Vedas go on to list many wonderful glories of this specific mantra. The sādhu who compiled the Vedas tells us that even a drunkard can become pure and attain perfection by chanting it. We are also told that if we neglect this mantra, and accept any other mantra as the means of deliverance, we are disobeying the guru and the Vedas. With that in mind our choice becomes clear. We either take on this process over all others, or become offenders to the Name.

Along with destroying the reactions to all of our sins, this

mantra can also destroy all of our bad habits and our ignorance. By providing us with a pure intelligence, this mantra will, in due time, cause us to become joyful.

A wonderful quality of the mahā-mantra is that it is worshipped just by saying it. We do not need to conduct any special ceremonies. In fact, it gives all its benefits just by coming into contact with the tongue.

Even though you may have read all of these qualities, you may not yet be able to understand them. This could be because the mahā-mantra can only be understood through bhakti. So if all of these things seem to be going over your head, or you are not yet experiencing these results, just relax, be patient, and proceed with faith and confidence. As your sincerity increases and as you serve the guru and God with a loving heart all, of these results will come to you.

Remember, we told you that part of performing bhakti is to do things that give pleasure to God. He has told us that He is pleased by our chanting. We should not try to concoct a process for spiritual progress on our own. We should humbly offer ourselves and our service to God while we call His Names.

In upcoming lessons we will give you many more reasons for chanting the Holy Names, but for now let us leave you with two final ones. We hope that these will be enough for you to take up the chanting of this mantra. Even if we had given you no other reasons to chant it, we ask you to try to understand why you should chant it, and want to chant it, based upon these two reasons.

The first reason is simple, God tells us to chant this mantra. Lord Caitanya is God. He was on this planet 500 years ago. He not only specifically instructed us to chant this mantra, He also chanted it Himself. Thus He showed us by words and example that we should take up this practice.

And the final reason to chant the mahā-mantra should be the icing on the cake, the sweetest and the topmost of all reasons. Our goal in every lesson, in every section, paragraph, and word of this course is to help you complete your journey to prema. The Vedas tell us that we can attain this goal, that we can uncover the most valuable treasure that exists, simply by chanting the mahā-mantra purely and without offenses.

Kṛṣṇa is very kind. Just think of how simple this process that He has given us is. We don't have to rent a giant piece of construction equipment and start digging up the whole world looking for life's most valuable treasure. He has told us where it is. It's in our hearts. He has told us how to uncover it, call His Names with love. Use love to find love. Miss Him to find Him. That's all.

The Most Important People You'll Ever Meet

Are you ready to meet Them? (An interesting note: Did you notice capital "T" on Them?) We know we've been building you up for this introduction for quite some time now. Well guess what, we did that on purpose too.

Along with trying to lead you to prema, there's another thing we're trying to do. We're trying to make you greedy. Good greedy. Spiritually greedy. Greedy to know, know, know Him. Greedy to love, love, love Him. This greed is the price we must pay to attain pure devotion. When this greed becomes strong enough we will be able to give up all our material attachments, to overcome all of our negative saṁskāras, and to throw all caution to the wind as our heart races to embrace the Lord.

We hope, that by making you wait this long to meet the two most important people that you will ever meet, that we've made you just a little bit greedy, and we hope that the more you learn about Them the more you will want to build a relationship with Them that is based on prema.

KṚṢṆA, the One and Only, Original, Supreme Personality of Godhead

In Lesson 3 we introduced you to the term avatār. We told you this term refers to forms of Gods that descend "from up to down", and to those He empowers with certain potencies. We

Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Kṛṣṇa - Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Hare Hare - Hare Rāma Hare Rāma - Rāma Rāma Hare Hare

Staple

have also told you that Prabhu Nityānanda and Advaita Ācārya were avatārs of the Lord, and we even referred to Lord Caitanya as an avatār.

All of these forms of the Lord, how and why They expand, and how They all fit into the grand scheme of things can be a complex and difficult subject to understand, and we're not even trying to get into that right now. The reason we have reminded you of what we have said about avatārs is because it's time for you to meet the one, the only, the original **avatārī + uh-vuh-tār-ee** (tār like car). (But, by the time we're done here, this may get a bit confusing).

While there can be an unlimited number of avatārs of the Lord, and They can even appear simultaneously, as the members of the Pañca-tattva did, there can only be one avatārī (well sort of). The avatārī is the source of all avatārs.

Kṛṣṇa, who we introduced you to earlier, as the warrior king who spoke the Bhagavad-Gītā, is the one avatārī. But here's the tricky part, and we'll come back to this a little later, Lord Caitanya **is** Kṛṣṇa. He is not an expansion like Prabhu Nityānanda. We referred to Him in Lesson 3 as an avatār because we can only cover things over time, but in truth, since He is Kṛṣṇa Himself, He is part of the avatārī aspect of God. This will become clear in time.

