

Sri Krishna Kathamrita



Bindu

Issue 568

vaiṣṇavānām yathā śambhuḥ

Shiva, the Greatest Vaishnava





Sri Krishna Kathamrita Bindu

Fortnightly email mini-magazine from Gopal Jiu Publications

Issue No. 568

Śrī Vijaya Ekādaśī

7 March 2024

Highlights

• [Worship of Shiva and Worship of Krishna](#)

His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

• [Bhakti for Shiva](#)

A story from the life of His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

• [Is Bhakti Only Applicable to Krishna?](#)

Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur Prabhupada

• [Don't Disrespect the Devas](#)

Sri Srimad Gour Govinda Swami Maharaja



WORSHIP OF SHIVA AND WORSHIP OF KRISHNA



His Divine Grace

A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

In this article we pose certain commonly asked questions about Lord Shiva, with answers from the teachings of Srila A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada.

What is the nature of the worshipers of different gods?

When the mode of goodness is mixed with the mode of passion, one worships the sun god, Vivasvan. When the mode of goodness is mixed with the mode of ignorance, one worships Ganapati, or Ganesh. When the mode of passion is mixed with the mode of ignorance, one worships Durga, or Kali, the external potency. When one is simply in the mode of ignorance, one becomes a devotee of Lord Shiva, because Lord Shiva is the predominating deity of the mode of ignorance within this material world. However, when one is completely free from the influence of all the modes of material nature, one becomes a pure *vaiṣṇava* on the devotional platform. (Cc. *madhya* 24.330)



Cover: Shiva and Krishna. Unkown artist, 1734-1767



Unknown artist. Lithograph, c. 1890, Calcutta Art Studio.

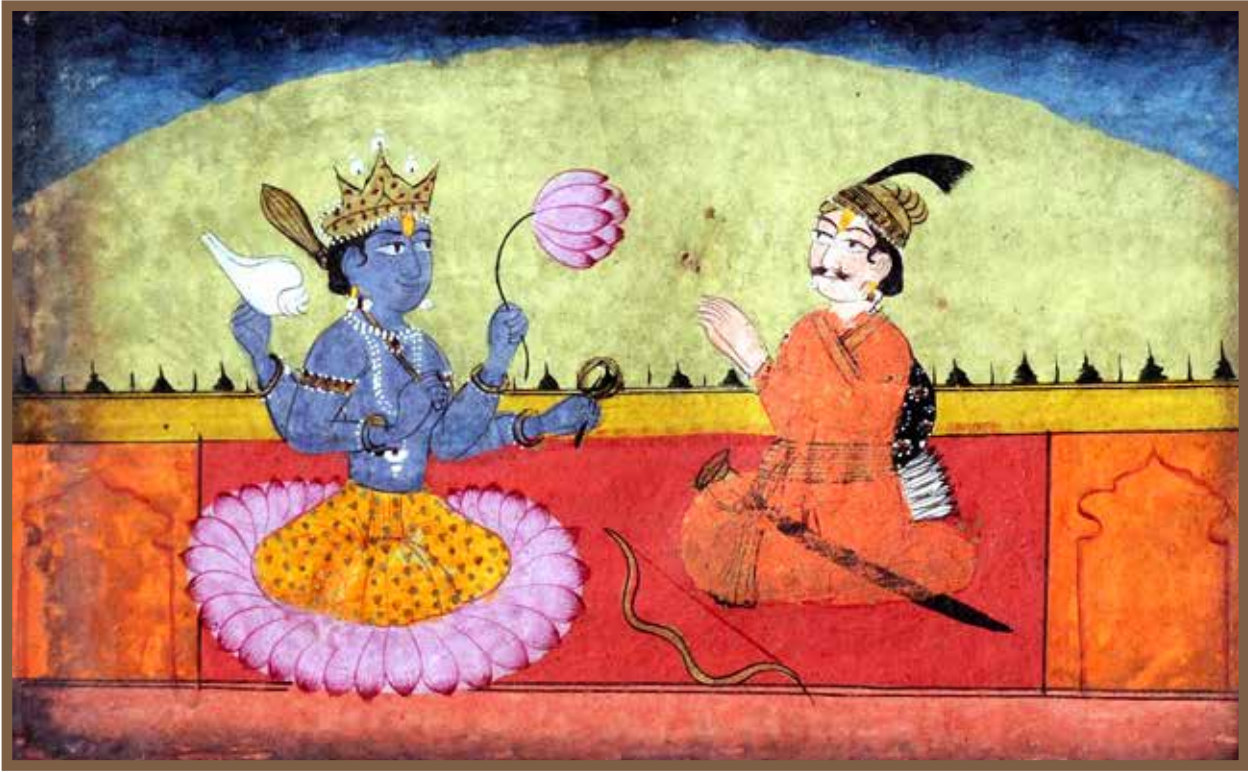
Shiva burns Cupid to Ashes

What is the difference between Krishna and Shiva?

