



तव कथामृतं तप्तजीवनम्  
tava kathāmṛtaṁ tapta-jīvanam

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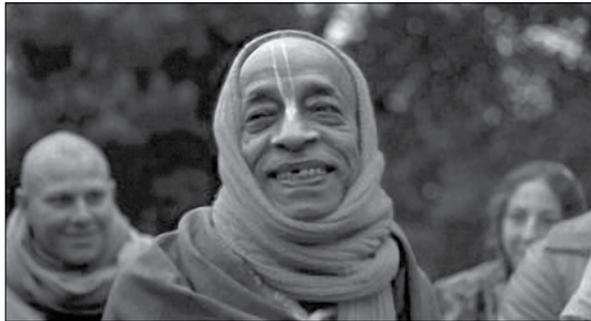
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## NOT SIMPLY BY ACADEMIC QUALIFICATIONS

His Divine Grace

A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

If anyone wants to understand the spiritual science of Krishna, then he should associate with the *satām*, those who are pure devotees. When discussions take place between pure devotees, then the potency of spiritual knowledge, as depicted in the scriptures and sacred books, becomes revealed. Discussions by armchair mental speculators on *Bhagavad-gītā* are useless, futile. Here it is stated that *satām prasāṅgān mama vīrya-saṁvido bhavanti hṛt-karṇa-rasāyanāḥ kathāḥ* [Śrīmad Bhāgavatam 3.25.25]. If it is discussed in the association of pure devotees, then the potency of that spiritual language will be revealed.

In the Vedic literature also, in *Śvetāśvatara-upaniṣad* (6.23), it is stated:

*yasya deve parā bhaktir yathā deve tathā gurau  
tasyaite kathitā hy arthāḥ prakāśante mahātmanaḥ*

It speaks about one who has firm faith in God and similar faith in God's representative. *Deve* means God.

*Gurau* means spiritual master. The spiritual master means a perfect devotee of God. All the import of the Vedic language will be revealed to him. We cannot understand the Vedas simply by academic qualification. We must have the qualification of becoming a devotee of the Supreme Lord, his representative the spiritual master, and saintly persons. This is recommended in all Vedic scriptures. (Lecture in New York on 30 December 1966.)

For those who are not in Krishna consciousness, their material academic qualification has no value, however great an M.A. or Ph.D. they may be. Why? Because they are materialists without Krishna consciousness. One who has no conception of God, Krishna, and one's proper relationship with him, one who does not know the science of God, is called a materialist. Materialist does not mean an extraordinary personality. One who does not know about Krishna is a materialist. And one who makes progress in the science of Krishna under regulation and principles is called a spiritualist. The disease of materialists is *harāv abhaktasya kuto mahad-guṇā mano-rathenāsati dhāvato bahiḥ* — "One who is not a devotee of the Lord is hovering on the mental plane." [Śrīmad Bhāgavatam 5.18.12]. Unless we take to Krishna consciousness fully we shall hover on the mental plane. We find so many doctors of philosophy who can go on speculating on the mental plane, but actually they are *asat*, useless. Their activities will be seen as materialistic. They have no spiritual realization. (Lecture in New York on 6 January 1966.)

**EIGHT PRAYERS  
TO KRISHNA'S NAMES – PART 1**

**Srila Rupa Goswami's Nāmāṣṭakam**

**With the Stava-mālā-bhūṣaṇa commentary  
of Srila Baladev Vidyabhushan**

Śrī-nāmāṣṭakam is a bouquet of eight verses offered by Srila Rupa Goswami in praise of the transcendental names of Lord Krishna. One special quality of these prayers is that Srila Rupa Goswami has composed each verse in a different meter. Meters in Sanskrit usually have feminine names, and thus he has surrounded Krishna's holy names with eight beautiful ladies in the form of eight beautiful meters, just as Krishna is surrounded by eight principal gopīs.

There is some question about the authorship of the Stava-mālā-bhūṣaṇa commentary. Some suggest that it was written by Srila Jiva Goswami and others say it was written by Srila Baladev Vidyabhushan. Haridas Das in his Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava Abhidhāna gives some reason why the confusion may have arisen. He says that Srila Jiva Goswami took many of the loose prayers of Srila Rupa Goswami and compiled them into the volume known as Stava-mālā, and that later Srila Baladev Vidyabhushan wrote the Stava-mālā-bhūṣaṇa commentary on the book. Moreover, the 1903 edition edited by Pandit Bhavadatta Shastri includes the following verse that makes it seem unlikely that the commentary was written by Sri Jiva:

vidyābhūṣaṇa-racite stava-mālā-bhūṣaṇe bhāṣye  
parituṣyatu vanamālī vara-ruci-śālī bataitasmin

May Lord Vanamali, full of exquisite splendor, become fully satisfied with this stava-mālā-bhūṣaṇa commentary composed by Vidyabhushan.