When Lord Caitanya was here He instructed His followers to copy and study a certain book from the Vedas that establishes Kṛṣṇa as the avatārī. The first verse of this scripture tells us that Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Controller, the Original Person, and the Cause of all Causes. It further goes on to describe how the "creator" of this universe is inferior to Him.

This supreme position of Kṛṣṇa is confirmed throughout the Vedas, and, most especially, in the final writings of the sādhu that compiled them. In that commentary he states that only Kṛṣṇa is **Bhagavān, the ultimate possessor of all opulence.**

This is the same name for God that we told you is referred to in the title of the Bhagavad-Gītā. In fact, throughout that book Kṛṣṇa is referred to as **Bhagavān + B-huh-guh-vān** (vān like gone). The fact that Kṛṣṇa is given this title becomes important proof that He is the highest, most complete form of God, once we understand what this word means.

A full discussion of this word will be taken on in the future, but for now, by simply conveying the essence of this word, we should be able to help you see why, whoever holds this title, would truly and surely be the Supreme Lord. The name Bhagavān comes from two root words, **bhaga + b-huh-guh** which is translated as "opulence" and **vān**, which means "possessor of."

When it comes to the Sanskrit term bhaga, we again find no real English term that does it justice, until we give it further explanation. "Opulence" is defined as wealth and most people equate wealth with material possessions or money. But the "wealth" that the Lord possesses is much greater than this.

The Vedas tell us that Bhagavān possesses six particular things, and that He possesses them to a greater degree than anyone else. The first of His possessions is beauty, no one is more beautiful than Kṛṣṇa.

His next possession again runs us into the "Sanskrit versus English" dilemma, as this word is also translated as wealth. A better term might perhaps be "majesty," as this term refers to the unlimited abilities of His forms. He can expand to a form large enough to step across the universe in one step (as He did in one of His avatār forms) or He can become so minute that He exists within every living creature, even one celled microbes (as He does in another of His forms). No one but the Supreme Lord can possess these qualities.

He also possesses unlimited powers, or strength. We will save the breakdown of this quality for our later discussion on Bhagavān, but in short, it means that His powers extend far beyond what He does with His personal forms. For example, He creates māyā, the power of illusion, which rules the minds of

those who focus their lives on their material bodies and senses.

Kṛṣṇa also possesses fame. No one can be more famous. Although you may have not known Him by the name Kṛṣṇa, surely you have heard of God before. Everyone has heard of God. Scientists (who really don't know much) are at least right about one thing. They say all societies and civilizations that have ever existed thought of God in one form or another. No one's fame transcends history, culture, and geographical borders like God.

Kṛṣṇa also possesses the most knowledge. God knows everything, past, present, and future. No one can possibly know all that God knows.

And finally Kṛṣṇa possesses the quality of renunciation. This refers to the fact that He has arranged things to work in ways that are totally fair and impartial to all concerned. For every action there is a reaction. It also refers to the fact that He is not attached to anything. **HOWEVER**, both aspects of this quality do not apply when it comes to His devotees.

In the Gītā, He tells us that He is not partial to anyone (BG 9.29). But in this same verse He tells us that He is bound by affection to His devotees. Thus the Lord will protect His devotees, even if He has to break His impartial nature or a solemn vow. This quality of His is described in many places and it is a very wonderful part of who He is. It's one of those things about Him that leads us from knowing Him, to loving Him.

So this is Bhagavān, the Supreme Personality of God; the most beautiful, most opulent, most powerful, most famous, most knowledgeable, and most unattached Person; whom we address as Kṛṣṇa when we chant the mahā-mantra.

Would You Like Sugar or Thunder With That?

There are two types of Names for God. Some names refer to Him in regards to his relationship with the material world. These Sanskrit names translate into terms like "Supreme Controller" and "Protector of the Universe." These are considered to be His secondary names. His primary names refer to His eternal forms that are always present in the spiritual world, these include names like Kṛṣṇa and **Nārāyana + Nā-rā-yun** (Nā like not / rā like rod).

Kṛṣṇa, Bhagavān, possesses all the wonderful things described above. Along with these things, the Vedas have broken down 64 more-specific qualities which Kṛṣṇa possesses. We will discuss those in great detail in the future, but for now, knowing the details of these qualities is not important. Just knowing that they are listed, and the number given will be enough to aid you in understanding our current topic.