Learned scholars in transcendental subjects have carefully analyzed the summum bonum, Krishna, to have sixty-four principal attributes. All the expansions or categories of the Lord possess only some percentage of these attributes. But Sri Krishna is the possessor of the attributes, cent percent. And his personal expansions such as *svayam-prakāśa* and *tad-ekātmā*, up to the categories of the *viṣṇu-tattva avatāras*, possess up to ninety-three percent of these transcendental attributes. Lord Shiva, who is neither *avatāra*, nor *āveśa*, nor in-between them, possesses almost eighty-four percent of the attributes. (Purport to *Bhāg.* 1.3.28)

Can one get the same result by worshipping Shiva or Krishna?

One particular mission regularly propounds that worship of any demigod will lead one to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, or the supreme goal. But worship of demigods is thoroughly discouraged herein, because even the greatest demigods like Brahma and Shiva represent only part of the opulence of the Supreme Lord. He is the origin of everyone born, and no one is greater than him. He is *asamaurdhva*, which means that no one is superior to him and no one is equal to him. In the *Padma Purāṇa* it is said that one who considers the Supreme Lord Krishna in the same category with demigods —



Maharaja Parikshit seated in front of Vishnu

be they even Brahma or Shiva — becomes at once an atheist. (Purport to Bg. 10.42.)

Many foolish persons say that one can chant Hare Krishna or chant the name of Kali or Durga or Shiva because they are all the same. If one thinks that the holy name of the Supreme Personality of Godhead and the names and activities of the demigods are on the same level, or if one accepts the holy name of Vishnu to be a material sound vibration, that is also an offense. (Purport to Bhāg. 3.15.25)

How is Lord Shiva auspicious?

Lord Shiva is always great and auspicious, but since he has accepted on his head the Ganges water, which emanated from the lotus feet of the Lord, he has become even more auspicious and important. (Purport to Bhāg. 3.28.22)

How is it that Gaudīyā Vaiṣṇavas say they respect Shiva as a devotee, but they often don't seem to appreciate him?

We worship Lord Shiva as a *vaiṣṇava*, but as a demigod we reject him. (Letter to Nityananda Das, 16 August 1972)

Is it acceptable to worship Shiva before Krishna?

That you may do. There is no harm. But you should understand what is Shiva and what is Vishnu. If you first offer prayers to Lord Shiva, there is no harm. It is good. He is *vaiṣṇavānām yathā śambhuḥ*. He is our spiritual master.

He is a *vaiṣṇava*. Why not offer first respect to him? But if you take Lord Shiva as the Supreme, that is an insult. You are giving me respect as spiritual master, but if you overestimate my position and say, “You are the king of the whole world,” that is an insult. That is not a prayer. If you offer me prayers that befit my position, then it is all right. But if you offer me prayers that are not befitting, then that is an insult. So you must know what the position of Lord Shiva is. He is a *vaiṣṇava*. He is the greatest devotee. You may praise him as the number one demigod. That would be all right. But if you praise him saying that he is the Supreme, then he will feel insulted, “What is this nonsense person saying?” So don't insult him in that way. That will go against your credit. He doesn't like that. (Morning walk conversation, 5 October 1975, Mauritius)

If Lord Shiva is a great devotee, how can he be influenced by māyā?

In his constitutional form, Shiva is a *mahā-bhāgavata*, a supreme devotee of the Lord. But because he accepts *māyā*'s association — especially the quality of ignorance — he is not free from *māyā*'s influence. Such an intimate association is completely absent in the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Vishnu. Lord Shiva accepts *māyā*, but in the presence of Lord Vishnu *māyā* does not exist.



Shiva offers prayers to Krishna

Consequently, Lord Shiva has to be considered a product of *māyā*. When Lord Shiva is free from *māyā*'s influence, he is in the position of a *mahā-bhāgavata*, a supreme devotee of Lord Vishnu, *vaiṣṇavānām yathā śambhuḥ*. (Cc. madhya 20.311)

Why did Lord Ramachandra worship Shiva?

