

# Practices leading to Devotion.

By Hanumanprasad Poddar.

A few rules of conduct are recommended below for observance by those who are treading the path of Devotion. The more completely they are followed the greater benefit will accrue therefrom to the practisant.

1. One should altogether give up lying, thieving, harming others, adultery and eating prohibited food.

2. One should never assume false appearances: one should try to *become* a devotee and should on no account *pose* as one.

3. One should relinquish all sorts of desires: he should seek nothing from God in return for his devotion.

4. One should give up the eight\* forms of sexual enjoyment: one should copulate with his wedded consort as seldom as possible. The best thing would be to give up copulation altogether. This should, of course, be done with the mutual consent of both ( husband and wife ).

5. One should have absolutely no connection with those of the other sex. One should take care never to see a person belonging to the opposite sex or talk with him or her in seclusion.

6. One should never seek honour, nor should he be afraid of insult or indignity. He should practise humility and submissiveness, should never speak harsh or unpleasant words, should bear ill-will to none, should never indulge in idle gossip or vilification of others, and should hate no one.

7. One should serve those who may be suffering from some disease or are incapacitated in body or helpless, in all possible ways, with mind, body and money. He should make it a point not to take service from others as far as possible.

8. One should avoid as far as possible societies and other public bodies and should read newspapers as sparingly as possible; he had better not read them at all.

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\* The eight forms of sexual enjoyment are:—mental enjoyment ( स्मरण ), talking of such enjoyment ( कीर्तन ), amorous sport ( खेलि ), casting amorous looks ( प्रेक्षण ), indulging in amorous talks ( गुह्य भाषण ), intention to copulate ( संकल्प ), resolution ( अध्यवसाय ), and the actual process ( क्रियानिष्पत्ति ).

9. One should respect all, love all and should be ever ready to serve all.
10. One should not reason with others, should not enter into discussion or controversy with others.
11. One should have a firm belief and supreme faith in God and His name, His devotees, and works dealing with His *Bhakti*.
12. One should never denounce others' religion or mode of worship.
13. One should not detect others' faults; let him discover his own faults and expose them.
14. One should serve his parents and other elders, as well as his master.
15. One should meditate on or mentally worship the Lord and recite prayers to Him both in the morning and evening every day.
16. One should repeat the Divine name of his choice at least 25,000 times daily. One can complete this number by completing 16 Mālās ( or rosaries of 108 beads each ) of the following *Mantra*:—

हरे राम हरे राम राम राम हरे हरे । हरे कृष्ण हरे कृष्ण कृष्ण कृष्ण हरे हरे ॥

This is, however, meant only for the Hindus. The followers of other faiths can similarly repeat the names of their respective Prophets or other names recommended in their scriptures.

17. One should induce all the members of his family ( including ladies, gentlemen, and children ) to chant the Divine Name in a chorus and with absorbed attention at least for 15 minutes regularly every day.

18. One should read at least one chapter of *Śrīmad Bhagavadgītā* daily, keeping one's eye on its meaning as well.

19. One should make it a point to have the *Darshan* of an image of the Lord daily. If he has got a temple close to his house and if he is entitled to visit it, he should visit the same, or else he may keep an image or picture of the Lord at his own house and obtain its *Darshan*. This, as well as the following item, is meant for only those who believe in idol-worship. It should, however, be borne in mind here that those who practise idol-worship so-called do not really worship the idol as such but the Lord Himself who is present in the idol.

20. As far as possible, one should practise idol-worship daily. Ladies need not go to a temple: they should keep an image of the Lord at their own house and worship it with due ceremony.

21. One should turn his back upon all worldly things as objects of enjoyment, but should learn to love them all as so many images of the Lord.

22. One should never entertain doubts regarding God and His Incarnations nor as regards saints and godly men.

23. One should read, hear discourses on and ponder over the meaning of, books like the *Upaniṣads*, *Śrīmad Bhagavadgītā*, *Śrīmad Bhāgavata* ( at least Book XI ), *Mahābhārata* ( at least *Śāntiparva* and *Anuśāsanaparva* ), the *Rāmāyaṇa* of *Vālmiki*, the *Rāmācharitamānasa* of Goswami Tulasidas, *Sundaravilāsa* of *Sundardas*, the *Dāsabodha* of Samartha Ramdas, the *Bhaktamāla* and other lives of saints and devotees, and other such books. People of other faiths can read their own scriptures.

24. Instead of trying to ascertain the dates of incarnation of Śrī Rāma, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Śrī Narasiṃha and other incarnations of the Lord and submitting their lives to a critical test, one should remember them and adore them with devotion. One who partakes of the mango fruit is wiser than one who is engaged in the vain pursuit of counting the trees. Life is too short to be frittered away in trifles.

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