Kṛṣṇa possesses all of these 64 qualities; all of His other forms can possess only 60 of these qualities. In the spiritual dimension there is an unlimited number of planets. On all of these planets, except one, there are countless pure souls who have prema for the Lord. They have forms like the Lord and they worship Him with great pageantry. On all of these planets the residents think of the Lord as **GOD!!!**

They have overwhelming respect for Him and they are totally in awe of Him. Because of their seeing Him in that way, their free exchange of love with Him is somewhat hindered. We could say, that to them, God is thunder.

In God's other aspect He is sweet. That is the literal translation of the Sanskrit word used to describe this part of God's personality.

When God's power side, His thunder side, is predominant, He manifests Himself in a four-armed form known by the name we gave you earlier, Nārāyana. When His sweet side predominates, His two-armed form manifests, this is Kṛṣṇa.

Kṛṣṇa resides on the best of all spiritual planets. In the sweetest areas of that planet the residents do not consider the fact that He is **GOD!** They do not love Him or serve Him because they want to get something from Him in return. They seek no exchange. They love Him because they love Him.

There is no difference in Kṛṣṇa and Nārāyana as far as Them both being God. Both are God. But They are not two Gods. They are one God. Just like a high court judge, who can wear his robe,

sit on his bench, and get great respect and honor. He is so respected that even those he works with maintain a little distance in their relationship with him. But when he goes home and takes off his robe, he can give up that role. At home he may even become a horse for his child, crawling around on his hands and knees. One person, two aspects, two types of relationships. Since the child is totally unconcerned and unimpressed by the powerful side of his father, he can love him in a more free and open way.

So Nārāyaṇa is like the judge and Kṛṣṇa is like the father. Of course a mortal man can't be in two places at one time, playing both roles, but God can.

When Lord Caitanya was here He established that our goal should be to develop a relationship with God's sweet side. When He traveled He would preach to those who worshipped the Lord as Nārāyaṇa, and convert them into worshippers of Kṛṣṇa. Only in a relationship with Kṛṣṇa can we have fully sweet exchanges of love, without the awe and respect He receives as Nārāyaṇa.

Lord Caitanya empowered His followers to reveal information about the loving relationships that Kṛṣṇa has with the residents of His personal abode. There is a special type of bhakti designed to help us reach that abode, and eventually instructions on that path will dominate this course, but for now, we are just laying the foundations for these more advanced teachings.

Śrīla Gurudeva, and all of the other advanced gurus since the time of Lord Caitanya, practice the type of bhakti that focuses on God's sweet side, and that should be our goal as well. Let's all learn to choose sugar over thunder.

Kṛṣṇa is Rāma

The name Kṛṣṇa comes from two Sanskrit words. **Krish** means "all-attractive" and **nuh** means "joyful" or "the giver of happiness." So **Kṛṣṇa is He who attracts all beings toward Him, and gives them pleasure and happiness.**

Rāma is Kṛṣṇa, the same exact person, in all respects. Rāma is just another name for Kṛṣṇa, like Joe and Joseph. Rāma also possesses the 64 qualities. Rāma and Kṛṣṇa are the same Supreme Person, just with two different names.

The name Rāma refers to pleasure also. Kṛṣṇa is also called **Rāma** because He is **the embodiment of all pleasure.** This is because He is always enjoying pleasure, and because He is always giving pleasure to His devotees and associates, and especially to Hare (See below – not yet – you'll be there in a minute).

So, of the 64 qualities of Kṛṣṇa, souls like us can possess varying amounts of 50 of them, and other forms of God like Nārāyaṇa can possess up to 60, but only Kṛṣṇa/Rāma can possess all 64 in full. This is why He is often referred to as the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Godhead is a term used to describe the sum total of God in all His aspects, including all of His forms and His formless energies.

Hare – The Mystery Devotee

The Sanskrit word **Hara** + **Huh-ruh** means **one who captures, or one who steals away.** As we discussed before, Sanskrit has a means of turning Joseph into "Hey Joey!" When we use this system on Hara it becomes Hare, which is really like saying, "Hey Hare!"

Hare is Kṛṣṇa's beloved companion, the one who steals His heart. Hare is how we call out to the topmost devotee, the female devotee who captures Kṛṣṇa's mind. She is also sometimes captured by Kṛṣṇa, so He can steal Her away into the forest to enjoy pastimes with Her. We also call to Her as Hare because She sometimes turns the table and steals Him away for a secret rendezvous.

We can also call to Her to captivate our hearts. "Hare! Hare! Please capture my heart! Please steal all my worldliness! Hare! Hare!"

The real identity of Hare was somewhat of a mystery until Lord Caitanya's visit. In the author's final commentary on the Vedas, he tells us about Her, but he never refers to Her by name. As our lessons continue, we will discuss the type of bhakti that

leads to a relationship with the sweet side of Kṛṣṇa, where details of the penultimate importance of this devotee, as Kṛṣṇa's devotional energy, will be revealed to you. Can't wait? Good, get greedy.