He [Lord Krishna or Lord Rama] likes to worship his devotee. Sometimes the father takes the child on his shoulder. Does it mean that the child is more important than the father? They say that in the original *Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa* there is no such incident as Ramachandra worshiping Shiva, that it has been added later — an interpolation. But even if he does so, what is the wrong? (Morning walk conversation, 23 December 1975, Bombay)

What advice does Lord Shiva give his devotees?

Lord Shiva is the supreme devotee of Lord Vishnu, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. *vaiṣṇavānām yathā śambhuḥ* — The most exalted *vaiṣṇava* is Lord Shiva. Those who are actually devotees of Lord Shiva follow Lord Shiva's advice and take shelter at the lotus feet of Lord Vishnu. (Purport to *Bhāg.* 4.30.38)

Who are the real followers of Lord Shiva?

It is especially significant that Lord Shiva is a pure devotee of Lord Vāsudeva. *vaiṣṇavānām yathā śambhuḥ* — Amongst all *vaiṣṇavas*, Lord Shiva is the topmost.

Consequently, Lord Shiva has a *sampradāya*, a *vaiṣṇava* disciplic succession, called the *Rudra-sampradāya*. Those who belong to the present-day *Vishnusvāmī-sampradāya* of *vaiṣṇavas* come from Rudra, Lord Shiva. (Purport to *Bhāg.* 4.24.76)

What is the relationship between Lord Shiva and the devotees of Krishna?

Because Lord Shiva is a great devotee of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, he loves all the devotees of the Supreme Lord. Lord Shiva told the Prachetas that because they were devotees of the Lord, he loved them very much. Lord Shiva was not kind and merciful only to the Prachetas. Anyone who is a devotee of the Supreme Personality of Godhead is very dear to Lord Shiva. Not only are the devotees dear to Lord Shiva, but he respects them as much as he respects the Supreme Personality of Godhead. (Purport to *Bhāg.* 4.24.30) 🍌

BHAKTI FOR SHIVA



A story from the life of His Divine Grace

A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

Srila Prabhupada encountered another long-standing South Indian feud — between the *śāivites* (followers of Lord Shiva) and the *vaiṣṇavas* (followers of Lord Vishnu). The *śāivites* generally espoused an impersonalist philosophy, declaring God to be the impersonal “one”, appearing in many forms, such as Shiva and Krishna. But since all the forms were one ultimately, fighting as to which god was best was petty and childish. Prabhupada's disciples found this philosophy difficult to deal with, and when Giriraj had argued with a wealthy *śāivite*, Mr. Ramakrishna, they had separated with hurt feelings. But in meetings with other persons in Madras, Giriraj was often reminded, “Have you met Mr. Ramakrishna? He is a very good man and a leader in religious functions.” Giriraj became embarrassed and decided to make another attempt to win Mr. Ramakrishna's friendship.

They talked again, but remained unsatisfied. Giriraj then informed Prabhupada and asked if he would meet Mr. Ramakrishna himself. Prabhupada agreed.

When they met, Mr. Ramakrishna began by saying, “Swamiji, we have been having some discussion about devotion to Lord Krishna and devotion to Lord Shiva. What do you say? Who is greater? Krishna or Shiva?”

Unknown artist. From an illustrated Hindi edition of Mahābhārata published by Gita Press, Gorakhpur



Lord Shiva teaches Narada Muni and some Rishis about Krishna

Unknown artist



Parvati has a vision of Krishna in Vrindavan

Prabhupada replied that actually the word *bhakti*, “devotion”, could not properly be applied to the worship of Lord Shiva. *Bhakti*, he said, meant service without any material desire, whereas *pūjā* included service with the desire for some return. *Bhakti*, therefore, could only be applied to Krishna.

“But isn’t it possible,” asked Mr. Ramakrishna, “for someone to be a *bhakta* of Lord Shiva and to worship Lord Shiva simply out of devotion, without desiring any material benefit?”

“It may be possible,” Prabhupada replied, “but generally not. Just like when a person enters a liquor shop, generally it’s taken that he is going for drinking, although there may be some exception.”

Prabhupada gave the example of the *gopīs*’ worship of the goddess Katyayani; their worship had not been for material benefit but for devotion to Krishna. Similarly, if one worshiped Lord Shiva with the aim of serving Lord Krishna, that would be *bhakti*. But people generally approach Shiva for material benefit. Although Mr. Ramakrishna was usually prone to argue these points, Prabhupada’s answer satisfied him.

