

Brief summary for Tuesday 13th February (9.14 session - Part 3)

We must thank all our teachers for their contribution to what has been written below. These are things we have learned and heard from other gracious souls whose teachings are expressed in our own words/understanding.

If you missed part 131, [check out the notes here](#).

You can find [all the previous notes here](#).

We discussed so many glorious aspects of the name last week, including how it reaches down to us to take us to the highest prospect of the soul. There are no rules and we can chant in any condition. We should try to develop the resolve within ourselves to take full advantage of this chanting.

Narottama dasa Thakura is a Mahatma, the kind Krishna speaks about in this verse. In his song Hari Hari Bifale (which incidentally was said to be one of Srila Prabhupada's favourite bhajans), Srila Narottama says human life is rare yet I have wasted it. He speaks in humility but we can relate to the sentiment as it can be so easy to be distracted from chanting and waste so much time.

It is rare to get human life and on top of that, it is rare still to get sadhu sanga. We have all these things but have not taken advantage of that. We must do our best to call out to Krishna to help us develop more taste. To ask Hari to steal our hearts.

This wealth of prema has come from Goloka. Love of Krishna means loving everyone and everything. He is from the place of cows. Cows are givers. They eat only grass and from that grass, they are giving so many things. They provide milk to drink, cow dung to cook, etc. So Krishna is surrounded by givers.

Krishna protects those who are only giving. Govinda means protector of the cows. From that place, Goloka, the planet of the cows, the wealth of Prema is coming. Harinama is this prema put in song, as it is beyond logic and reason.

Kirtan is any time, always, at any time and any place. Song and poetry are better languages for describing the nature of reality. By nature we feel reality should be bigger. In human life we want to fly high and swim with the fish. We want to do it all. The self is coming out and it can do anything. It is not matter. In human life we are sensing that. We think matter should not restrict me.

Reason isn't neglected. It should be used in conjunction with sastra in sadhu sanga. Reason has its place but should be tamed by sastra, in pursuit of a soft heart. There is more to life than meets the eye. Poetry and art can help us to see these things. For example, the Bhagavat describes how everyone's life is being taken away by the rising and setting of the sun. It says the sun is showing you your life is decreasing in time. It is taking the life of everyone except this involved in this kirtan of Hari.

Poetry and art are participatory languages rather than controlling languages. Love means we don't want anything. Everything about God is found in Krishna. Where is Krishna and what is really a devotee? We will see Krishna when we see a devotee. There is no meaning to give Krishna without love of Krishna. Radha is the personification of the highest love.

God is dancing. When Shakti is alive, Brahman becomes animated. Krishna overflows in the form of compassion. If this love exists, Krishna must exist. People will see you, full of this, and they can't help but think of Krishna. Krishna will go into your heart even if there are high walls and locked doors.

Sometimes people wonder, do they need to give up their families. In the song Gay Gora Madhura Sware, Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur says whoever has left the world and entered the forest, or remained in the house, it makes no difference. Just worship Krishna. If we just worship Krishna then what about relationships with other devotees. Srila Rupa Goswami says it is a

special type of love, sancari. Someone may love another devotee like oneself. The love of a friend.

This fixation, the orbit around which this love orbits is Krishna. The love of our partner or family members, if they are devotees of Krishna, it augments our love for Krishna. So if we become a devotee ourselves, where will Krishna be more than in you, if you are really a devotee. By loving Krishna, Krishna is present. We are teaching about the most worshipable object of God. Become a devotee. Krishna means all attractive and so the more attractive you are through your love for Krishna, you will attract others. Detachment is never a goal unto itself, so for example, trying to be detached from family. But bhakti can be a goal unto itself.

We heard the internal characteristics of these devotees who are most dear to Krishna. Now we have been hearing about the external characteristics. The first and foremost quality if they are always chanting about Krishna. Kirtan means fame. That person becomes famous.

Kirtan means literal chanting but it can also take a dynamic form, such as in the form of writing books, etc. It is the highest welfare work. Transcendental philanthropy. It treats not the symptoms, such as hunger, cancer, war, etc, but the disease, that is, identification with matter, etc. Not that we aren't concerned on a relative plane, but we go to the root. The sun is burning out. Why is no one doing anything about that? The death rate is 100%. This is a solution in a comprehensive way.

One will be famous by sharing such a solution. The Gopi Gita says that talks about Krishna are life-giving. Krishna is described in so many ways by the Gita. People engaged in sharing His glories are doing the highest welfare work. Even non-moving living entities are benefitted.

Some mantras, there are rules governing their utterance. You must face a certain direction, there are certain rituals, etc. Chanting of Krishna's name is not bound by any rule. It is always beneficial and gives one the highest benefit.

We discussed what Yamaraja said to the Yamadutas after being blocked by the Vishnudutas from taking Ajamila. The verses that follow also emphasise

this point that the Holy Name is the highest benefit. Srimad Bhagavatam 6.3.22 to 6.3.24 says:

"Devotional service, beginning with the chanting of the holy name of the Lord, is the ultimate religious principle for the living entity in human society.