Before the prayers begin, the commentator has composed a verse in which he seems to describe the mood of the author prior to composing these eight prayers:

nāmābhāsenāpi te yogi-mrgyā  
muktiḥ syād ity āhur āmnāya-vācaḥ  
tvad-vyākhyāne mahyam iśa pradadyāḥ  
svasmin bhaktiṁ nādhikam tat-prayāce

Vedic statements declare that the liberation desired by yogis is available simply by chanting nāmābhāsa. However, O Lord! After glorifying you, I earnestly beg you to bestow upon me devotion unto you. I do not ask for anything more.

[Having thus pledged in his mind that he will glorify the Lord's name,] the author [Srila Rupa Goswami] now glorifies the names of Hari through these eight verses as follows:

**Verse 1:**

[Meter: *vasanta-mālikā* — a feminine name denoting a spring jasmine]

*nikhila-śruti-mauli-ratna-mālā-  
dyuti-nīrājita-pāda-pañcakānta  
ayi mukta-kulair upāsyamānam  
paritas tvām hari-nāma saṁśrayāmi*

O merciful Harinam! O Lord, the toenails of whose lotus feet are offered worship in the form of the Upanishads, which are like a jeweled necklace forming the crown of the Vedas! I take complete shelter of you, the Lord worshipable by hosts of liberated souls.

**Commentary:** O Harinam! I whole-heartedly take shelter of you.

[**Translator's Note:** The commentator will now explain the meaning of the large compound term — *nikhila-śruti-mauli-ratna-mālā-dyuti-nīrājita-pāda-pañcakānta*.]

The crown of all the Vedas are the Upanishads, which are like a necklace of jewels. By the brilliant illuminations of these jewels, the toes of the Lord's lotus-feet are offered worship.

[**Translator's Note:** But this large compound term seems to denote the Lord, not his holy names. How can this term be addressing his holy names? In reply to this, the commentator says the following:]

It is to be understood that the holy name has been addressed like this by considering that the name is non-different from the personality it denotes.

Some others give a different meaning of this compound term by quoting the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (11.17.5), *yatra mūrti-dharā kalāḥ* — “The Vedas reside in personified forms in the abode of Lord Brahma.” Based on this, the other meaning of the compound term can be, “O Lord, whose lotus feet are offered worship in the abode of Brahma by the lamp-like illuminations of the jewels on the crowns of the personified Vedas.”

This point has also been described in the *Kaṭha-upaniṣad* (1.2.15), *sarve vedā yat-padam āmananti* — “All the Vedas describe his feet.” This statement from the *Kaṭha-upaniṣad* means that all the Vedas describe the Lord to be the ultimate goal of human life.

“What is your nature, O Harinam?” In reply to this, the verse says that it is, *mukta-kulair upāsyamānam* — “Worshipable by hosts of liberated souls.” This is described in the *Taittirīya-upaniṣad* (3.10.6), *etat sāma gāyann āste* — “The liberated sings hymns dedicated to him.”



Painting by Kshitindranath Majumdar

Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's *prema-nāma-saṅkīrtana*

Also, the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (10.1.4) says, *nivṛttatarṣair upaḡīyamānāt* — “The holy name is sung by those who are free from the thirst of sense-gratification.” Elsewhere, the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (2.1.11) describes:

*etan nirvidyamānānām icchatām akuto-bhayam  
yoginām nṛpa nirṇītaṁ harer nāmānukīrtanam*

O king, constant chanting of the holy name of the Lord after the ways of the great authorities is the doubtless and fearless way of success for all, including those who are free from all material desires, those who are desirous of all material enjoyment, and also those who are self-satisfied by dint of transcendental knowledge.

The term “*yoginām*” in this verse means, “Liberated souls engaged in your *bhakti-yoga*.”

In this way, both the *Upaniṣads* and the *Purāṇas* describe the fact that the liberated sing the holy names of Krishna.

[**Translator’s Note:** The commentary on verse one ends here. The commentator introduces verse two by posing a possible question spoken by Sri Harinam.]

