

|| ShriHari: ||

Chanting the Name of God

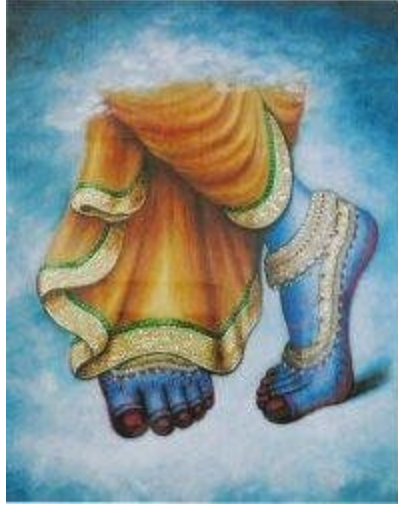


in the Gita

Swami Ramsukhdas

|| Shri Hari ||

[7] Chanting the name of God in the Gita (गीता में भगवद् नाम)



tvameva mata cha pita tvameva
tvameva bandhuscha sakha tvameva |
tvameva vidyaa dravinam tvameva
tvameva sarvam mama devadeva ||

Swami Ramsukhdas

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[7] Chanting the name of God in the Gita

(गीता में भगवद् नाम)

कृष्णेति नामानि च निःसरन्ति रात्रन्दिवं वै प्रतिरोमकूपात् ।

यस्यार्जुनस्य प्रति तं सुगीतगीते न नाम्नो महिमा भवेत्किम् ॥

*Krishneti Naamaani Cha NiHsaranti Raatrandivam Vai Pratiromakupaat
Yasya Arjunasya Prati Tam Sugitagite Na Namno Mahima Bhavet Kim*

Both God and His name are one and the same. So remembrance of the two is equally important. The name of God can be chanted in three ways.

(1) **By mind** : This sort of chanting has been mentioned when Lord Krishna in the Gita declares, “Who constantly remembers Me” (8/14); ‘यो मां स्मरति नित्यशः’ (८ । १४)

(2) **By speech**: The Divine name is constantly uttered, which has been mentioned by the expression, “Among sacrifices I am the sacrifice in the form of the reception of My Divine Name (Japa)” (10/25) ‘यज्ञानां जपयज्ञोऽस्मि’ (१० । २५)

(3) **By throat**: The Divine Name is chanted loudly, which has been described by the term ‘Satatam Kirtayanto Mam’ (always chanting My name loudly) (9/14) ‘कीर्तयन्तः’ (९ । १४)

In the Gita ‘Om, Tat, Sat’ these three are the names of the Absolute. ‘Om, Tat, Sat’ has been declared to be the triple designation of the Absolute (17/23). ‘ॐ तत्सदिति निर्देशो ब्रह्मणस्त्रिविधः स्मृतः’ (१७ । २३) Lord Krishna calls Himself sacred syllable Om – “I am the sacred syllable Om in all Vedas” (7/8), ‘प्रणवः सर्ववेदेषु’ (७ । ८), “Among words, I am the monosyllable Om” (10/25) ‘गिरामस्म्येकमक्षरम्’ (१० । २५). The Lord also declares, “He who departs leaving the body uttering the one syllable Om thinking of Me attains the Supreme goal” (8/13) (*paramgati*).

Arjuna while eulogizing the Lord's Cosmic Form has sung the glory of the Divine Name – “Some of the Gods with joined palms out of fear are uttering your names (11/21). O Lord, by chanting your name etc. the entire world is delighted and filled with love, the demons are fleeing in all directions and the hosts of enlightened souls are bowing to you – it is proper (11/36).

SOMETHING WORTH KNOWING

During sound sleep, all the senses merge in the mind, the mind merges in the intellect and the intellect merges in 'I' and 'I' merges in the ignorance viz in sound sleep the sense of 'I' is lost. But as soon as a man wakes up from his sleep, first of all he realises 'I' ness and later on place, time and condition etc. But if someone calls him while he is in sound sleep, he wakes up. It means that the sound (word) reaches the man when he is soundly asleep and his sense of 'I' is merged in ignorance. It means that the word (sound) has power behind thought, which piercing ignorance reaches 'I'. As a man merged in ignorance from times immemorial and deluded in the world like an unconscious person, comes to realise the self after hearing the word from the lips of his preceptor, so does the chanting of the Divine-name conduce a devotee to realise the self and to have a vision of God.

