



Amṛta Vāṇī 1 *The Journey of Faith*

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## 3) INATTENTION IS THE ROOT OF ALL OTHER OFFENCES

Chanting with *sambandha-jñāna* is closely connected to chanting with attention. Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura says, “Even if one successfully overcomes all the other offenses in chanting, and one is chanting continuously, love of God may not come. One should know that the reason for this is that one is committing the offense known as *pramada*, or *inattention*.” (*Hari-nāma-cintāmaṇi*, chapter 12) It is difficult to avoid all ten offences, but easier to focus on the root of the other offences: inattention.

As practitioners of chanting the holy names we all know how difficult it is to connect the mind with the holy name because by definition, the mind is only able to grasp material things. The mind has great difficulty to stay with Kṛṣṇa because essentially we have turned away from Kṛṣṇa and for a long time become absorbed in everything else. Thus, our inability to focus on Kṛṣṇa especially manifests when we try to chant. Without overcoming our alienation from Kṛṣṇa we will never learn to chant Hare Kṛṣṇa. You have to love Kṛṣṇa in order to love the holy name, you have to turn back to him and chant with a sense of a relationship – only then you will be able to concentrate.



### SIDEBAR: Three Types of Inattention

#### 1) *Audāsīnya* – apathy, indifference

Apathetic chanting is a lack of attraction for the holy name or no fixed resolve in *sādhana*.

**Remedies:** chanting in the association of Vaiṣṇavas, near Tulasi and/or at a holy place or shutting out external stimuli by chanting in a disturbance-free place.

#### 2) *Jāḍya* – laziness, drowsiness

Laziness or drowsiness expresses itself by a desire to take frequent rests during chanting or not caring to properly pronounce the names.

**Remedies:** becoming enthusiastic in the association of Vaiṣṇavas by observing their quality of never wasting time in material acts and being totally absorbed in the holy name.

#### 3) *Vikṣepa* – distraction

Distraction comes from being attracted to material enjoyments like the opposite sex, wealth, material success, position and cheating for personal gain. Distraction is the tendency to think of these sense objects during chanting.

**Remedies:** following proper Vaiṣṇava behavior and observing *ekādāśī* (fasting and joyfully engaging in *sādhana* in the association of devotees).

### EXERCISE: Chant from Your Three Hearts

This exercise is based on Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī’s *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* and helps to blow away the clouds and fog covering the holy name – in other words to chant offenselessly.

- 1) Remind yourself to whom your chanting is dedicated – Kṛṣṇa (you can include the devotees). You might tell him and your mind, “*This is for you, Kṛṣṇa.*”
- 2) Engage your body, mind and voice in the chanting to become totally absorbed.
- 3) Chant in a favorable mood of wanting to please Kṛṣṇa.