Hare – Lord Caitanya – Kṛṣṇa

Kṛṣṇa knew that no one loved Him like Hara did. He wanted to understand Her feelings so He decided to take on a form that would allow Him to taste those emotions Himself. Thus, He became Lord Caitanya. In this form He is Kṛṣṇa, but He is captured by the emotions of His beloved one.

Kṛṣṇa has a dark complexion, like that of rain cloud. His dearest companion, Hara, has a golden complexion. When He embraced Her heart, in His efforts to capture Her emotions, He also captured Her complexion, and that is why Lord Caitanya is golden. This is why the word **gaura**, which means **golden**, is used to refer to Lord Caitanya in the Pañca-tattva mantra.

When Lord Caitanya was here, Hara descended as Gadādhara Pandit. She knew that She needed to take this form in order to allow Him to experience what He desired, because if He was in the direct presence of Her original form, He would be overwhelmed by the Kṛṣṇa aspect of His personality. So She came as a male. In that way, She was able to associate with Him as both His friend, and as His devotee.

When we discussed the Pañca-tattva in Lesson 3, we told you that the relationship between Lord Caitanya and Gadādhara Pandit was very deep. Now you have some idea why, but to fully grasp these things, we will need to provide you with further descriptions.

The Divine Couple

Although Hare is the name that we call out in the mahā-mantra, this is not the most common name that She goes by. Kṛṣṇa's dearest companion is named **Śrīmatī Rādhārānī** + **Shree-muh-tee Rād-hā-rā-nee** ("ā" like water). **Śrīmatī** is like Śrīla, **a title of honor and respect**, but used more often when referring to females. **Rādhārānī** comes from two words, **Rādhā**, which is **Her name** and **rānī**, which means **queen**. Like Kṛṣṇa, She also has many names, but for the purposes of this course, we will usually refer to Her as Rādhā.

When She is with Kṛṣṇa, They are referred to as Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa. Together, They form the Divine Couple. Occasionally Kṛṣṇa will be worshipped alone, but Rādhā is only worshipped with Kṛṣṇa. Together, They are the main Deities that are worshipped by the followers of Lord Caitanya.

There is a great depth of meaning, and also some mystery, about everything that relates to this couple. For example, although They are two, They are one. Although They are never apart, They are sometimes separated. The truth of these statements is not contradictory, though they may seem to be for now. Some of these truths can be given in words and understood through knowledge, others will only be found in the treasure chest of prema.

It is to this Couple that we pray to when we chant the mahā-mantra. This course will slowly, over time, begin to focus more and more on this Couple and Their forms, Their qualities, and finally, Their pastimes.

One thing we can tell you now, that you may be able to understand, is that Their love, is the source of all love. All of the feelings of love that have ever been, or ever will be experienced, are drops from the limitless ocean of love that They share.

When we spoke of Them earlier, with a capital "T", we pointed this factor out. When referred to together "They" is capitalized because together, They are God. When Rādhā is referred to as She or Her, She will be capitalized for the same reason. Though two, They are one, She is Goddess, He is God. But there is only one God. Got it? Good!

A Little Straight Talk from X28

Hello brothers and sisters. This is X28. I'm the inmate who contributes to this course. From this point on you'll be hearing from me occasionally. I'll be jumping in from time to time for

Staple

various reasons, often times for just a paragraph or two. Mostly I'll be trying to relate a point of the lesson to things that inmates experience. For instance, a lot of inmates hate the word inmate. "I'm no inmate, I'm a convict." I just use that as an example to show that someone who has never done time can't understand many of the unique things that take place on the inside.

All you really need to know about me is that I did some time, a few years more than a decade, in a Southern, state prison system. No Fed time, no cake walk. I'm no better than any other person whose done time. I'm not trying to say I am. I'm not trying to say I've seen it all, but I saw my share. I've watched guys get stabbed up over "relationships", I've watched bloody bodies go out on stretchers when guys decided they didn't want to face another day, and I've seen brutal fights. In fact, the worst fight I ever saw was over a guy turning the TV station.

I never had much money or hustle, so I ate the crummy chow hall food. I've dealt with straight up guards, and with ones who planted shanks in cells and beat guys down. I've lived in open bay dorms and two man cells, and of course I've been to confinement. I was never a snitch and I never tried to make friends with a single guard. I just did my time, kept mostly to myself, flew below the radar.

The reason I'm jumping in right now is because I want to try to help you avoid the mistake of committing some terrible offenses.