If a person listens to the gospel preached by an enlightened (liberated) soul with reverence, his conduct and feelings are changed, his ignorance is destroyed and he realises the Self. But the persons who use the words full of falsehood, bitterness, calumny, contempt and useless babble etc. do not affect others. It is because their bad conduct reduces the power of their words to nothing. Similarly, an orator has also four defects – भ्रम (Bhrama = lack of knowledge), प्रमाद (Pramada = heedless-ness), लिप्सा (Lipsa = greed) and

करणापाटव (Karanaapaatava = lack of skill in speech). If the speaker does not know the subject thoroughly it is known as भ्रम (Bhrama). If he speaks with careless-ness without keeping in mind the standard of the audience, this defect is known as प्रमाद (Pramada). If he speaks in order to gain honour, riches, name and fame etc. then it is called as लिप्सा (Lipsa). If he does not have the skill to express his views and to make them clear so that the people may understand them, this is known as करणापाटव (Karanaapaatava). It is because of these four defects that an orator can not impress the audience. Similarly the listeners can gain knowledge from the orator only if they have faith, reverence, curiosity, promptness and self control etc. So if both of them – the orator and the listener are free from the above mentioned defects and possess the above mentioned qualities then and then only the speech of the orator leaves an impression on the listeners. But as far as the name of God is concerned, its utterance in every way leads to bliss. It is also mentioned in the Rama-charita-manasa.

भाय कुभाय अनख आलसहूँ ।

नाम जपत मंगल दिसि दसहूँ ॥

(मानस १ । २८ । १)

The utterance of the name of God with devotion, with evil motive, with anger or with laziness leads to bliss everywhere (Manasa 1/28/1).

It is also declared in the Shrimad Bhagavatam :-

साङ्केत्यं परिहास्यं वा स्तोभं हेलनमेव वा ।

वैकुण्ठनामग्रहणमशेषाघहरं विदुः ॥

(श्रीमद्भागवत ६ । २ । ९४)

“The utterance of the name of God even with disrespect, with gesture, with joke or in any other way destroys sins” (Shrimad Bhagavatam 6/2/94).

The Lord Himself declares that the name of those, who with regard or disregard utter His name, resides in His heart.

श्रद्धया हेलया नाम रटन्ति मम जन्तवः ।

तेषां नाम सदा पार्थ वर्तते हृदये मम ॥

Question – A man cannot relish a sweet dish just by uttering the expression ‘sweet dish’. Similarly what is the use of uttering the Divine name?

Answer – It is indeed very useful to utter the Divine name because both God and His name are one and the same. He resides in His name and His name resides in Him. As far as the name (expression) ‘sweet-dish’ is concerned, it is different from the real sweet dish. So it cannot be relished by uttering its name. Similarly riches cannot be acquired just by naming the rich man or riches. Therefore, the utterance of the name of God leads to God. Realisation, He has to reveal Himself if His name is uttered.

Questioner - Doubt – How can the mere utterance of the name of God lead to perfection?

Answer – Any utterance (word) has power beyond thought. But as far as the utterance of God's name is concerned, it has a special power to connect the person with God. The utterance of God's name in every way leads to bliss. "But those who utter the name with reverence cross the mundane ocean very easily" (Manasa 1/119/2).

सादर सुमिरन जे नर करही ।

भव बारिधि गोपद इव तरहीं ॥

(मानस १ । १११ । २)

Utterance of the name of God even without devotion is useful. The constant repetition of the Divine Name reveals devotion because it remains concealed in its subtle form in every one.

The repetition of God's name is not an action, but it is worship to God because the devotee who utters His name remains connected with God and his aim is God – Realisation. The actions performed in order to reap their fruit are destroyed after bearing fruit. But the actions which are performed without expecting any reward lead to salvation. Similarly when a devotee repeats the Divine Name having the aim of God – Realisation becomes divine and it does not remain merely an action. Not only this but this divinity descends in the devotee also who utters the name and his body also becomes divine. Saint Tukarama went to the abode of God with his body, Meerabai's body merged in the idol of Lord Krishna. Saint Kabir's body disappeared and only flowers were seen there. Saint Chokhamela's bones produced the sound 'Vitthala', which was heard by people.