“How can I give shelter to a person such as you who is habituated to sin?” In reply to this, the author speaks the next verse as follows:

#### Verse 2:

[Meter: *Mañju-bhāṣiṇī* — A feminine name denoting a sweet-speaking lady]

*jaya nāma-dheya muni-vṛnda-geya he  
jana-rañjanāya paramakṣarākṛte  
tvam anādarād api manāg udīritam  
nikhilogra-tāpa-ṣaṭalīṁ vilumpasi*

O respectable holy name worthy of being sung by hosts of great sages! All glories to you, for you have taken on the transcendental form of these wonderful syllables in order to please the devotees and ordinary men alike! Even if you are uttered once with disrespect you destroy all the distresses of a living entity.

**Commentary:** By the author saying, “O respectable holy name! O name worthy of being sung by hosts of great sages! O holy name, all glories to you! Kindly exhibit your superior characteristic of burning heaps of sinful activities to ashes.”

Even if you are only uttered a little, without respect, indirectly to indicate something else, or spoken in jest, you completely destroy all distresses as well as the seeds of future distresses stored within the subtle body.

We hear the same principle being reaffirmed in the various *smṛtis* as follows, *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (6.2.14):

*sāṅketyaṁ pārihāsyam vā stobham helanam eva vā  
vaikuṅṭha-nāma-grahaṇam aśeṣāgha-haram viduḥ*

One who chants the holy name of the Lord is immediately freed from the reactions of unlimited sins, even if he chants indirectly [to indicate something else], jokingly, for musical entertainment, or even neglectfully. This is accepted by all the learned scholars of the scriptures.

Śrī Nārāyaṇa-vyūha-stava [quoted in *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa* 11.393]:

*parihāsopahāsādyair viṣṇor nāma gr̥ṇanti ye  
kṛtārthas te 'pi manujās tebhyo 'piha namo namaḥ*

They who jokingly, mockingly, or in any other way chant the holy names of Lord Vishnu are all-perfect in this world. I offer repeated obeisances to such individuals.

Kāśī-khaṇḍa [quoted in *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa* 11.324]:

*pramādād api saṁspr̥ṣṭo yathānala-kaṇo dahet  
tathauṣṭha-pūta-saṁspr̥ṣṭaṁ hari-nāma dahed agham*

Even if touched only by mistake, a spark still burns. In the same way, when it touches the lips the holy name of Lord Hari burns all sins.

By speaking about the sin-cleansing powers of the holy name, the author indicates, “O Harinam! Remembering your potency to cleanse sins, please purify me. I am a preacher of your glories.”

By addressing *hari-nāma* as *jana-rañjanāya paramakṣarākṛte* — one who has taken on the

transcendental form of these wonderful syllables in order to please the devotees and ordinary men alike — the author wishes to suggest the merciful nature of the holy name.

[**Translator’s Note:** Now the commentator gives some grammar-related clarification for the term, *paramakṣarākṛte*. See also the endnote.]

The *śrūtis* specify the transcendental nature of Sri Harinam as follows (*R̥g-veda* 1.156.3):

*āśya jānanto nāma cid vivaktana  
mahas te viṣṇo sumatim bhajāmahe*

Knowing the glories of the transcendental name, please describe them. O Lord Vishnu! May we all attain good intelligence dedicated to you!

The *Skanda Purāṇa* also specifies the transcendental nature of the holy name as follows, *sakala-nigama-vallī-sat-phalaṁ cit-svarūpam* — “The holy name has a transcendental form and is the true fruit growing on the creeper of all the Vedas.”

In other words, just as Krishna — the *nāmī*, the entity denoted by the holy name — has bodily forms such as Hamsa, Varaha, etc., similarly, the holy name also has forms of various transcendental alphabets. [To be continued.] 🕉

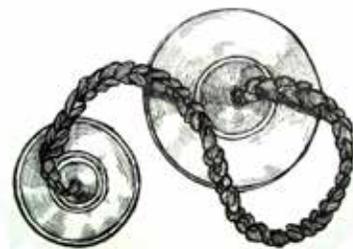
### Endnote

The term ‘*paramakṣarākṛte*’ is formed by combining the terms *parama* and *akṣarākṛte*. According to standard grammar rules, it should have resulted in the form — *paramākṣarākṛte* (with the elongated ‘ā’ at the point of combination). However, due to a special exceptional rule named — *śakandhvādiṣu para-rūpaṁ vācyam* (*Vārttika* on *Pāṇini* 1.1.64), the resultant form is *paramakṣarākṛte* (with the small ‘a’).

Translated by Hari Parshad Das from the following sources:

— *Stava-mālā* of Sri Rupa Goswami. Edited by Pandit Bhavadatta Shastri and Kasinath Pandurang Parab. Published and Printed by Tukaram Jawaji at the Nirṇaya Sagar Press. Bombay (Mumbai). 1903 A.D.

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