We just introduced you to Kṛṣṇa and His beloved and dearest companion. This subject can be very dangerous if you're not careful. I know when I first started learning about Them it took me a long time to stop thinking about Them and Their relationship in material-minded ways. Their relationship will get a little heavy, but it's entirely spiritual, we can never really compare it to you and I, and to do so is dangerous and offensive.

All of these topics are spiritual. Just because Gadādhara Pandit is Rādhā in a male role, doesn't mean you should think he was a little soft. He was a pure devotee. Offending pure devotees is called the mad elephant offense. Hopefully, by now, five months into this course, you've got at least a tiny bhakti plant growing in your bhakti garden. If you offend a devotee, a mad elephant will come in and trample your garden to death. If you even think bad things about pure devotees, you'll kill your spiritual life.

Look, I know most inmates have a lot of pent up hormones. But if you think things like, "I wonder what Kṛṣṇa and Rādhā went off to the forest to do?", while you imagine something based on material relationships, the mad elephant will get loose, actually a whole herd of these wild, giant beasts will start stamping around in your bhakti garden, because Śrīmatī Rādhārānī is the purest devotee of all.

The pastimes of the Divine Couple are the highest and deepest subject in all of the Vedas, and over time, you'll be able to deal with them without offense. Whatever you do, whether you're a male or female, don't ever put material sexuality into the purest loving relationship that exists.

I guess that's about all I've got for now. I do, however, want to let all of you know that Śrīla Gurudeva is the real deal, and that everyone at IPBYS, except me, are pure hearted people. If you get on track and give up your false ego you'll be able to get somewhere on your journey to prema. Śrīla Gurudeva's followers can help you every step of the way.

As for me, I try to take their advice and at least practice every day. Their association has done a lot for me. I know I'm a long way from the goal, but at least I'm convinced that prema is what this life is all about, and at least I'm a heck of lot better off than I used to be. I'll keep you all in my prayers.

It's Got Rhythm

So have you started chanting the mahā-mantra yet? Early on, in Lesson 1, we told you that we were not out to "convert" you to any "religion", and that still holds true. We told you we were going to explain a science to you and ask you to do some

experiments. The chanting of the mahā-mantra is an experiment you really need to try.

We told you that you can call God by any of His names, and that's still true. But would it do you any harm to try calling to Him as Kṛṣṇa and Rāma, and to call to Her as Hare? Surely you agree that no one could ever be more attractive than God and that no one could ever give or enjoy more pleasure than He can. So if you call Him Kṛṣṇa or Rāma, you are really just calling Him by these Names and Qualities.

Think of it this way. You may know someone at your job for years and years, but since you only know them in that environment, you only call them by the name they use there. Then, at some point you become friends with this person, and they invite you over to their house for dinner.

Let's just say your friend is a lady who lives at home, so that she can help take care of her elderly parents. When you spend the evening at her house you find that "Susan" is never called Susan at home. Susan's sister, who stopped by for dinner that night, calls her Suzie Q, to her dad she's Little Sue, and her mom never calls her anything but "Honeybunch." Then during dinner you call her Susan and she tells you, "Please don't call me that. That's my work name. You can just call me Sue."

She's only one person. There is only one God. Throughout the Vedas, and in particular when He visited as Lord Caitanya, He tells us that He prefers to be called Kṛṣṇa and Rāma. Shouldn't we just call Him the Names He wants to be called by?

And surely, using any of His names is better than calling Him by a title, like "God." Do you call anyone "Man"? You may have called your boss, "Boss" before, but if your boss was a female and she told you to call her Mary, would you refuse her wishes and keep calling her "Boss"?

God asks us to call him Kṛṣṇa and Rāma and to call His dearest companion Hare. Lord Caitanya and His followers have taught us, and told us, to call out with love and a mood of separation. Is that really so hard?

"Hey Hare! I miss You. Hey Kṛṣṇa! I love You. Hey Rāma! Where are you?"

And here's another great thing about the mahā-mantra. It's got rhythm. It's like it was made to be repeated over and over again. If you say "Ice cream, peanuts, Ice cream, peanuts," over and over again, you'll probably get tired of it real quick. Even "God, God, God." would probably be a little tough. But the mahā-mantra just keeps on going and going and going. It just seems to fit in with the rest of nature's perfect cycles; be it spring, summer, autumn, winter, spring, summer, autumn, winter; or high tide, low tide, high tide, low tide; or new moon, waxing moon, full moon, waning moon. It just has a feel of eternity to it.

If you have never heard the mantra sung, and you have access to a CD player, write to us and let us know how we can send you a CD. Once it's in your head, it will hopefully take up permanent residence there. It's addicting. Like the good kind of greedy, it's the good kind of addicting.

Just look how kind Kṛṣṇa is. He asks us to always remember Him, and then He gives us the perfect way to do so. It's got rhythm, oh what a rhythm, it's got rhythm, who could ask for anything more.

