

# — THE FIVE STAGES TO PERFECTING NĀMA BHĀJANA —

Intelligent persons who take to Kṛṣṇa consciousness use the human life fully in the devotional service to the Lord, chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa , Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare. Thus they transfer themselves, even in this life, to the spiritual planet of Kṛṣṇa and become eternally blissful there, not being subject to rebirths. Bg 8.19p

## 1<sup>st</sup> Stage ŚRAVAṆA-DAŚĀ

### HEARING

That blissful stage when the devotee hears from a bonafide guru about *sādhana* and *sādhya*. At that time, the devotee hears how to chant without offense, how to chant to attain perfection and how to become factually qualified for Nāma. At this stage, the devotee gradually develops continuous chanting of the Holy Name.

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Stage VARAṆA-DAŚĀ

### ACCEPTANCE

When the devotee becomes qualified to receive *prema* derived from the chanting of Holy Name, he receives the pure process of such chanting and worship from his gurudeva, and the guru imparts his potency into such a fully surrendered disciple. The devotee has then attained *varaṇa-daśā*.

## 3<sup>rd</sup> Stage SMARAṆA-DAŚĀ

### REMEMBERING

FIRST PHASE OF SMARAṆA-DAŚĀ SMARAṆĀVASTHĀ	Recollection/Remembrance (Interrupted recollection)
SECOND PHASE OF SMARAṆA-DAŚĀ DHĀRAṆĀ	Absorption (Uninterrupted recollection/remembrance)
THIRD PHASE OF SMARAṆA-DAŚĀ DHYĀNA	Meditation (Concentrated remembrance)
FOURTH PHASE OF SMARAṆA-DAŚĀ ANUSMṚTI	Absorbed and constant Remembrance (Expanded meditation which becomes constant) (Also called <i>dhruvānusmṛti</i> , or perfect meditation)
FIFTH PHASE OF SMARAṆA-DAŚĀ SAMĀDHI	Trance

These five activities of remembering Nāma as He reveals Himself, constitute *smaraṇa-daśā*.

**4<sup>th</sup> Stage**  
**APĀÑĀ-DAŚĀ**  
(*Svarūpa-siddhi*)

**APPLICATION**

(Interrupted manifestation of one's *svarūpa*)

At this stage one can see and has entrance into the *aprakāṭa* pastimes of the Lord. But that entrance is interrupted.

When remembrance of the Name, concentration on the form, meditation on the qualities, absorption in the pastimes, and finally entrance into those pastimes in a trance-like state are all accomplished, the devotee has attained *apāñā-daśā* (attainment of spiritual form while still maintaining his material body). This state is called *svarūpa-siddhi*.

In the stages both of *smaraṇa* and *apāñā* the devotee consciously endeavors to remember Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa's *aṣṭa-kālīya-līlā*. When he becomes deeply absorbed in this, he attains *svarūpa-siddhi*, attainment of his spiritual form.

**5<sup>th</sup> Stage**  
**SAMPATTI-DAŚĀ**  
(*Vastu-siddhi*)

**INHERITANCE**

(Permanent re-instatement in one's *svarūpa*)

By the mercy of Kṛṣṇa and His eternally liberated devotees, when a perfected devotee drops his material body, he enters *vraja-līlā* in his spiritual body. This is called *vastu-siddhi* and is the highest perfection.

Such perfection in chanting the Holy Name is also called *prāpana-daśā*.

**\* Primary Reference: Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, Śrī Caitanya Siksamṛta, 6<sup>th</sup> Rainfall, 4<sup>th</sup> Shower**

One can reach *āpana-daśā* either from *rāgānuga sādhana*, where scriptural rules are minimal, or through *vaidhī-sādhana*, 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-sādhana*, one then comes to the stage of *bhāva*, preliminary *prema*. It is at this point that one attains *āpana-daśā*. At this stage, which is beyond the category of *sādhana-bhakti*, scriptural rules will be discarded as troublesome to one's service, and conceptions of *rāgānuga* and *vaidhī* will both be discarded.

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 seriously taking the Name and becoming purified.

— Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, Śrī Harināma Cintāmani, Ch.15