(*Srila Prabhupada Lilamṛta*, chapter 38.) 🍌

IS BHAKTI ONLY APPLICABLE TO KRISHNA?



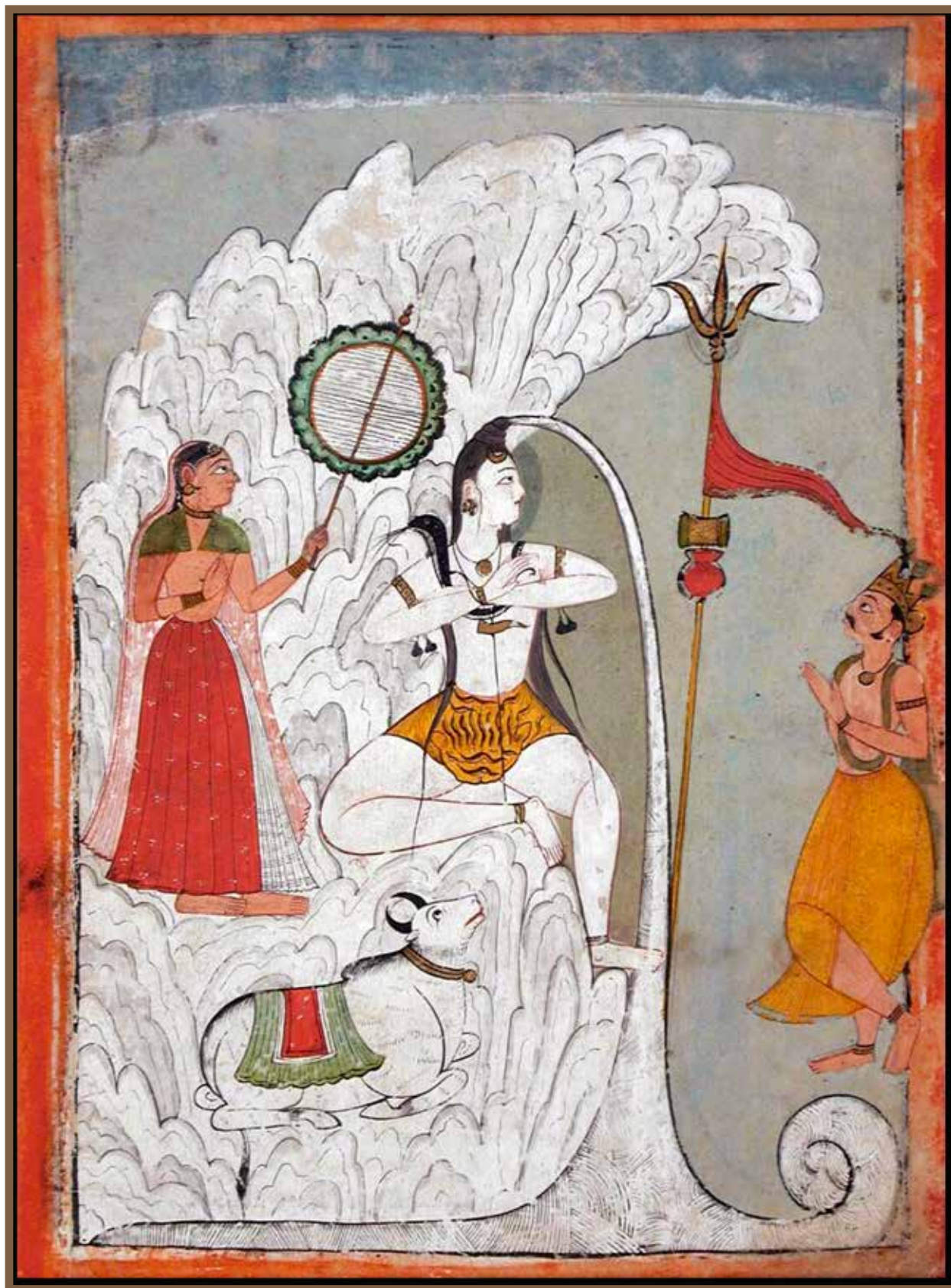
Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur Prabhupada

Lord Vishnu is no one’s order supplier but is the master of all order suppliers. Since Lord Vishnu is worshipable for everyone, the word *bhakti*, “devotional service”, can apply only to him. The word *bhakti* cannot apply to the demigods, even though the demigod worshipers falsely attribute those words to their practices. When we worship the demigods, we want religiosity, economic development, sense gratification, or liberation, but when we worship Vishnu we attend only to what Vishnu wants.