Promises to Keep

We all need promises to keep. That is one reason that we started off this lesson talking about promises. Now that we're about to bring it to a close let's revisit that subject one last time.

In every lesson so far, we've presented various ways to engage in bhakti-yoga. Each month we also asked you to practice various processes as you were waiting for the next lesson to arrive. We asked you to do things, like try to always remember God, and to begin paying your respects and making offerings to Śrīla Gurudeva. We also introduced you to the Pañca-tattva and asked you to learn the mantra that honors them. Then last month we gave you a quick intro to the mahā-mantra and requested you to

begin chanting it. And of course we always ask you to repeatedly study the lessons and the pocket aides that we provide.

However, if you look back at the lessons, you'll find that we may have stressed the value and the importance of these things, but we never really asked you to make a promise to do them. We've never asked for a real vow, a real commitment. Well that's about to change.

As we prepare these lessons, the pages fill with words so fast that it seems like we're never quite able to cover as much as we had hoped. This month we wanted to talk to you a lot more about the chanting process, but space just didn't allow it. We will squeeze in a few words though, as they directly relate to the promise we want you to make.

Ultimately there are no strict rules for chanting the mahā-mantra. It can be done anywhere and anyway you choose. Yet Lord Caitanya, and all of His followers since, have also practiced a certain process. This process involves taking a vow to chant the mahā-mantra a certain minimum number of times each day.

This chanting is best done out loud, but, if circumstances do not allow for this, you may also say it softly, in a whisper, where only you can hear it. If even this cannot be done, then you can repeat the mantra silently through thought.

What we want you to do is make a promise to Śrīla Gurudeva, to the members of the Pañca-tattva, to Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, and also to yourself, to chant the mahā-mantra at least 108 times a day. This promise will take less than 10 minutes of your time. You may carry out your vow all in one setting or you may break it up and do it at different times, just do whatever works best for you.

Next month we'll talk a little more about counting these mantras, but for now just try to use a simple process that doesn't distract your chanting. For example, if you extend one finger for each mantra until your hands are fully open, then retract each finger one at a time as you continue to chant, two hands will be twenty mantras. Do that 5 times for 100, then do the final 8.

It is important that you start each of your chanting sessions by saying the guru prayer from Lesson 2 while you pay your respects to Śrīla Gurudeva. Then you should say the Pañca-tattva mantra and offer them your respects. This will help you avoid making offenses to the Names.

Taking and keeping this kind of vow has a value beyond words. If you make this promise, and conduct this experiment in the science of bhakti, then there is an excellent chance that you will slowly but surely be drawn into the ocean of prema, which, although unlimited in size, is contained within the mahā-mantra.

Of course you may find that you want to set your goal higher. If you get to the point where you are chanting 108 mantras every day, without fail, then you are welcome to increase your vow. But don't take a vow you cannot keep. An unbroken vow of 108 is better than an unsteady vow of 801. If you are doing well on your vow, but for some reason you fail to reach your goal on a given day, make it up the next day. If you missed 20 mantras, you should chant 128 the next day. Don't put them off and let unchanted mantras linger.

Is ten minutes a day really too much to ask? Try to remember what we've told you in the past. While you chant, you must do all you can to keep the mind focused on God. Some may find that closing the eyes while chanting helps them to do this, while others may find that practice just gives the mind more room to roam. It is often very helpful to look at the words of the mahā-mantra or at any of the pictures we've provided you with.

No matter what system you use, the purpose will be to keep the flame of the mind from flickering. Try to keep it steadily focused on Śrīla Gurudeva, on the Pañca-tattva, on the words or sound of the mahā-mantra, or even on Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa. Experiment. What works well one day may not work so well on another. Adapt. But always be honest with yourself. Don't let the mind run wherever it chooses. Don't chant while you think about material things.

Over time we'll be sharing a lot more about what we should focus the mind on while we chant, but these basic tips should

help you begin to establish some good chanting practices.

So, for this month, our request is that you take a vow to chant the mahā-mantra 108 times a day, that you take this vow seriously, and that you keep it every day. If you do this, and call out Hare! Kṛṣṇa! Rāma! with a sincere and loving heart, then this powerful means of uncovering your treasure of prema will become a rewarding and fulfilling part of your bhakti-yoga practices.

Reasons for Review

It's time for us to wind this month's lesson down. When space allows it, we like to include a review of what we covered each month. If you make good use of these reviews they can become effective tools to help you study the lesson.

