

# Śrī Śikṣāṣṭakam

Emanated from the lotus mouth  
of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu

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# Śrī Śikṣāṣṭakam

1. Śrī Sanmodana Bhāṣyam by Śrī Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura
2. Śrī Bhajana-Rahasya by Śrī Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura
3. Related Verses from Śrī Caitanya Caritāmṛta with Srila Prabhupada's Purport
4. Vivṛti Commentary by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvati Ṭhākura
5. Śikṣāṣṭākam songs from Śrī Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's Gītāvalī

Why Harinama Sankirtanam is  
exclusively glorified amongst all  
the other limbs of Devotional  
Service?

2.3.147

bhaktiḥ prakṛṣṭā smaraṇātmikāsmiṇ  
sarvendriyāṇām adhiṇe vilole  
ghore baliṣṭhe manasi prayāsair  
nīte vaśam bhāti viśodhite yā

But, smaraṇātmikā  
the ki which is  
superior → superior within  
the turbul, frightful will  
when by serious efforts, the  
mind is fully purified.

Superior bhakti (prakṛṣṭā bhaktiḥ) in the form of remembering (smaraṇātmikā), they think, appears (bhāti) within the mind (manasi)—that turbulent (vilole), frightful (ghore), and mighty (baliṣṭhe) chief of all the senses (sarva indriyāṇām adhiṇe)—when by serious efforts (prayāsair) the mind has been brought under control (vaśam nīte) and fully purified (viśodhite).

Everyone has experience that the mind is difficult to control.

To subdue and purify it is a great achievement.

Because the mind is the ruler of the senses, when the mind is controlled the functions of the senses, including kīrtana, are also controlled.

In the words of the mendicant from Avantī in Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.23.47, 45):

mano-vaśe 'nye hy abhavan sma devā  
manaś ca nānyasya vaśam sameti  
bhīṣmo hi devaḥ sahasaḥ sahiyān  
yuñjyād vaśe taṁ sa hi deva-devaḥ

The senses (anye devā) are under the control of the mind (mano-vaśe hy abhavan sma). The mind is not under the control of anything else (manaś ca na anyasya vaśam sameti). The mind is fearsome (bhīṣmo hi devaḥ), stronger than the strongest (sahasah sahiyān). One who controls the mind is the controller of all the senses (yuñjyād vaśe taṁ sa hi deva-devaḥ).

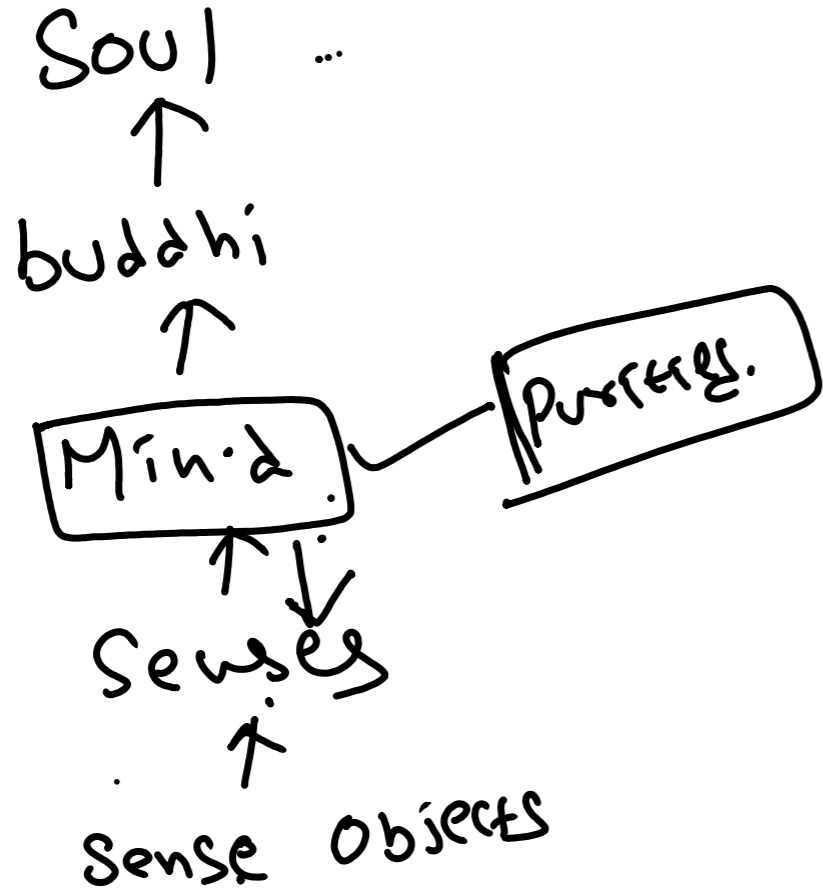
dānam sva-dharmo niyamo yamaś ca  
śrutam ca karmāṇi ca sad-vratāni  
sarve mano-nigraha-lakṣaṇāntāḥ  
paro hi yogo manasaḥ samādhiḥ