The Supreme Lord, *bhakti*, and the devotee, are sewn with the same thread. Devotional service is the *via media* between the Lord and his devotees — the Lord is the object of the devotees’ worship and the devotees are the Lord’s servants. The demigods are not God, but *jīvas*. The *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* states:

*ekale īśvara kṛṣṇa, āra saba bhṛtya
yāre yaiche nācāya, se taiche kare nṛtya*

“Krishna alone is the supreme controller, and all others are his servants. They dance as he makes them do so.” (ādi 5.142)



Unknown artist. Pahari school. Circa 1740

Maharaja Bhagirathi prays to Shiva to let the Ganga descend

The Padma Purāṇa states:

*harir eva sadārādhyaḥ sarva deveśvareśvaraḥ
itare brahma rudrādya nāvajneyāḥ kadācana*

*ya tu nārāyaṇaṁ devaṁ brahma-rudrādi-daivataiḥ
samatvenaiva vikṣeta sa pāṣaṇḍī bhaved dhruvam*

“Lord Hari alone is the supreme worshipable object. He is the controller of all controllers. Demigods like Brahma and Shiva are subordinate to him. Yet they should never be disrespected. A person who considers demigods like Brahma and Shiva to be on an equal level with Narayan is to be considered an offender.”

The scriptures declare that service to the Supreme Personality of Godhead Hari is devotion, but at present the word *bhakti* is being misinterpreted and misused. People have come to think that it means devotion to the father, king, or schoolteacher. If we do not know what devotional service is and through which medium it is to be performed, we will find ourselves in trouble. Serving Lord Hari, the master of all the senses, with our senses is called devotional service. The *Nārada-pañcarātra* states:

*sarvopādhi-vinirmuktaṁ tat-paratvena nirmalam
hṛṣikeṇa hṛṣikeśa-sevanaṁ bhaktir ucyate*

“*Bhakti*, or devotional service, means engaging all our senses in the service of the Lord, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the master of all the senses. When the spirit soul renders service unto the Supreme, there are two side-effects. One is freedom from all material designations, and the other is that one’s senses are purified simply by being employed in the service of the Lord.”

Lord Gauranga states in *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*:

*anya-vāñchā, anya-pūjā chāḍi’ jñāna’, ‘karma’
ānukūlye sarvendriye kṛṣṇānuśilana*

*ei ‘śuddha-bhakti’ — ihā haite ‘premā’ haya
pañcarātre, bhāgavate ei lakṣaṇa kaya*

“A pure devotee must not cherish any desire other than to serve Krishna. He should not offer worship to the demigods or to mundane personalities. He should not cultivate artificial knowledge that is devoid of Krishna consciousness, and he should not engage himself in anything other than Krishna conscious activities. One must engage all one’s purified senses in the service of the Lord. This is the favorable execution of Krishna conscious activities. These activities are called

śuddha-bhakti, pure devotional service. If one renders such pure devotional service, he develops his original love for Krishna in due course of time. These symptoms are described in Vedic literatures like the *Pañcarātras* and *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*.” (madhya 19.168-69)

Śrīmad Bhāgavatam (3.29.11-12) states:

*mad-guṇa-śruti-mātreṇa mayi sarva-guhāśaye
mano-gatir avicchinnā yathā gaṅgāmbhaso ‘mbudhau*

*lakṣaṇaṁ bhakti-yogasya nirguṇasya hy udāhṛtam
ahaituky avyavahitā yā bhaktiḥ puruṣottame*

“The manifestation of unadulterated devotional service is exhibited when one’s mind is at once attracted to hearing the transcendental name and qualities of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who is residing in everyone’s heart. Just as the water of the Ganges flows naturally down towards the ocean, such devotional ecstasy, uninterrupted by any material condition, flows towards the Supreme Lord.” 🍊

— *Amṛta Vani*, 5.43. A collection of statements from Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur. Originally compiled in Bengali by Sri Bhakti Bhagavat Mayukha Maharaja. Translated into English by Bhumipati Das. Touchstone Media. Mumbai. 2004.



