

15. Power of the Lord's name

ALL RELIGIONS have laid stress on purity of heart. They have also declared that without a pure heart all spiritual exercises are valueless. How can purity of heart be realised if the mind is filled with egoism? The body can be cleaned by water. But the heart can be cleaned only by chanting the Lord's name.

Prahlada, who was the son of an *Asura*, Jatayu, a bird, and an animal like Gajendra, the Lord of the Elephants, redeemed themselves by relying on the Lord's name. As long as one is filled with ego and relies on his own strength, the benefit of the Lord's grace will not come to him. It is only when Gajendra declared that he knew no one other than God who could save him here or in the hereafter that the Lord rushed to his rescue.

When Draupadi was being humiliated by the Kauravas, who went to her rescue? All the prowess of her husbands could not protect her. She prayed to Krishna as her sole protector, as no relations or others could come to her aid. Men may help to relieve ordinary difficulties in life. But in times of grave crisis only *Madhava* (God) can save man. Believing in this, Draupadi prayed to Krishna for succour. The faith in the Lord's name saved her.

Tulsidas hailed Rama as the protector of the universe and declared that the very name Ra-aa-ma represented the three powerful deities, *Agni, Surya and Chandra* (the Fire-God, the Sun-God and the Moon-God).

Valmiki, who was a hunter in his early life, became a sage and the author of the immortal Ramayana by meditating on the name Rama, taught to him by the Seven Sages. Association with the saintly persons and the chanting of Rama's name made him *the Adikavi* (the first poet).

The Lord's name is like a boat for a man crossing the ocean of life. It is supremely important in the *Kali* Age. It has been declared that there is nothing greater than the name of Hari in the *Kali* Age. By no other spiritual or religious practices can peace be attained in this age.

The Divine name can turn poison into nectar. It can revive a lifeless thing. It is surcharged with infinite power.

Mira was so deeply immersed in chanting the name of Krishna that she was totally unmindful of where she was going and what others thought about her. Those who have firm faith in God should not bother about what others thought or said about them. They should adhere to their practices regardless of what others felt.

This applies to students when they go to their homes for the holidays, when some persons might comment about their uttering prayers before they took their meals. They should have the courage to practise what they knew to be right. They must be afraid to commit sin, but have no fear at all in chanting the name of God. The Lord's name will protect them upto the end of their lives even when all others desert them. You must practise chanting God's name from now on because no one can **say** when the end will come.

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The deepest yearning of man is to experience the One, the Basis, the Being that has Become. From east and west, from south and north, you have come in thousands and are now One in this Poorna Chandra Auditorium, feeling a blissful spiritual Unity. Be aware of the One which manifests as the many. That is Divine Life. Aspire for such a life, not simply for long life. Aspire for the Bliss that the awareness of the Atma can confer, not for the pleasure the objects of the world can give.

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