After you read the Lesson, whether it be for the first, third, or thirty-third time, it is advised to reflect on each of the subjects that come up in the review. This gives you a chance to judge for yourself if you were able to absorb the teachings that we've shared with you. Make a note, mental or written, of the subjects that you are not quite clear on. That way you can pay special attention to them, either on your next review of the entire lesson, or by going back for extra study of those particular topics.

We would also like to mention again that review is always valuable, even when it comes to things that you feel you have already grasped. This is true for at least three reasons.

First, when you review a subject that you are familiar with your insights into that area may well change as you develop your knowledge of other subjects. This can take place even when other subjects seem to be unrelated to what we are currently studying.

The second reason that you to spend time reviewing spiritual teachings is because review tends to reinforce our knowledge. Even if it does not alter that knowledge, it may help us to build the strength of our faith in that teaching.

And finally, when we do a review we should always take time to honestly consider whether or not we truly understand this teaching. We can't really say we understand a teaching until we put our knowledge into action. During our review we can consider if we have come to the point where that teaching has changed our thinking patterns, our actions, or both.

As you read through these reviews try to include these types of reflections in your thoughts. If you do so, your review time will be time well spent.

Until We Meet Again

Well, it's time to say good-bye for this month. We still have lots more to tell you about the Divine Couple. We didn't even share one eyedropper-full of nectar from the oceans of Their wonderful and unlimited Names, forms, qualities and pastimes.

Next month we'll finish up our discussion on the 10 offenses against the Holy Names and we'll cover some of the various ways that we can chant the Lord's Names. These discussions should help you to better understand why chanting is such an important part of bhakti-yoga.

So, until we meet again, we ask you to seriously study this lesson, to daily review it and to draw the truth it contains into your heart. Of course we've also asked you to begin to take your journey a little bit more seriously. It's time to make a small but important commitment in your life. It's time to make a promise to yourself, to Śrīla Gurudeva, and to the Divine Couple. It's time to take a daily dose of life's best medicine. It's time to call out - Kṛṣṇa! Rāma! Hare!

**We pray that your life becomes blessed
with the mercies of Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa.**

**We are, the servants of God's servants,
The IPBYS Prison Program.**

All Glories to Śrīla Gurudeva!

Pocket Aide Note: Please carefully separate the top and bottom halves of the final page. Use the pictures on your personal altar and use the pocket aide to help your studies.

Staple

POCKET AIDE - LESSONS 4, 5, and 6**Lesson 4****Saṁskāra** + sum-skār-uh (skār, like car)

An impression made on the mind or heart due to things we experience

Jnana + Jna-nuh – Knowledge**Mahā** + Muh-ha (ha, like hot) – Great**Mantra** + Mun-tru -- A sound vibration that consists mostly or entirely of God's names.**Prema** - Pure love for God that is centered on a desire to please Him.**Lesson 5****Śrīla Prabhupāda** + Prub-hoo-pād (pād, like rod)

A great guru and ācārya.

Ācārya + ā-chār-ya (“ā”, like water)

A person who teaches by his own example.

Kṛṣṇa + Krish-nuh -- A name of God.**Arjuna** + Ur/Ār-joon -- Lord Kṛṣṇa's friend.**Bhagavad-Gītā** + B-huh-guh-vud Gee-ta

Literally - “The Song of God”

Bhagavān + B-huh-guh-vān (vān, like gone)

A name of God. See Lesson 6 (other side of aide)

Lesson 6**Ten Offenses to the Holy Names
(Should be Memorized)**

1. To blaspheme devotees and sādhus.
2. To consider the demigods to be equal to or independent of the Supreme Lord.
3. To disobey a true guru who reveals the truth about the Holy Names.
4. To criticize the Vedas, especially those portions which describe the glories of the Holy Names.
5. To consider the glories of the Holy Names to be an exaggeration or to create one's own interpretation of Them.
6. To consider the Holy Names and their glories to be products of the imagination.

Lesson 6**Ten Offenses to the Holy Names (cont.)**

7. To commit sinful activities on the strength of chanting the Holy Names.
 8. To think that chanting the Holy Names is equal to other types of activities designed to bring about positive material results
 9. To instruct faithless persons on the glories of the Holy Names.
 10. To not have faith in the Holy Names and to remain attached to material things even after hearing the glories of the Holy Names.
- **NOTE:** It can also be an offense to be inattentive while chanting. (See Lesson 7)



© Syāmarānī Didi, used with permission. bhaktiart.net

The Divine Couple - Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa



Artwork courtesy of The Bhaktivedanta Book Trust International, Inc. (www.krishna.com) Used with permission

Lord Caitanya shows a great devotee that He is both Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa.

Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Kṛṣṇa - Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Hare Hare - Hare Rāma Hare Rāma - Rāma Rāma Hare Hare

Lesson 6

Jiva + Jee-vuh -- Every living entity is a jiva.