Question – How far is the glory of the utterance of the Divine Name, sung by the scriptures and saints, true?

Answer – The glory of the utterance of the Divine Name sung by the scriptures and saints is completely true. Moreover this glory yet remains to be sung because it is limitless (Manasa 1/140/3).

–‘हरि अनंत हरि कथा अनंता’ (मानस १ । १४० । ३)

Even Lord Rama cannot sing the glory of His name (Manasa 1/26/4).

–‘रामु न सकहिं नाम गुन गाई’ (१ । २६ । ४)

Question – What is the reason that the glory of constant repetition of God’s name is not seen in those devotees who utter His name?

Answer – The name which is uttered without accepting its glory is dishonoured and so it does not bear the expected divine fruit. Its glory cannot be perceived quickly if the Divine name is uttered without concentrating the mind, without attaching importance to it, without meditation on the Favourite-Deity and such other defects. If the Divine-Name is constantly repeated, all these defects by the grace of the Divine-Name will come to an end and a devotee will start having faith and belief in the power of the name.

If the Divine-Name is uttered with exclusive devotion and constantly, a

devotee is certainly benefited because God and His name both are divine. In Rajasthan, there was a saint named Budha Ram. He constantly uttered the Divine-Name without wasting any time. First he had the solid diet. But sometime was wasted in having it. So he began to have only the liquid diet so that the time could be saved for the repetition of the Divine-Name. Utterance of the Divine-Name with such an assiduity and devotion proves really useful.

Question – If the utterance of the Divine-Name with faith and belief proves useful, it means that it is the glory of faith and belief. How is it the glory of the name?

Answer – As a person cannot derive benefit from a king, a scholar, a saint and even an incarnation of God without knowing them and without accepting their positions, so does the person without faith and belief in the Divine-Name remain deprived of the benefit of the utterance of the Divine-Name.

The Divine-Name has immense power and that power neither increases with faith and belief nor decreases without faith and belief but the devotee having faith and belief in the Divine-Name derives benefit out of it while one without faith and belief is deprived of this benefit. Secondly he commits a crime against the Divine-Name without having faith and belief in it without which he cannot derive the due benefit.

Question – Fire burns a person's hand if he touches it without having faith and belief in its power, then why is the glory of the utterance of the name of God not revealed immediately?

Answer – Fire is something physical (mundane) and it burns physical objects, while the name of God is divine. The more devotion a man develops to it by constant repetition of the name, the more glory of the Divine-Name is revealed to him and then he perceives the glory and power of the utterance of the name in due course of time.

Question – Does a man get rid of all sins by uttering the Divine-Name once?

Answer – When a person in great distress (adversity) utters God's name even once from the core of his heart, all his sins perish. At the time of his death, when he finds himself utterly helpless, the utterance of God's name once destroys all the sins. When the big elephant was being pulled by the alligator and he found no saviour to save him from the clutches of death, he uttered the name of God only once hopelessly. At that very moment God appeared and released him from the clutches of the alligator.

He who has firm faith and belief in God and is exclusively devoted to Him attains salvation by reciting his name only once.

Question – Why should a person repeat His name time and again when all the sins are destroyed by the mere utterance of His name only once?

Answer – When a person repeats His name again and again, then and then only he can utter His name piously once. For starting the engine of a

motor car the driver turns the handle bar again and again till the engine starts functioning. It may start in any attempt, the fifth or the tenth or so on. In the same way a devotee should go on repeating the Divine-Name because his purpose may be served any time.

Question – Will the person, who utters the Divine-Name, while performing forbidden actions, attain salvation?

Answer – He will attain salvation in the course of time because utterance of name never goes in vain. But he will not perceive quick outcome. In fact forbidden actions are performed by him whose only aim is not God-Realisation. As a businessman who wants to earn money performs such activities by which he may earn money without sustaining any loss so does a devotee by uttering the Divine-Name perform only such actions which are conducive to God-Realisation.

A striver having the only aim of God-Realisation should go on uttering the name of God. By doing so, no forbidden action will be performed by him. If it is sometimes performed then he will feel sorry for it and then it will never be performed.

