

Hari-Nāma-Cintāmaṇi

The Touchstone of the Holy- Name

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gadāi gaurāṅga jaya jaya nityānanda
jaya sītānātha jaya gaura-bhakta-vṛnda

- The Lord said, "Haridāsa, by your devotion you have received all knowledge available in the universe.
- All the Vedas are dancing on your tongue; all the conclusions of scripture are in your speech.
- Now speak clearly about the rasa (sentiment or mellow) of the holy name.
- How does the jīva get qualification for the rasa of the name?"
- Haridāsa, in great bliss, said, "Through Your inspiration, I will describe it.

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- "The highest, purest state, the perfection of the Absolute Truth, is called rasa.
- This rasa is not the emotions or sentiment of the material world but is the inherent nature of the Absolute Pure; it is unlimited, full of bliss and the greatest glory.
- The Absolute Truth reveals His variegated character through His energies, which are inseparable from His very existence (abhinna).
- His energies create the variegated spiritual world which is prerequisite to rasa.
- "Through His spiritual energy, Kṛṣṇa reveals His form, name, dhāma and activities.

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- The Supreme Truth is known as Kṛṣṇa with a Śyāmasundara form, residing in Goloka-dhāma, performing His sweet pastimes with His devotees.
- Thus variety and rasa exist in the Lord due to His spiritual energies, which cannot be separated or differentiated from the substance of the Lord (abhinna).
- In this way, the Absolute Truth remains supreme, whole (akhaṇḍa), beyond duality (advaita), and simultaneously engages in a transcendental world full of beautiful forms, activities and emotions.
- "The shadow energy of the Lord's spiritual energy is called māyā. By the will of Kṛṣṇa, this energy creates the material world outside of the spiritual dimension.

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- Through His jīva-śakti, He creates the innumerable souls situated between the material and spiritual worlds, similar in quality to Kṛṣṇa but infinitesimal in size.
- Because of their borderline quality, the jīvas are of two types, eternally bound jīvas and eternally liberated jīvas.
- Those who are eternally liberated are qualified as Kṛṣṇa's eternal servants in the spiritual sky, and those who are eternally bound engage and suffer in the material shadow away from Kṛṣṇa.
- The jīvas dwelling in the material world are of two types, those taking Kṛṣṇa's name and associating with devotees, who will go to the spiritual world of rasa by the power of the name, and those who ignore Kṛṣṇa and toil hopelessly for rasa in relation to inert matter.

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- "The gradual realization of rasa in the name is compared to the blossoming of a flower.
- The name is compared to a flower in bud when it is spread to the general mass of people in the world.
- When one realizes the beautiful form of Kṛṣṇa in Goloka Vṛndāvana through continual chanting of the name, that is compared to the partially opened flower.
- Continuing sādhana further, when Kṛṣṇa's sixty-four qualities become revealed in the name, that is compared to the fragrance from the half-opened flower.
- When one realizes the eternal pastimes of Kṛṣṇa in Goloka Vṛndāvana, the flower is in full bloom.

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- Then, by the great mercy of the name, the original energies of hlādinī (bliss) and samvit (consciousness) belonging to the spiritual world, whose prime embodiment is Rādhārāṇī, unite in the form of bhakti-devī and descend upon the small jīva, who possesses only a small portion of hlādinī and samvit energy.
- From the transcendental realm, bhakti-devī reveals to the jīva the full rasa in the name, and by her mercy the jīva takes on his spiritual body and enters into the pastimes and tastes rasa.
- "There are four ingredients of rasa: vibhāva, anubhāva, sāttvika-bhāva and vyabhicārī (sañcārī) bhāva.
- The mixture of these ingredients produces rasa.

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- Vibhāva, the general cause for rasa, is divided into ālambana and uddīpana.
- Ālambana means the root cause, that upon which the rasa depends.
- It is divided into āśraya, the recipient, who is the devotee, and viśaya, the object, who is Kṛṣṇa.
- Uddīpana, the instigation, is composed of the form and qualities of Kṛṣṇa, which are realized through constant chanting.
- Thus, where there is ālambana (devotee and Kṛṣṇa) and uddīpana (Kṛṣṇa's qualities), līlā and rasa can occur.

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- "When the conditions of vibhāva are perfected, anubhāva (external symptoms of internal emotions) appears.
- These symptoms are all based on pure spiritual love, and can in no way be compared to the symptoms of love in the material world.
- Gradually, as emotions deepen, sāttvika and vyabhicārī bhāvas (additional symptoms) appear.
- By the combination of these ingredients, the initial sthāyī-bhāva (primary mood) of the devotee transforms to rasa, full spiritual flavors.

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- The situation of tasting rasas in the spiritual world is the highest perfection, the ultimate goal of the jīva, according to the scriptures.
- There are four goals for man mentioned in the Vedas: dharma, artha, kāma and mokṣa.
- These, however, are meant to lead to the supreme goal (parama-puruṣārtha)—rasa.
- One who is truly liberated is qualified for rasa.

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- "The path for attaining rasa is as follows: The jīva who has attained faith in bhakti receives a pure Vaiṣṇava guru.
- That guru gives the mahā-mantra.
- The jīva will take the mantra, either in the form of smarāṇa (remembering the name) or kīrtana (chanting the name), regulating himself by counting on Tulasī beads.
- Gradually, as his craving for the name increases, he will increase to 3 x 64 rounds.
- Of the two forms of taking the name, kīrtana is the more powerful, for in that process are combined śravana, kīrtana and smarāṇa, and by it the senses of the jīva dance in joy.

