

7. Power Of The Divine Name

When rains fall, if seeds have not been sown,

Will there be any crop in the field?

If seeds are sown, but there is no rain

Will any crop come up in the field?

Both rain and seeds are needed

For the harvest to be reaped.

Likewise, Divine Grace will bear fruit

Only when there is also human effort,

When the thoughts in the mind are good

They will be reflected in the actions;

When the thoughts are ill-disposed

The fruits thereof will be equally bad.

Embodiments of Divine Love! The world is based on three entities: Fire, the Sun and the Moon. No one can deny the existence of these three. "*Hethu Krisaanu Bhaanu Himakarathe.*" *Krisaanu* means the Fire principle. *Bhaanu* refers to the Sun and *Himakara* refers to the Moon. The combination of these three attracts and sustains all beings in the world. They give pleasure, provoke wonder and also delude men. Because they give pleasure, the three are called "Rama." In the word "Rama" there are three sounds: Ra, Aa, Ma. "Ra" refers to *Agni* (Fire). "Aa" refers to the Sun and "Ma" refers to the Moon. The combination of these three entities represents the "Rama Principle."

The name is fundamental for all objects

All objects in the world can be cognised by name and form and nothing else. All objects are identified by their names. The form is derived from the name. Hence, for everything in the world, the name is primary and fundamental.

The Divine Name is highly potent. Even the wish-fulfilling celestial cow, Kama Dhenu, when it is tethered to the post, comes under control. Likewise, when the Supreme Lord, the Indweller in all hearts, is bound by the rope of *Bhakthi* (devotion) and tethered to the post of the tongue, He gets bound to the devotee. There are only two means by which the Lord can be bound or enjoyed, namely, through the name and through Love. The name can be "Rama," "Hari" or "Hara" or any other name, because the All-pervading Divine bears all names.

The name "Rama" is not confined only to the son of Dasaratha. The *Atma* that confers bliss is known as Rama. The sage Vasishta gave the name Rama to Emperor Dasaratha's son. The name Rama symbolises the universal attributes of the Divine such as omniscience, omnipotence and omnifelicity.

The sage Valmiki composed the *Ramayana* in a hundred crores (a thousand billion) of stanzas. He prayed to the Lord that the stanzas should be divided equally among the denizens of the three worlds. When the stanzas were thus divided and distributed, one stanza of 32 syllables alone

remained. After 30 syllables were equally divided, only two syllables remained undistributed. These two syllables have become the names of the Divine such as Rama, Had, Hara and Saayee. These names can be recited by people of any country or faith. They are not confined exclusively to any faith or country. Any person with a pure and loving heart can recite any of these names. No blame will attach to him.

Divine Name can convert poison to nectar

The potency of the Divine Name is such that it can convert even poison into nectar. This is illustrated by an episode from the life of Meera. She was a queen. But she was so much absorbed in her devotion to Krishna that she would sing and dance with ecstasy unmindful of whether she was in a palace or in a crowded bazaar. Her brother-in-law, who was incensed at such conduct in public places by the queen, was not aware of what true devotion meant. Meera had no body consciousness at all. A true devotee should be totally free from the sense of "I" and "Mine."

Feeling that Meera's conduct was casting a slur on the royal family's prestige and reputation, her brother-in-law decided to do away with her by giving her a cup of milk mixed with poison. Having dedicated herself heart and soul to Krishna, Meera used to take any food only after offering it to Krishna. When she offered the milk given to her to Krishna before drinking it, the Lord accepted all the poison in it and made the entire milk pure. In this way, Meera demonstrated to the world the power of the Lord's name and the greatness of devotion to the Lord.

Very few in the world try to find out how the Name emerged, how it is to be pronounced and what is its potency. The authority for and exponent of the glory of the Lord's name is the *Bhagavatham*.

From the navel to the tongue

Yasoda did not know where Balarama and Krishna were born. She brought them up as her own children. They were born in Mathura, but grew up in Gokulam. They grew in the womb of Devaki (the wife of Vasudheva). But they lived and played in Yasoda's house.

When we try to explore the inner meaning of these events, we realise the Divine story unfolded by them. Balarama and Krishna were both in Mathura. Mathura signifies the navel. Devaki represents the Divine *Shakthi*. The *Naadam* (Divine sound) represented by the names Balarama and Krishna emerging from the womb of the Divine *Shakthi*, proceeding to Gokulam, represented by the mouth, was playing on the tongue, represented by Yasoda. "Rama" signifies one who gives delight. "Krishna" means one who attracts.