Question – What should a sinner do if he cannot utter the name of God due to his excessive sins?

Answer – It is a fact that such a sinner cannot utter the Divine-Name. Such a person has no faith in either devotees or devotion or food offered to God or the Divine-Name.

A patient suffering from bilious fever, tastes sugar-candy bitter. But if he goes on eating sugar-candy, he is cured of his bilious fever and then the sugar-candy tastes sweet. Similarly, the sinner should go on repeating the name. By doing so his sins will perish and then he will relish the utterance of the Divine-Name, which will lead him to the goal of life.

Question – How can a person utter the Divine-Name if it is not decided by his fate?

Answer – Fate is the fruit for actions performed in the past. But a man is free in performing new actions. The business or farming done in the past may result in profit or loss. Some religious ceremony performed with a motive may cure a person of his disease. So profit or loss, birth or death, honour or dishonour etc. are the rewards of the past deeds. Utterance of the Divine-Name is a new activity, which can be performed by everyone. Fate is no obstacle to it. If a person practiced the recitation of the name in the past, he will relish it easily. But he who has never uttered it may not feel interested in it quickly. But if any experienced guide explains the glory of the constant utterance of the Divine-Name, even a novice will be quickly interested in it. So a person should start the utterance without making any excuses. Those who say that the utterance of the name of God, listening to discourses of enlightened souls and performance of virtuous deeds have not been destined for them, make mere lame excuses. Such excuses are harmful to spiritual progress.

Question – Can utterance of the Divine-Name change one's fate?

Answer – Yes, the utterance and chanting of the Divine-Name can change one's fate. He gains what he was not going to gain and even impossibilities turn into possibilities for him – this is the experience of great souls. It is God, who decides the fate of a man according to his past deeds. So he can change the fate of the person who utters His name and calls Him. Even if beggars are engaged in uttering His name, they will not suffer any kind of shortage but they will be provided with heaps of eatables and clothes. But the Divine-Name should not be used in changing the fate or in destroying sins. It is not a wise act; it is just like exchanging coal for precious jewels.

Question – Why are there rules prescribed in the scriptures for expiation in order to be free from sins when all the sins are destroyed by uttering the Divine-Name.

Answer – Utterance of God's name is expiation for all the known and unknown sins, and all the sins are destroyed by this means. But there are rules prescribed in the scriptures for expiation to be free from sins because people have no faith and belief in the Divine-Name. If a person has faith and belief in the utterance of the Divine-Name, he is freed from all sins and there is no need for him for any other expiation. Prompt utterance of the Divine-Name sets everything right.

Question – If anyone utters the Divine-Name with some selfish motive (in order to reap its fruit) will it perish after bearing fruit?

Answer – Though it is not wise to spend the Divine-Name in order to

satisfy petty mundane desires, yet if the Divine-Name is uttered to reap its fruit, it does not lose its glory. He who utters the name will be certainly beneficial spiritually because God's name is directly connected with him. But the benefit will be less because he has slighted the name by spending it in satisfying the mundane desires. If he continues to be engaged in chanting the name promptly by depending on it, by the Divine-Name's grace, his desire for fruit will be destroyed. As Dhruva had a constant repetition of the Divine-Name in order to gain kingdom, but when he had a vision of God, he was not pleased with the kingdom and rank. He was rather sad by thinking why he had desired to gain kingdom and the rank. Thus, desire for reaping the fruit was destroyed.

Those who chant the name of God to reap some mundane fruit, by the Divine-Name's grace can recollect it at the time of death and so it can lead them to salvation.

Question – The saints and the scriptures mention that a certain number of the utterance of the Divine-Name leads a man to God's vision. Is it true?

Answer – Ye, the repetition of the sacred formula:-

हरे रामा, हरे रामा, रामा रामा, हरे हरे।
हरे कृष्णा, हरे कृष्णा, कृष्णा कृष्णा, हरे हरे॥

*Hare Raama, Hare Raama, Raama Raama hare hare ।
Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna Hare Hare ॥*

thirty five million times leads a man to God's vision. It has been mentioned in the 'Kali Samtaranopanishad'. Saint Samartha Ramadasa mentions in the 'Dasabodha' that one can have a vision of God by chanting the name 'Rama' thirteen crore times (one hundred and thirty million times). But if the name is chanted with belief and faith having hearty devotion one can have vision of God even before the completion of the above mentioned number.