Sri Srimad Gour Govinda Swami Maharaja

Ambarish did not disrespect Indra. He offered him all respect and obeisances. A *vaiṣṇava* should not disrespect any demigod. That is *aparādha*, offense.

The fourth canto of *Bhāgavatam* (4.11.33) describes that when Dhruva Maharaja was engaged in killing the Yakshas, his grandfather, Swayambhuva Manu, appeared and said, “Don’t do this.” Swayambhuva Manu told him:

*helanaṁ giriśa-bhrātūr dhanadasya tvayā kṛtam
yaj jaghnivān punya-janān bhrātṛ-ghnān ity amarṣitaḥ*

My dear Dhruva, you thought that the Yakshas killed your brother, and therefore you have killed great numbers of them. But by this action you have agitated the mind of Lord Shiva’s brother Kuvera, who is the treasurer of the demigods. Please note that your actions have been very disrespectful to Kuvera and Lord Shiva.

When Dhruva heard this, he stopped fighting. Then he offered prayers to Kuvera, “Please excuse my *aparādha*. Please give me the benediction that I may develop *bhagavad-bhakti*.”



Unknown artist

The Devas listen to Krishna's flute

So those who are aspiring after *bhagavad-bhakti* should not disrespect any demigod, what to speak of Shiva, who is *deva-deva*, chief of the demigods. He is very dear to Krishna.

In the *Kūrma Purāṇa* [quoted in *Bhakti-sandarbha* 106.6], Bhagavan says:

*yo mām samarcayen nityam ekāntam bhāvam āsritaḥ
vinindan devam iśānam sa yāti narakam dhruvam*

One who is offering worship to me, but disrespects Isana, Shivaji, must go to hell, *narakam dhruvam*.

There is also the example of Chitraketu. Chitraketu criticized Shivaji and was therefore cursed by Parvati-devi to become the demon Vritrasura. Shivaji tolerated his criticism, but Parvati-devi couldn't tolerate seeing Shiva offended.

Lord Kapiladev (*Bhāg.* 3.29.23) has instructed that one should not disrespect any living entity:

*dviṣataḥ para-kāye mām mānino bhinna-darśinaḥ
bhūteṣu baddha-vairasya na manaḥ śāntim ṛchhati*

One who offers me respect but is envious of the bodies of others and is therefore a separatist, never attains peace of mind because of his inimical behavior towards other living entities.

Mahaprabhu has also advised (*Cc. madhya* 22.120), *prāṇi-mātre mano-vākye udvega nā diba —*

SRI KRISHNA KATHAMRITA BINDU

**A free bi-monthly service provided by
Gopal Jiu Publications**

Subscribe at our website: www.gopaljiu.org

GopalJiuPublications is a section of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness, Founder-Acharya: His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada.

Quotations from the books, letters, and lectures of His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada ©Bhaktivedanta Book Trust. All other materials, unless specified, © ISKCON Gopal Jiu Publications. All rights reserved. Blanket permission is given to redistribute Bindu in electronic or print form provided no changes are made to the contents.



Unknown artist. From a Chamba Raganala, c. 1700. Himachal Pradesh, Pahari

The gopīs worship Lord Shiva

“Neither by mind nor words should the devotee cause anxiety to any living entity, regardless how insignificant he may be. Even you should not hurt any animal in thought, or words, what to speak of activity.

Śrīmad Bhāgavatam (3.29.21-22) describes:

*aham sarveṣu bhūteṣu bhūtātmāvasthitaḥ sadā
tam avajñāya mām martyaḥ kurute 'rcā-vidambanam*

I am present in every living entity as the Supersoul. If someone neglects or disregards that Supersoul everywhere and engages himself in the worship of the deity in the temple, that is simply imitation.

*yo mām sarveṣu bhūteṣu santam ātmānam iśvaram
hitvārcām bhajate maudhyād bhasmany eva juhoti saḥ*

One who worships the deity of Godhead in the temples but does not know that the Supreme Lord, as *paramātmā*, is situated in every living entity's heart, is in ignorance and is compared to one who offers oblations into ashes.

Mahābhārata says [quoted in *Bhakti-sandarbha* 106.83]:

*piteva putram karuṇo nodvejayati yo janam
viśuddhasya hr̥ṣikeśas-tūrṇam tasya prasīdati*

Lord Hrishikesh, Krishna, at once gives his mercy to a person who does not trouble others and who is as kind to them as a father is to his son.” 🍀