Charity, prescribed duties, niyama and yama (**dānam sva-dharmo niyamo yamaś ca**), hearing from scripture, pious works and purifying vows (**śrutam ca karmāṇi ca sad-vratāni**) all have as their final aim the subduing of the mind (**sarve mano-nigraha-lakṣaṇa antāḥ**), since control of the mind is the best yoga (**paro hi yogo manasaḥ samādhiḥ**).

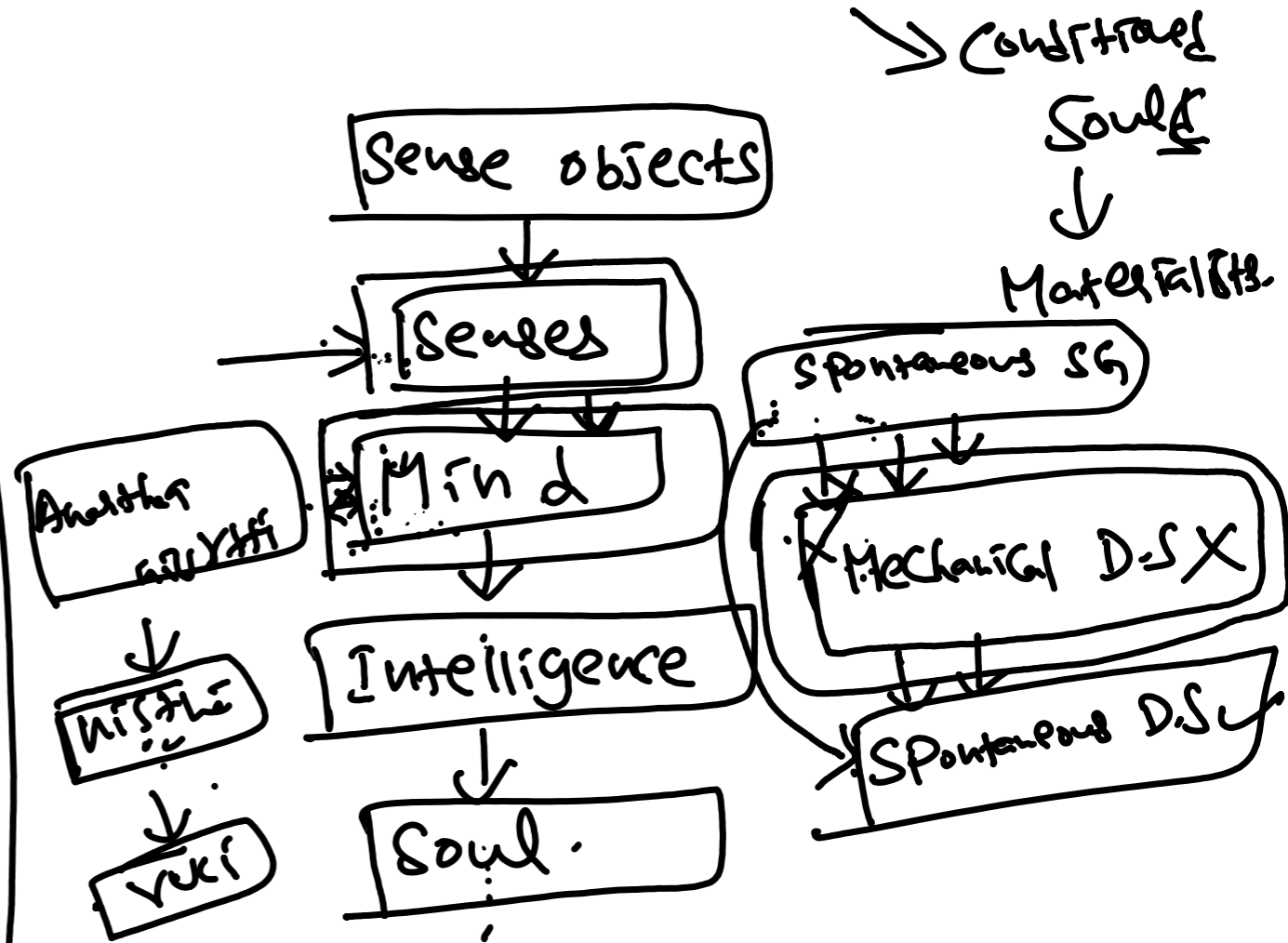
Therefore, in the opinion of the residents of Tapoloka, one achieves the highest perfection by controlling one's mind and engaging it in remembrance of the Supreme Lord.