The Divine name thus has its origin in the navel and its sacredness should be safeguarded when it is uttered by the tongue. Thus, *Nama-smarana*, remembrance of the name of the Lord, implies chanting the name from one's inmost being and preserving its sacredness.

What is the significance of the word *Nama*? "Na + Aa + Ma," according to the science of numerology, amounts to a total of 7. Na=1, Aa=2, Ma=5. The total is 7. Seven is associated with the *Sapthasvaras* in music (Sa, Ri, Ga, Ma, Pa, Da, Ni). The Sun's rays are made up of seven colours. There are seven oceans in the world. The supreme sages are seven in number *Saptharishis*. It is significant that certain religious observances are spread over seven *days*---*Sapthaaham*.

Potency of *Rama-Nama*

The name "Rama" has a unique spiritual significance. "Ra" represents the *Paramaatma*, "Ma" represents the individual soul and "Aa" brings the two together. The Divine Name thus demonstrates the unifying principle.

The *Puranas* relate a story regarding the potency of the Rama name. Once Easwara wanted to choose a leader for the host of *ganas* (Divine entities). *Gana* refers to the *Devas*. Easwara summoned all the deities and told them that whoever amongst them goes round the earth quickest will be made the leader of the *Deva ganas*. The different deities got on to their respective vehicles and set out on the round-the-world trip. Ganapathi, the elder son of Easwara, was one of them. He was originally called "Lambodhara" because of his big belly. His vehicle was a rat. Sitting on the rodent Lambodhara entered the race to go round the world. On his way, Narada saw him and enquired about his mission. Lambodhara was put out by the facts that a lone Brahmin had confronted him in his trip and put the inauspicious question as to where he was going. He feared that his trip would be a failure. Narada approached Lambodhara with a smile and told him that he was well aware of Lambodhara's mission. But, he declared that only if Lambodhara acted up to the Vedic injunctions would he be successful in his mission. Narada explained what this Vedic injunction was. All the Vedas have extolled the potency of the Lord's name. "As a vast banyan tree is potentially immanent in a little seed, the entire universe is potentially contained in the Lord's name. The cosmos is, therefore, not different from the Name. If you go round the Name, you will have gone round the world. If the deities object to this claim, I shall bear witness on your behalf," declared Narada.

How Lambodhara became Ganapathi

Lambodhara said: "Well, if that is so, what is that name?" Narada replied: "I shall impart that name to you only if you are prepared to carry out my words." "Yes, I shall do so implicitly," said Lambodhara. "Write the two letters "Ra" and "Ma" and go round them. Then go back to Easwara," said Narada. "This is the name which delights the universe. The entire world is contained within this name. Going round the name is equivalent to going round the world," declared Narada.

Lambodhara acted according to Narada's advice and went back to Easwara. As the one who had found the truth about the potency of the Rama name, Lambodhara became the chief of the *Ganas* and got the name Ganapathi (the chief of the Divine entities). Easwara blessed his son with the words: "As the chief of the *Ganas*, you will be the first deity to be worshipped on all auspicious occasions and at all religious ceremonies before the commencement of the functions."

This is the inner meaning of the worship of Ganapathi at all religious functions. Ganapathi is also called "Siddhi Ganapathi" and "Buddhi Ganapathi." Ganapathi is noted for His acute intelligence. "Siddhi" and "Buddhi" are His powers. Because He possesses these powers and is capable of ensuring that any undertaking is carried out without impediments, He is known as the remover of obstacles--Vighneswara.

Consider how Ganapathi got his overlordship of the *Ganas*. It was solely through the name of the Lord. How potent is this name can be explored by you.

Entire cosmos rests on the basis of Name

In the name "Rama," the three deities--Agni, Sun and Moon--are present. From where have these three deities originated? The Sun has the power to scorch the earth from millions of miles away.

Who are the parents of the Sun? Should they not be even more powerful than the Sun? There is, then, the Fire principle. Fire can destroy anything. Who are the parents of Agni? The Moon is the source of coolness and light. Who are the parents of the Moon? If the enquiry is made regarding the parents of these three powerful entities, it will be found that God is the parent.

Everything has come from God. The common people do not make this basic enquiry into the root cause of all things. Nothing can exist without a basis. Even scientists are now engaged in trying to discover this basis. In fact, the Name is the basis and the entire cosmos rests on it. The Name is the easiest means to identify anything or any person. Hence, the best way to recognise God and envisage His form is through the Name. The Name is always auspicious.

Every human being experiences three kinds of night. One is a moon-lit night. A second is a dark night. The third is a night half-dark and half-lit by the moon. But, apart from these three, there is one night which is more sacred and unique. That is Shivarathri. This is the night devoted to the chanting of the sacred name of Shiva. This means that the entire night should be devoted to recitation of the auspicious name of Shiva.