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- By taking shelter of any of the nine processes of bhakti, one progresses in devotion, but of the nine processes, chanting is the best.
- Those who have an attraction for Deity worship will reach perfection only by also engaging in hearing and chanting the name.
- But those who have exclusive attraction for the name need only engage in hearing, chanting and remembering the name.
- If one executes these three processes nicely, all the other nine processes of bhakti—serving the lotus feet, praying, servitude, and complete self-surrender—can also be easily accomplished.

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- "With faith that the name and Kṛṣṇa are nondifferent, and avoiding the ten offenses, the effects of the name will be perceived.
- By clear chanting and remembering of the name, one will find attraction and joy in the name.
- Then, one will either meditate on a form of Kṛṣṇa or constantly take darsana of His mūrti along with one's chanting, delving deeper and deeper into the name.
- When one has succeeded in realizing the form of Kṛṣṇa in the name, one will then meditate on Kṛṣṇa's qualities while chanting, one will meditate on a pastime of Kṛṣṇa's with the aid of a specific mantra.

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- When all four elements become one, one will begin to perceive rasa in the name.
- One will perfect the rasa by meditating on the eightfold pastimes of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa in Vṛndāvana.
- Gaining one's spiritual body by the mercy of the guru, one will enter into the pastimes with the associates of Rādhārāṇī, and according to the directions of the sakhīs, one will serve Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa in ecstasy.
- This service in the conjugal mood is the most brilliant thing in the spiritual world, and is obtainable by the jīva by the practice of bhakti.

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- There are even higher stages than this, but it is not possible to describe them by mere words.
- These things will be revealed by the mercy of Kṛṣṇa.
- "The specific process is now described.
- To receive a spiritual body in conjugal rasa one must culture eleven specific items in one's identity: one's relationship, age, name, bodily color, membership in a particular group, dress, order, residence, highest expectation in service and the protecting gopī under whom one serves.
- These items are perfected through five stages.

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- First, one will approach a guru who has realized Kṛṣṇa's eternal pastimes and the eleven items in eternal service.
- Upon hearing the eightfold pastimes of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, one inquires how to realize that state.
- The guru then describes the eleven items by which one can enter the pastimes. This is called sravana-dāsa.
- "The guru will then choose the particular spiritual identity of the disciple according to the tendency and attraction of the disciple.
- If the disciple does not have a natural taste in one bhāva, he can request another from the guru.
- When finally one's spiritual identity fits, he vows to the guru never to give it up. This is called varaṇa-daśā (the accepting stage).

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- The disciple will then practice remembering his given identity in his heart.
- This smaraṇa-daśā (stage of remembering) is divided into five levels.
- First one tries to remember the eightfold pastimes, but the mind wanders. This is smaraṇa.
- When one's practice becomes steady, it is called dhāraṇā.
- When one can meditate on all aspects of the desired object, it is called dhyāna.
- When this dhyāna becomes continual, it is called anusmṛti.
- When this becomes perfect, it is called samādhī.

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- "If these stages are followed progressively in smaraṇa, one will quickly come to the stage of āpana (possession), where the eleven items are realized as one's constitutional state.
- However, if one is busy making an exterior show, but does not cultivate fixing one's identity within, he cannot perfect this stage.
- But fixing one's identity is natural, since the jīva has simply forgotten his perfect stage when entering the material realm and body, desiring his own pleasure, and proportionately as one increases his practice of remembering his natural state, material designation and identification will decrease.

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- "One can reach āpana-daśā either from rāgānuga sādhanā, where scriptural rules are minimal, or through vaidhī-sādhanā, where relying on suitable rules from scripture is predominant.
- If one progresses through the stages of faith, practice, purification, steadiness, taste and attachment, in either vaidhī or rāgānuga-sādhanā, one then comes to the stage of bhāva, preliminary prema.
- It is at this point that one attains āpana-daśā.
- At this stage, beyond the category of sādhanā-bhakti, when scriptural rules will be discarded as troublesome to one's service, conceptions of rāgānuga and vaidhī will both be discarded.

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- "Here, one's identification with the material body will vanish and identification with one's spiritual body will predominate.
- In that spiritual body (svarūpa-siddhi) one will always see Vṛndāvana and serve Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa.
- This final stage is called sampatti-daśā.
- By Kṛṣṇa's mercy, suddenly one's material body, mind, intelligence and false ego will be cast off and one will appear in a pure spiritual body, serving Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa along with Their eternal associates.
- The jīva can achieve this fifth stage in perfecting rasa by taking the name and becoming purified.

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- "Therefore, the jīva with faith should take up chanting of the name seriously and constantly in good association.
- He will take superior Vaiṣṇava association, avoid material association and reside away from material glare.
- By the strength of these three items, he will achieve his position of real glory."
- Haridāsa said, "I am low, mean-minded and absorbed in material enjoyment, always refusing good association.
- Still, I am begging for causeless mercy to progress to the rasa stage of bhakti."
- Saying this, Haridāsa fell unconscious at the lotus feet of Śrī Caitanya.

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- Lord Caitanya said, "Listen, Haridāsa, in the future people with evil minds will degrade these intimate pastimes, but those who are real devotees will understand the supreme teaching that you have given.
- Taking shelter of this knowledge and taking shelter of the name, they will chant the name and worship Kṛṣṇa, far away from the materialists.
- The jīva will attain faith in bhakti through past accumulated sukṛti, (devotional activity).
- It is hard for all jīvas to obtain bhakti.
- Lead them on a direct path home.

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- I have come to preach the yuga-dharma of the holy name.
- You are helping Me accomplish this activity by describing the full truth about the holy name."
- Whoever attains the full nectar of the touchstone of the holy name, worshiping Kṛṣṇa in spontaneous emotion, has attained full success and full bliss.
- A worthless rascal, weeping, I hold that person's feet and beg that he distribute the bliss and let me drink forever just one particle of the nectarean rasa.