# Constitutional Hierarchy (3 charts)

↓ self realize path.



# Conditional hierarchy





2.3.148

But in our opinion, chanting  
is better than smārṇam.  
Why?  
Best,  
a) chanting includes mind, speech & hearing.  
b) chanting helps not only the person  
practicing it, but others also.

manyāmahe kīrtanam eva sat-tamam  
lolātmakaika-sva-hṛdi sphurat-smṛteḥ  
vāci sva-yukte manasi śrutau tathā  
dīvyat parān apy upakurvad ātmya-vat

But we consider (manyāmahe) chanting to be alone (kīrtanam eva) the most excellent form of bhakti (sat-tamam), better than remembering (smṛteḥ), which appears (sphurat) only in one's own (turbulent heart) (lolātmakaika-sva-hṛdi). For chanting harnesses not only the faculty of speech (vāci) which it engages directly (sva-yukte), but also the mind (manasi) and sense of hearing (śrutau tathā). And chanting helps (upakurvad) not only the person practicing it (ātmya-vat dīvyat) but others as well (parān apy).

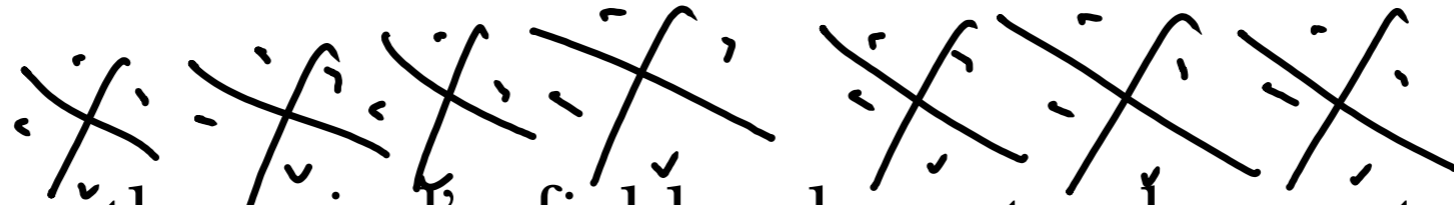
This is the Vaikuntha-dūtas' own opinion. Smarana is purely an  
internal function, but kīrtana, which actively employs one's power of  
speech, affects both one's internal and external environments.

Kīrtana also acts on the mind, bringing it subconsciously into  
contact with all spiritual sensory functions.

If this subtle contact were not established, the spirit soul could not  
awaken to his real life.

The transcendental sound of kīrtana enters the ears on its own strength, without any effort by the hearer and thus it benefits not only the chanter but everyone who hears it, treating them all as its subservient dependents.

The process of remembrance does not have such power.



In fact, as long as the mind's fickle character has not changed, smarana cannot manifest itself fully.

When we realistically consider the relative value of smaraṇa and kīrtana, we find, therefore, that the difficulty of performing smaraṇa does not make smaraṇa more important.

By the kīrtana of Lord Visnu's names even the sinful Ajāmila, who could not remember the Lord at all, attained liberation.

The beneficial results of meditation, sacrifice, and worship are all automatically obtained in the process of kīrtana, especially in the present age:

dhyāyan kṛte yajan yajñais  
tretāyām dvāpare 'rcayan  
yad āpnoti tad āpnoti  
kalau saṅkīrtya keśavam

“What was accomplished (yad āpnoti) in the Kṛta Age (kṛte) by meditation (dhyāyan), in Tretā (tretāyām) by ritual sacrifices (yajan yajñais), and in Dvāpara by worship of the Deity of the Lord (dvāpare arcayan), in this Kali Age (kalau) is accomplished (tad āpnoti) by loud chanting of the names of Keśava (saṅkīrtya keśavam).” (Viṣṇu Purāṇa 6.2.17)

The claim made in this statement and others about the potency of  
hari-nāma-saṅkīrtana is not merely rhetoric; it is proven by the life  
histories of many successful Vaiṣṇavas.