God is one and one only

Unfortunately, in this *Kali* Age, people observe the vigil of Shivarathri by seeing three cinema shows all through the night or playing cards or seeing some dramas. This cannot be called "Shivarathri." What is true vigil on Shivarathri night? It is to devote every moment of the night to thoughts of God and recite His name. This alone is Shivarathri. Shiva means auspicious, not Easwara. God has innumerable names. There is no difference at all between Hari and Hara. The differences between the two names have been created by Vaishnavites and Shaivites, but God has no such sectarian differences. God is one and one only. There may be many names and forms but Divinity is one alone.

Many worshippers go to Tirupathi. Vaishnavites repeat the name: "Venkataramana, Venkataramana!" They derive satisfaction from repeating this name. Ramana is favoured by Vaishnavites. They carry a mark of three vertical lines on their foreheads. Shaivites go to the Thirumula temple and repeat the name: "Venkateshvara! Venkateshvara." They derive some satisfaction from using the word Easwara. The Shaivites carry on their foreheads three horizontal lines of *vibhuthi*. These marks are the difference between the two sects. But the Lord in the temple is one and the same, whether he is called Venkataramana or Venkateswara.

Meaning of the four weapons in Vishnu's hands

Moreover, Vaishnavites consider that Vishnu carries four insignia in His four *hands*--*Sanka* (conch), *Chakra* (discus), *Gadha* (mace) and *Padma* (lotus). The conch is a symbol of sound. This means that the entire universe is in God's hand. *The chakra* (discus) symbolises the Wheel of Time. The inner significance of this is that God holds Time in His grip. The lotus is a symbol of the heart. God holds in His hand the hearts of all beings. The mace is a symbol of prowess. God is the possessor of all power and strength. This is the esoteric meaning of the weapons attributed to Vishnu.

Easwara bears in one hand a *Damaruka* (kettledrum). In another hand He carries a conch. The kettledrum symbolises sound. In another hand, Easwara carries a trident, which symbolises the three aspects of Time--the past, the present and the future. Thus, Easwara is also Lord of Sound and Time.

When the attributes of the Divine are studied in this manner, it will be found that divinity in any name or form bears all the attributes and potencies. Among the glorious attributes of the Divine, *Sadhaashivamayee* (perpetual auspiciousness) is one. Comprehending the significance of the name, eschewing all differences, remembering the glories of the Lord, people should sanctify their lives by utilising the sacred days like Shivarathri for the purpose intended by Bharathiya tradition.

Embodiments of the Divine Aatma! Remember that the Indwelling Spirit in everyone is the same Divine. He is called Hridayavaasi---the dweller in the Heart.

Buddhi transcends the Indriyas

You must consider the distinction between mind and heart. Heart refers to the blood-pumping organ in the body. This heart produces pure blood and circulates it to every part of the body. The Mind is not related to the body. It transcends the body. It is associated with the Universal Consciousness. There are two other agencies: the *Buddhi* and the *Medhas*. The *Medhas* is the agency that controls all *Indriyas* (organs). It is described as the "Control room." *Buddhi*, however, is not related to the body. The *Medhas* is related to the *Indriyas* (the instruments of perception and action). "*Buddhigrahyam atheendhriyam*," it is said. The *Buddhi* transcends the *Indriyas*. When a person says, "My *Buddhi* was preoccupied with something else," it shows that the *Buddhi* is beyond the body. Hence, both the mind and *Buddhi* are related to the *Aatma* and not the body.

Men are accustomed to treat the mind as part of the body. This relates only to the sensory activities of the mind. This mind is made up of thoughts and doubts. But the mind that is associated with the Divine *Aatma* transcends the body. Consequently, it is only when the ordinary thought processes are extinguished that the divinity within can be experienced. The consciousness that goes beyond thought is a reflection of *the Aatma*.

Distinction between Aham and Ahamkaara

The *Aatma*, the *Buddhi* and the mind are three in one. This unified consciousness transcends the sense of "I" and "Mine." It may be called *Aham*. *Aham* means Consciousness. In the *Aatma*, the *Aham* abides as a subtle entity. When the *Aham* acquires a form, it becomes *Ahamkaara*, the Ego. The distinction between *Aham* and *Ahamkaara* should be understood. To identify the *Aham* with the corporeal form is *Ahamkaara*--the Ego feeling. *Aham* transcends the *Ahamkaara* (the physical form). When the identification of the Self with the body is given up, the state of "*Aham Brahmaasmi*" (I am Brahman) is realised. Brahman and *Aatma* are the same. Brahman refers to the Universal Consciousness that is present in all beings.

