

THE MARKET PLACE OF THE HOLY NAME

INTRODUCTION

As a transcendental mercantilist, Nityānanda Prabhu established a market place where one can purchase everything one needs for one's spiritual life – the market place of the holy name. The transcendental currency of this market place is spiritual qualification. With different degrees of spiritual qualification one can purchase different degrees of revelations of the holy name. In order to increase one's purchasing power, in other words one's spiritual qualification, one can work on one's capacity in chanting.

This Amṛta Vāṇī series “The Market Place of the Holy Name” reviews what we worked on in our retreat - five main messages and six practices that will increase our qualification to purchase higher levels of revelation if we apply them.

Each Amṛta Vāṇī in this series has two parts, one devoted to discoveries and the other one to a practice. Here is a short overview of the contents discussed in each Amṛta Vāṇī:

	Discoveries	Practice
➤ Amṛta Vāṇī 1	<i>the power of faith</i>	<i>silence</i>
Amṛta Vāṇī 2	<i>all things will be revealed through chanting</i>	<i>controlling the mind</i>
Amṛta Vāṇī 3	<i>the name has the same effects as the form</i>	<i>purity</i>
Amṛta Vāṇī 4	<i>the fuel for spiritual life: mercy</i>	<i>contemplating the meaning of the mantra</i>
Amṛta Vāṇī 5	<i>chanting with feelings of separation</i>	<i>patience</i>
Amṛta Vāṇī 6		<i>steadfastness</i>

DISCOVERIES

THE POWER OF FAITH

Why do we not relish chanting? It is because our senses cannot grasp transcendental objects. For us, spiritual life is intangible. We are like a blind person walking through a flower garden. There is only one remedy for this situation: to develop transcendental perception.

The first step in this process is to invest faith into one's spiritual practices. Just like a blind person can go anywhere if he or she invests faith into his or her guide, we can progress on our path if we invest faith into our guides. Invest your faith into what the scriptures and ācāryas teach about the holy name – only when you fully trust that Kṛṣṇa and his name are identical, then you will be able to feel that you are associating with him when you chant.

There is a mystery in the procedure of faith investment. By the mercy of Lord Nityānanda the customer is reimbursed



his original payment multiplied by an unlimited sum. This would be like buying something, let us say a laptop for \$480, and then noticing that by the influence of the salesman the money in your wallet has multiplied! By investing a little faith, your faith will increase and you will attain immense spiritual results. However, do make sure that your intentions are pure and selfless; otherwise your faith will not be the transcendental faith you need to attain the real name.

Chanting with faith will uncover your spiritual sense perception and give you the taste for the holy name.

SIDEBAR

In his song *Boro Sukher Khabor Gāi*, Śrīla Bhaktivinode Ṭhākura gives some beautiful advice on how to chant:

- Approach the holy name as the servant of the Pañca-tattva.
- Develop the qualities of humility and compassion.
- Connect with Kṛṣṇa – become aware of the person whose names you chant. This will enable you to chant with genuine emotion.

—❖❖❖❖❖❖❖❖ PRACTICE ❖❖❖❖❖❖❖❖—

THE SIX STEPS TO PERFECT ONE'S CHANTING

In his *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa* (17.129) Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī offers six steps to help perfect one's chanting. They are:

*manah-samharaṇamśaucam
maunam mantrārtha-cintanam
avyagravam anirvedo
japa-sampatti-hetavaḥ*

In order to perfect one's *japa*, one needs to cultivate the following qualities:

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| 1. <i>manah-samharaṇam</i> | mind control |
| 2. <i>śauca</i> | internal and external purity |
| 3. <i>mauna</i> | the practice of silence |
| 4. <i>mantra-artha-cintana</i> | contemplating the meaning of the mantra |
| 5. <i>a-vyagravā</i> | patience |
| 6. <i>a-nirveda</i> | steadfastness |

Let us start with *mauna* – the practice of silence.



STEP ONE: SILENCE

Śrīla Prabhupāda gives us a very instructive definition of *mauna*.

“Mauna means ‘silence.’ [...] Mauna necessitates refraining from nonsensical talking, and engaging the talking facility in the pastimes of the Lord. In that way one can chant and hear about the Lord in order to perfect his life.”

(Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 3.24.42, purport)

In other words *mauna* means to become materially silent and only vibrate that spiritual sound vibration. In relation to chanting, *mauna* particularly means to be silent during one's practice. One should not only not speak, but also observe inner silence. While chanting the mantra, one should calm the mind and stop its endless inner chatter. No other vibration (inner and outer) should be heard except the holy name.

In this way one will become totally receptive to the sound of the holy name.

Mauna also means to not interrupt one's *japa*. Finish your round(s) – then talk!

However, there is another dimension of *mauna*. To practice silence for extended periods of time – outside the immediate practice of chanting. If one becomes hesitant to engage in unnecessary or harmful talk outside of one's practice, one can observe how one's life becomes positively changed. The uncontrolled tongue has a negative influence on one's life. For example one could start to practice silence from material sound vibration in the morning until breakfast time. Only chant mantras, prayers and read! That is a good practice to have in order to purify one's mind. During *japa*-retreats we often become silent for a whole day. For many participants this is usually the best day out of the whole week.