2.3.149

bāhyāntarāśesa-hr̥ṣika-cālakam

vāg-indriyam syād yadi samyatham sadā

cittam sthiram sad-bhagavat-smṛtau tadā

samyak pravarteta tataḥ smṛtiḥ phalam

If Speech is brought under control & the mind becomes stable, on engage in bhagavat-smṛti. ∴ Smṛtau is the fruit of Kṛtām.

If the sense of speech (vāg-indriyam), which sets in motion (cālakam) all the external and internal senses (bāhya antara aśeṣa-hr̥ṣika), is brought under constant control (yadi sadā samyatham syād), then the mind becomes stable (tadā cittam sthiram) and can properly engage in transcendental remembrance of the Lord (sad-bhagavat-smṛtau). Remembrance (smṛtiḥ) thus (tataḥ) develops (samyak pravarteta) as the fruit of chanting (phalam).

evam prabhor dhyāna-ratair mataḥ ced  
buddhyedṛśam tatra vivecanīyam  
dhyānam parisphūrṭi-viśeṣa-niṣṭhā  
sambandha-mātram manasā smṛtir hi

If still insist that remembering is more important than meditation, they should understand that only in dhyāna the Lord fully reveals Himself, at the stage of sambandha-mātra contact.

If (**ced**) those attached to meditation on the Lord (**prabhor dhyāna-ratair**) still insist that remembering is of greater importance (**mataḥ**) with their intelligence (**buddhyā**) they should make the following distinction (**īdṛśam tatra vivecanīyam**): In meditation (**dhyānam**) the Lord reveals Himself fully (**parisphūrṭi**) with His particular qualities (**viśeṣa-niṣṭhā**), but in remembrance (**smṛtir**) the mind (**manasā**) merely comes in contact with the Lord (**sambandha-mātram hi**).

Some sincere and intelligent Vaiṣṇavas are firmly convinced that meditation on the Lord is the best form of devotional service.

Since they perceive an authentic spiritual taste from their meditation, their opinion must be honored; but as the Vaikuṅṭha-dūtas here suggest, this opinion should be adjusted to make it exactly correct.

The advocates of the meditational process think as follows: The faculty of speech has the power to mobilize all the senses, both external (like the ears) and internal (like the mind).



If a person steadies his mind by controlling his speech, either through silence or through bhagavat-kīrtana, he can begin the practice of remembering the Supreme Lord.

So kīrtana is the means to the goal of smarana.

Scriptures may say that in Kali-yuga the perfection of kīrtana is in itself the goal and automatically includes the results of smarana—but that is only in reference to the special situation of the modern age.

It may also be said that the exceptional faults of Kali-yuga can be counteracted only by the very powerful process of kīrtana, not by meditation alone or any other means, but actually there is no absolute rule that meditation on the Lord is less than enough to wash away the contamination of the modern age.

Rather, hundreds of convincing statements of scripture confirm that simply remembering the Personality of Godhead destroys one's sinful reactions.

Thus meditation is the best form of devotional service.

The Vaikunṭha-dūtas ~~accept this opinion,~~ as long as it is qualified by the understanding that true meditation on the Supreme Lord is a very mature (stage of devotional development).

dhyaṇam

dhyaṇam.

In meditation the devotee realizes the Lord in the heart and directly perceives many details of the Lord's exquisite beauty and charm, from His feet to the hair on His head.

But in the more usual (smṛti) or (remembrance), the mind only comes in contact with the Lord, as when one thinks "God exists" or "I am the Supreme Lord's servant."

ced dhyāna-vegāt khalu citta-vṛttāv  
antar-bhavantīndriya-vṛttayas tāḥ  
saṅkīrtana-sparśana-darśanādyā  
dhyānam tadā kīrtanato 'stu varyam

If, by the force  
of meditation for a  
longer fully absorbed into the  
function of the mind  
then that dhyāna may be  
accepted as better than  
saṅkīrtan

If by the force of one's meditation (ced dhyāna-vegāt) all the  
functions of the senses (indriya-vṛttayas tāḥ)—including  
saṅkīrtana of the Lord (saṅkīrtana), physical contact with Him,  
seeing Him, and so on (sparśana-darśana ādyā)—become absorbed  
into the function of the mind (citta-vṛttāv antar-bhavanti), that  
meditation (tadā dhyānam) may be accepted as better than  
chanting out loud (kīrtanato varyam astu).

If a devotee becomes so proficient in dhyāna (meditation on the Lord) that the devotional practices he earlier performed with his speech, touch, eyes, and other senses become spontaneous activities of his mind, then of course for that devotee meditation has become the most suitable practice.

He can inwardly continue his śravaṇa, kīrtana, and so on, (with) or (without) the participation of his external senses.