Bhagavan + B-huh-guh-van (van, like gone)

God - The ultimate possessor of all opulence
(Beauty, majesty, strength/powers, fame,
knowledge, renunciation/detachment)

Bhaga + B-huh-guh -- Opulence

Van + (like gone) The possessor of

Narayana + Na-ra-yun (na/ra, like not/rod)

A name of God. His four-armed, "thunder" form

Lesson 6**The Names of the Mahā-mantra**

Hara + Huh-ruh (becomes) **Hare** + Huh-ray

One who captures or steals away.

Refers to Kṛṣṇa's dearest companion.

Kṛṣṇa from **Krish**, All attractive. **Nuh**, joyful/ the giver of happiness. He who attracts all beings toward Him, & gives them pleasure & happiness.

Rāma + Rā -muh (like drāma) -- The embodiment of all pleasure. The enjoyer and giver of the greatest pleasures.

Lesson 6

Shrimati + Shree-ma-tee (ma, like mop)

A title of honor and respect generally used to honor females.

Radha + Rad-ha (as if saying Rod-hot)

Shorter version of **Radharani**. Comes from the Sanskrit word for "the best worshipper."

Rani + Ra-nee (Ra, like rod)

Queen **Radharani** is called out to as Hare. She is the queen of all devotees and the queen of Krishna's heart.

Radharani + Rad-ha-ra-nee

The Supreme Goddess. Krishna's beloved.

Lesson 4**What We are Really Made Of**

A SPIRIT SOUL, which is composed of:

- **An individual and limited consciousness**, that is;
- **Eternal, aware, and blissful**, and that possesses;
- **Prema, and a true ego**, that resides in;
- **A spiritual body** (once the soul reaches a purified and perfected state)

What We are Not - Our Temporary Vehicles

A Subtle Body, which is composed of:

- A mind, intelligence, & a false ego/ false identity.

A Material Body, which is composed of;

- Gasses, liquids, solids, heat and space.



© Syāmarānī Didi, used with permission. bhaktiart.net

Kṛṣṇa, the enchanter. Kṛṣṇa's flute is an extension of His beauty.

Not only does it produce the most beautiful sound imaginable, but it imparts the essence of His intoxicating nature.

Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Kṛṣṇa - Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Hare Hare - Hare Rāma Hare Rāma - Rāma Rāma Hare Hare

Correspondence Course
Lesson 7

1. What is the most critical thing we must possess to become qualified to hear about more advanced teachings?
2. When do you feel your journey to prema began?
3. We have said that most of us require two things to complete our journey to prema. What are they?
4. What are the first three steps on the journey to prema?
5. Can we ever destroy off all of the devotion in our hearts?
6. How many Holy Names is too many to chant?
7. Do you understand offense number 7? Try to express this offense in your own words.
8. Do you agree that we are aware of most of our sins before we commit them? If not, why not?
9. Try to say a few words about how saṁskāras can affect our choices when it comes to sinful acts.
10. When do the Holy Names become material?
11. Name the material things that we should pray for while we chant the Holy Names.
12. What is the true function of the jīva?
13. Looking back at the dilemmas we discussed in Lesson 5, try to say a few words about offense number 9.
14. Say a few words about the ability of the sādhus to transmit faith into our hearts.
15. What attachments or offenses should cause us to stop chanting?
16. Can we always trust the mind? Explain your answer.
17. Name the most important thing we want you to do.
18. Give at least three reasons to chant the Holy Names.
19. Who is Rāma?
20. Why do we spell “Holy Names” with capital letters?
21. Can you give three reasons why it can be difficult to chant?
22. We say — Use love to find love. Miss Him to find Him — Try to say a few words about how you feel about this statement.
23. What do you think about “spiritual greed”?
24. What does avatārī mean? How many avatārīs are there?
25. Name the six reasons that God is called Bhagavān.
26. What are the two types of names for God?
27. What aspect of God can hinder our love for Him?
28. Say a few words about the difference between Kṛṣṇa and Nārāyaṇa.
29. What does Kṛṣṇa mean? What does Rāma mean what does Hare mean? Who is Hare?
30. Why does Lord Caitanya have a golden complexion?
31. Which of the following is God — Kṛṣṇa, or Rāma, or Hare, or Nārāyaṇa, or Lord Caitanya?
32. Which aspects of the relationship between Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa are material?
33. What mood should we try to chant in?
34. How should we start our chanting sessions?
35. Without looking — Name as many of the ten offenses to the Holy Names as you can.
36. For you personally, what was the most important teaching in this lesson, and why did you choose this particular teaching?

You may formally participate in this course by sending your answers to our Alachua team (see address—on page 1), or you may use these questions for self-study.