The consciousness that is present in the body is called *Aatma*. It is called Conscience. The distinction between the Conscience and the Universal Consciousness should be noted. Conscience is a reflection of the Consciousness. When the Conscience ultimately leaves the body, it merges in the Universal Consciousness and becomes one with it. This process may be likened to the oneness that occurs when the air within a balloon joins the atmospheric air outside. This is the process of the many merging with the One. The individual self is the *Bhuthaatma*. The Universal Self is the *Paramaatma*. The individual self confined within a body is like the air confined within a balloon. When the individual self sheds its attachments relating to the body and develops universal love, it overcomes the confines of the body. It merges in the vast, infinite Love. This merger is described as *Mukthi*, *Moksha* or Liberation. The correct name for this

consummation is *Saayujyam* (oneness with the Universal). It is comparable to the merger of a river in the ocean from which it had its origin.

***Brahma-Jnaana* exists within everyone**

Once this merger of Consciousness takes place, there is no reversal of the process. The individual self has become the Universal, as when a drop of water is put into the ocean and becomes one with it. As long as the individual self is attached to the body and maintains its separateness from the Universal Self, it cannot escape the succession of birth and death. But once it casts off its separateness and becomes one with the Omni-Self, there is no further return to the cycle of birth and *death--Punarjanma na vidhyathe*.

This *Brahma-Jnaana* (awareness of the Divine) cannot be got from any external source. It exists within everyone. Once the delusion of separateness in which the individual is enveloped goes, the resplendent Awareness manifests itself. All other knowledge relates to the external world. This external knowledge is only "a reflection of the Inner Being." It is entirely wrong to imagine that one can acquire knowledge of the Inner Reality by exploring *Prakruthi* (Nature). The Omni-Self is not to be realised through the understanding of the phenomenal world. You have come from the *Paramaatma* (the OmniSelf). This truth has to be understood. The fountain-source of all knowledge is within you. The *Jnaani* (wise one) is not the one who has a great deal of book knowledge or knowledge of the physical universe.

The true Jnaani is one who is aware of the Self within and lives accordingly. Many who discourse elaborately on the glories of God do not lead a Godly life. Of what use is their scriptural knowledge? What fight have they to exhort others, when they themselves do not practice what they preach? This was the message of Jesus when he saw a woman being stoned by a crowd for her sinful conduct. He told the crowd: "If there is anyone among you who has not sinned mentally, let him cast the stone at her."

The proper way to observe Shivarathri

Festivals like Shivarathri are intended to make people cultivate auspicious and Godly qualities. To listen to a Divine discourse on Shivarathri day and forget all about its message after leaving the hall is not the way to observe Shivarathri. It may well be called "*Shavarathri*" (a Night of Death).

The difference between "Shiva" (what is auspicious) and "Shava" (a lifeless corpse) can be understood from the process of breathing and cessation of breathing. The process of inhaling and exhaling conveys the message of union with God--*So-Ham* (He is I). It is the consciousness of this oneness that is auspicious. When this consciousness is absent, inauspiciousness (or death) sets in.

There has to be a complete absence of body consciousness. It was by forgetting the body completely while chanting the Name of Rama that Ratnakara, the dacoit, became Valmiki the supreme poet (who gave the *Ramayana* to the world). He was so completely absorbed in chanting the name that he was oblivious to the anthill that had grown over him.

Shivarathri is the day that is devoted to the contemplation of God. It does not come only once a year. Every night can be a Shivarathri. Even if you are not able to contemplate on God all through the night, it is enough if you think of God before going to bed and when you wake up in the morning.

Again, whatever manner in which you may think of God, the results will be good. There is a story to illustrate this. Once a father took his son to the temple and advised him to keep vigil all night in the sanctum sanctorum. After some time, both the priest and the father dozed off. But the young lad, who was keeping vigil, observed a mouse repeatedly nibbling at the fruit and other edibles kept as offering to the deity. He felt sad that the mouse should be nibbling away at what was intended for God. Because he was thinking in this manner about God all night his life became sanctified. But neither the priest nor the others in the temple got the benefit of Divine grace. What is important is that devotion should be expressed in some form.

Different devotees are bound to differ in their ways of worshipping God. But whatever the method of worship, there must be one-pointed devotion. Develop the love of God. Love towards God is devotion. Love towards the world is attachment. Devote this entire night to chanting the name of God. Life can be immensely sanctified through *bhajans*.

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