

Hari-Nāma-Cintāmaṇi

The Touchstone of the Holy- Name

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Chapter – 11

Considering the Name as
Equal to Material Piety

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jaya jaya gaura-candra nāma-avatāra
jaya jaya hari-nāma sarva-tattva-sāra

- Haridāsa said, "O Lord, please note that the holy name is not to be equated with the pious activities mentioned in the Vedas.
- One should know the identity of the name.
- Kṛṣṇa is the spiritual sun, perfect, conscious and inconceivably wonderful.
- Thus all the Lord's diverse forms can be similarly fully spiritual, including His name, dhāma and līlā.
- Unlike material objects and names, the Lord's principal names are nondifferent from the Lord.

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- When the devotee chants the name, that name is coming directly from the spiritual level, from Goloka to the ātmā, from the ātmā to the body, where it dances on the devotee's tongue, in his mind, etc.
- If one takes the name with this conception, then it is the real name of the Lord with full power.
- But to take the name as a material object leads to sorrow.
- "Of course, in scripture there are various methods mentioned, according to one's qualification, for coming to the Lord.
- Men who can think only in material terms of limited time and tangible objects, out of fear, take to religious activity.

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- Actually the Supreme Lord is the only relief from fear, for by taking His lotus feet one can cross over the material ocean.
- To come to accept the Lord's feet, the Lord has created different methods.
- For one who is in the material conception, the method is material.
- All activities, such as fire sacrifices, baths, charity, yoga, varṇāśrama duties, vows of visiting holy places, worship of forefathers, meditation, culture of knowledge, worship of demigods, austerities, and prāyaścitta make use of purely material elements for limited material goals.
- But these material pious activities are also a means by which one may eventually come to bhakti.

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- Then, upon receiving bhakti, one will reject the material, temporary means and engage solely in bhakti.
- This will bring about full bliss or prema, the goal of life.
- "Here we can see the difference between bhakti and pious activities.
- Material objects and time are without real bliss.
- All the activity and reward from pious activity is material, and progress toward the goal of spiritual prema is slow.
- There is a great separation between the means and the end.

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- "Therefore, being merciful, the Lord has given the holy name, by which the intelligent jīvas can attain perfection.
- Because the holy name is also a means or method, it is considered by some to be a part of the pious activity method, with no other potency.
- In the same way, materialists think that Viṣṇu, like Brahmā and Śiva, can be counted as a material demigod.
- Though the name is transcendental, without material tinge, the jīva covered by materialism gives the name material position, as a material pious activity.
- This is offensive to the name and an obstacle to bhakti.

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- "In truth, the name is the end, the goal, full of spiritual bliss, the perfection; and simultaneously, the name has appeared in the material world as the means for the jīva to come to that end.
- Thus the name is both the means of purification and the end, prema.
- According to one's qualification, the name may be acting as means or end.
- “In the world we can find two means, the secondary or indirect means of purification, such as pious activities, and the principal means, which is the holy name.
- One should not confuse the two and equate them.

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- By singing the name, transcendental bliss will come and make the heart dance.
- That actually is the essential character of the name, it is full of nectarean pastimes.
- That happiness achieved by jñāna and yoga may seem great in comparison to the shadow of happiness received from the material world, but in comparison to the bliss of the holy name, that happiness is scant.
- "At the stage of sādhana, the purificatory stage, the name is the means; but in the pure stage, the name is the end and the highest bliss.

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- Thus it cannot be compared to material pious activities.
- Even at the sādhana stage the name remains pure; the anarthas of the sādhanaka only make it look impure.
- But by association with Vaiṣṇavas, material mentality and anarthas will go away and the pure name will show through.
- With pious activities, one must reject them in the end, but one never rejects the name.
- In one stage it is covered, in the other it is pure.
- "By the mercy of the guru this knowledge is revealed.
- If this knowledge is lacking at the stage of sādhana, then one becomes an offender.

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- But if one has faith that the name is supreme and without equal, then quickly the pure name will be revealed along with full bliss and nectar.
- "If one should commit this offense and desires relief, one should seek good association and purify one's intelligence.
- If an outcaste is surrendered to the pure name, for one's own purification one should smear his foot dust on one's body, should eat his food remnants and drink his foot water.
- In that way one can similarly obtain the pure name.
- An example of this is Kālī dāsa."

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- Haridāsa said, "I am materially minded and I just sing, but never do I get the touchstone of the name.
- Be merciful, O Lord, and dance on my tongue in the form of the name.
- Keep me in the material realm or in the spiritual sky, but wherever You put me, give me the nectar of the name.
- You have appeared in the world to give the holy name to the people of the world.
- Please accept me as one of those people.
- True, I am low, but You are the deliverer of the low.

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- This is our unbreakable relationship.
- On the strength of this, I am begging for the nectar of the name.
- "In Kali-yuga it is not even possible to execute the path of pious activities.
- Therefore the name has appeared here as the sole process for the age.“
- Whosoever serves in devotion as the servant of Haridāsa and thinks himself to be without qualifications, is qualified to sing the touchstone of the holy name.