Question – In the Kali age it is difficult to follow either the path of action or devotion or knowledge, so the only support is the name of God. (Manasa 1/27/4) What does it mean?

Answer – In the Kali age, the performance of virtuous actions such as religious sacrifice etc. in their entire form is difficult. There are only a few persons who know all the rules and regulations for their performance and moreover the stuff such as pure cow ghee (clarified butter) is not easily available. If they are not performed properly, the doer incurs sin.

वैधि भक्ति (Vaidhi Bhakti i.e. ritual devotion) is performed by the following certain rules and regulations in order to worship one's Favourite-Deity. Their knowers are very rare. Therefore, the ritual devotion is difficult to follow in this Kali age.

As far as the path of knowledge is concerned, it is very difficult to follow it in the Kali age and the experienced persons of this field are rare.

Thus all the three paths are difficult to follow. But everyone, a child or a man or a woman, healthy or unhealthy can utter the Divine-Name every time, everywhere and in every circumstance because in its chanting there are no hard and fast rules.

Utterance of the Divine-Name is an invocation, a call in which one's distress rather than rules pre-dominates. So everyone can invoke Him by calling His name when he is in distress.

Question – It is said that there is no use of chanting the Divine-Name if mind is not concentrated. It is not real recollection. How far is it true?

Answer – It is true that without concentrating the mind there cannot be recollection. But it does not mean that the name is not uttered. The utterance of the Divine-Name never goes in vain. So a striver should go on chanting the name of the God whether the mind is concentrated or not. By constant repetition of the Divine-Name the mind will also be concentrated in due course.

Question – It is mentioned in the scriptures that the Divine-Name should not be recited to those who have no faith in it. It is a crime against the Divine-Name. But the Saint such as Gauranga Mahaprabhu etc. recited the name even to those who had no faith in it, why?

Answer – The name should not be recited to the person, who does not want to listen to it, who does not want to utter it and who slights it; this is the ordinance of the scriptures. But the saints out of mercy recite it even to such type of persons because in their mercy the law of prescription and prohibition

is not applicable. The law is applicable to the performance of action while mercy transcends the ken of actions. Mercy is shown without any reason. As a God-Realised soul offers anything to a man by his own power, it is not the fruit of his past deeds, it is only out of the God-Realised saint's mercy. Similarly saints such as Gauranga Mahaprabhu etc. recited the Divine-Name to the wicked and sinful persons out of mercy.

Question – If the Divine-Name is recited to birds and beasts etc. when they are going to die, will it lead them to salvation?

Answer – Birds and beasts etc. do not understand the glory and influence of the Divine-Name nor do they oppose it. They neither blame it nor slight it nor hate it. Therefore, if the Divine-Name is recited to them, it will lead them to salvation.

Question – If a man at his death-bed calls his son etc. by his name 'Narayana, Vasudev etc., why does God accept it as the utterance of His own name?

Answer – God is very merciful. He has granted this special concession to a human being that if he utters His name or thinks of Him at the time of death in any way, he will attain salvation. This human body has been bestowed upon him only to attain salvation and he has accepted it. So if he attains salvation, God's purpose of bestowing upon him this human body and man's purpose of accepting it – both are served. But if he does not attain salvation during his lifetime, God affords him the final opportunity at the time of his death that somehow he should chant His name or think of Him so that

he may attain salvation. At the moment of death when Ajamila, seeing the messengers of the god of death in dreadful form, called his son 'Narayana' and God accepted it as His own name and sent his four courtiers to Ajamila and thus he attained salvation.

Thus we conclude that every human being during the performance of different activities such as eating / drinking, asleep / awake, movement / rest etc. should chant the Divine-Name all the time, day and night.

Narayana ! Narayana !! Narayana !!!

From book in Hindi "Gita Darpan" By Swami Ramsukhdasji

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Oct, 2016 - **गीतामें भगवन्नाम**



A Note to the Reader

The special quality of the original is difficult to capture in a translation. Readers are earnestly requested, that if they have the knowledge of the Hindi language, to read the original book in Hindi.

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ENGLISH: www.swamiramsukhdasji.net

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