

13. Auspiciousness (Sivam), Not Corpse (Savam)

Handikota Subrahmanya Sastry read and offered what he called a Garland of Nine Poetic Gems (a *Navarathna Haram*). Though I do not accept garlands, I certainly accept the devotion that gives fragrance to the garland. He said that the *Vedas* are for the glorification of the Gods, that in the *Kali Yuga* (the age we are in), one is asked to rely more on repeated remembrance of God (*namasmarana*) for liberation. Why is it considered enough for the people of this age? Well, other spiritual practices are fraught with difficulties. They need rigorous discipline and much preliminary effort. Again, there is another advantage in *namasmarana*: as soon as the Name is uttered, the owner of the Name comes into view. When you think of the Form, the Name may not always accompany; you may not be able to identify it. There may be more than one name, and you may be confused. But take the Name and the Form automatically appears before the mental eye.

In Bharath (India), the discipline to remove attachment to the senses and to curb the mind from running after fleeting pleasures has been clearly laid down for ages, and we have the experiences of many saints recorded in the sacred literature of this land. All the activities of thought, word, and deed are sublimated to this higher purpose. A person is auspicious (*sivam*), not a corpse (*savam*); the person has three eyes, which are derived from the sun, moon, and Agni.

Where the Lord's Name is sung, there He sits

The Agni eye is the internal eye, which can be opened by the discipline of the yoga. The three-eyed Siva can see the past, present, and future. You can recall the picture of boy of ten whom you have seen as he was when you saw him, but you can't see him as he is now or as he will be ten years hence. But if you earn the three eyes (*thri-nethra*), capable of seeing the past, present, and future, you can see all three. You become master of time and space.

The Name is enough to give you all the results of every type of spiritual effort. This is accepted by all the scriptures (*sastras*) and all the spiritual aspirants who have left accounts of their struggle and success. Moreover, the Name is capable of being recited and meditated upon by all, equally. Of course, the Name is a limitation of the Universal; it identifies the unidentifiable through one of its aspects. Take the disguise as a means of saving yourself; take it as a boat that will take you across the sea of birth and death.

When you repeat the Name, all the sweetness of the Form and its associated glory must come to memory and, just as your mouth waters when you remember some sweet dish you relish, your mind must “water” when you contemplate it. Choose the Name that captivates your heart. Why run after riches when all the pleasure and satisfaction that riches can offer—and even a hundred-fold—can be got by dwelling on the Name? The Lord has said that where His Name is sung, “There I sit.” He establishes Himself there! He will not move from that place. So, the tongue is enough to win Him, the tongue that speaks the language of the pure mind.

The Lord is a Wish-fulfilling Tree (*Kalpavriksha*). You have to approach Him and develop attachment to Him. You must win His grace and be ever near Him, keeping back all the forces that draw you away from Him. Even if you commit some technical faults in singing about Him or in worshipping Him, it does not matter. Intense devotion makes every error excusable. Nectar, though poured into a brass cup, will not lose its savour or taste. Poison, even if is poured into a cup of gold set with gems, will not lose its death-dealing property.

The Name persuades the Form to bend and bless

Devotion will force the Lord to give you Himself as the gift. The coronation ceremony of Sri Ramachandra (Rama) and the celebrations were all over, and the presentation of gifts to all important people was over. Then, Sita remembered that Maruti (a name for Hanuman, meaning son of Marut) had been forgotten. Only Rama, Sita, and Maruti were in the hall. Rama wondered what to give him: He suggested to Sita that the gemset ring that Janaka gave him on the occasion of the marriage would be the best gift, because, as He said. “Your father gave this to me on the day he gave you to me; Maruti gave you to me a second time. So I shall give him this.”

Maruti did not seem quite happy when the ring was placed in his hand. Evidently, he did not appreciate the gift because it was not given in full sight of all; when all were given, he was neglected! But Maruti placed it near his ear as if he sought to know what sound emanated from it: he bit it with his teeth and tried to peer into its structure.

Rama asked him why, and Sita was also anxious to know. Maruti said, “I am finding out whether it has the repetition of “Rama” (*Ramanama*), which I want to the exclusion of everything else.”

Then Rama embraced him and said, “Maruti! What other gift can I give you? I shall give you Myself as the gift. Accept Me!” So that is why he was neglected at the time everyone else was awarded gifts! That is why wherever Maruti is, there Rama is bound to be —wherever Rama is, there Maruti is invariably present. The Name is so valuable for the devotee. It persuades the Form to bend and bless.

The Name that pleases you is best for you

Just consider this: the form changes from age to age, from one appearance to another. Rama and Krishna were different in form; even their deeds were distinct. But still, people agree when you say that they are identical. But tell them that Rama held the Govardana mountain aloft, and they will not accept it.

The Name has the association of all the special fragrance of the divine play (*leela*), the power, and the spiritual instruction. Each person has a special attachment to one Name out of many, suited to the temperament and inherited instincts and tendencies shaped in previous births.

Meera loved the Name *Giridhari* (mountain-holder). That *leela* appealed to her as the most significant, as the most symbolic of the Lord’s glory. The name that pleases you, that arouses the sweetest and the purest love, is best for you. “The thing that pleases is Rama (*Ramayathi* is Rama).” “The thing that destroys illusion (*maya*) is Hara or Hari (*Harathi* is Hara).”

Keep the Name lit on the tongue

Surdas was overwhelmed with grief when the lovely little body who held his stick and led him along the road to Brindavan suddenly left him with the announcement that his name was Krishna! He ran about with both hands extended to catch Him and keep Him in his embrace, but Krishna had disappeared. Then, Surdas shouted, “You may run away from my clasp, but I have you in my heart. You can never run away from there.” Prahlada was also like that. He had no other thought; he saw nothing else. Elephant, snake, poison, fire —all were for him were the Divine Principle (*Narayana-thathwa*) itself. How then could they harm him?

The Name is the Narasimha for the Hiranyakasipu of the mind (the man-lion *Avatar*, Narasimha, slew the evil Hiranyakasipu). The passionate (*rajasic*) and ignorant (*thamasic*) forces besieging your heart are bent on your

downfall. Just as they give calcium and vitamin tablets to cure anaemia, etc., take Repetition-of-the-Name tablets to get rid of mental anaemia and other illnesses. There are some throat pastilles, which you have to carry to your mouth and whose taste you have to slowly swallow in order to relieve a cough; have repetition of the Name on your tongue and imbibe its taste slowly to get rid of the troublesome upsurge of passions and emotions. Keep the Name lit on the tongue; it will illumine your interior and also the exterior. It will cleanse your mind as well as minds of those who hear the Name when you recite it. Keeping it on the tongue is like keeping a lamp lit on the door step at the entrance to your house.

Repetition of the Name (*namasmarana*) is the best spiritual discipline; it is the most beneficial good action. It is the highest prayer, the most profitable spiritual exercise. Kuchela won the grace of the Lord through the same means. Fill the Name with your love whenever you repeat it; saturate it with devotion. That is the easiest path for all of you.

Prasanthi Nilayam, 1963-04-29

A mere five-minute inquiry will convince you that you are not the body, the senses, the mind, the intelligence, the name, or the form, but that you are the *Atma* Itself, the same *Atma* that appears as all this variety.

Once you get a glimpse of this truth, hold on to it; do not allow it to slip. Make it your permanent possession.

Sathya Sai Baba