My dear servants, who are as good as my sons, just see how glorious is the chanting of the holy name of the Lord. The greatly sinful Ajāmila chanted only to call his son, not knowing that he was chanting the Lord's holy name. Nevertheless, by chanting the holy name of the Lord, he remembered Nārāyaṇa, and thus he was immediately saved from the ropes of death.

Therefore it should be understood that one is easily relieved from all sinful reactions by chanting the holy name of the Lord and chanting of His qualities and activities. This is the only process recommended for relief from sinful reactions. Even if one chants the holy name of the Lord with improper pronunciation, he will achieve relief from material bondage if he chants without offenses. Ajāmila, for example, was extremely sinful, but while dying he merely chanted the holy name, and although calling his son, he achieved complete liberation because he remembered the name of Nārāyaṇa."

There is so much power in kirtan. It has great efficacy. It is a call. We make an effort to get grace. I have no strength, no real detachment, etc. I have only a heart that cries out for your grace Krishna. I can't do yoga in the way described in the 6th chapter, I can't control the senses to that degree, etc. We don't want powers that come from that yoga, we don't want omniscience or eternity, etc.

We want Krishna. If we have this desire, Krishna finds this interesting. You stay here He says, I will come to you. In the form of my Name I will come here. Golokera Prema dhan. Krishna goes wherever people like Him. No qualification is needed.

Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, in the form of a devotee has brought the name in a way that it has never come before, quantitatively and qualitatively, because of the strength of the bhakti He personified. Krishna is available in love of Krishna. He comes in the heart of the devotee.

Srila Rupa Goswami said a problem arises when the name comes and dances in the courtyard of my heart. I have only one tongue and two ears and there is so much nectar in these two syllables, I cannot do justice to them. Therefore I need millions of ears and millions of tongues.

This is how one becomes a guru. It is a problem. They need help, what Krishna nama has done to them. Like the Srimad Bhagavatam says about itself, one should drink it until they pass out. Then when we get up, drink it again. So the Mahatmas are troubled by these names, such is the Name's power.

Srila Prabhupada said he came to New York and experimented, seeing what would happen giving the name to these people. This is how he spread his movement. He thought, I have given the name of Krishna to them and they are chanting sincerely so something must be coming from them. There are some ideas coming from them, there is some feeling for this.

Once on a train in India, some devotees got off to get some fruit and one mentioned that this would be a nice place for a temple. Srila Prabhupada said yes, get off the train and start a temple here. He gave the name. He thought, it is having an effect on me. It must be having an effect on them. The name is using the Western intelligence in a divine way. We are all a product of that.

So the Mahatmas, this is how they conduct themselves. The external expression is they do kirtan about Krishna, always. Kirtan is the backbone of the whole process of bhakti.

Desires make us get up so we can't sit and meditate. The bhakti school is generous. Some purification is needed to sit. Kirtan can be done always, even if we don't have a pure heart. Even if we can't pay attention. There is no benefit if we meditate and can't pay attention. Kirtan will purify the heart.

Krishna's names are filled with shakti, as Mahaprabhu points out in the second verse of His Siksastakam:

"O my Lord, Your holy name alone can render all benediction to living beings, and thus You have hundreds and millions of names, like Krsna and Govinda. In these transcendental names You have invested all Your transcendental energies. There are not even hard and fast rules for chanting these names. O my Lord, out of kindness You enable us to easily approach You by Your holy names, but I am so unfortunate that I have no attraction for them"

The primary names are filled with lila. They can be chanted anywhere and at anytime. Even when asleep and we will get benefit. There is the lila of Mahaprabhu holding His tongue when chanting in an unclean place. Gopal Guru of course pointed out that it was OK to chant always and Mahaprabhu was pleased.

Nama is very generous. It is a good thing our God is a thief, as one policeman pointed out to another. He doesn't care for high walls and locked doors. There is something valuable in our heart and we have locked it in.

While we identify with the material energy, we only actually have 7 days to live, just like Pariksit Maharaja. Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, etc. On one of these days we will die. We should think like this.

Janmastami is the eighth day. This will take us beyond these 7 days. Krishna Nama is not like any other name. There is a whole philosophy behind this. There are no rules and anyone can chant.

The name has all the power of Krishna. It is so generous and it has its own agenda. Krishna doesn't care for your locked doors. Human life has potential not just to reason, but to love. If a person who has cleansed the heart speaks, what will they speak? They will speak about Krishna from the heart. As they speak, the audience may accept some of the logic used, some they may not, because after all, any discussion will be too high for some and too low for others.

Krishna will go into the heart anyway, such is the power of hearing such discussions from that person who has nothing to gain. Who speaks about Krishna just out of love for Krishna.

Krishna captures the heart. He steals it, hence His name Hari. Krishna is said to have performed the rasa dance in this world out of mercy. Krishna has His agenda. This knowledge has an agenda of its own, and I am part of it. As I follow that, I feel more and more it will be good for me. Yet often we are resisting it. So we are advised to keep good company. It is very attractive what Mahaprabhu has given.

Our perfection lies in chanting purely, free from offense, and this involves appropriately honoring all living beings. Others are not to be seen as objects of exploitation, which is the unfortunate result of material attachment. When we become materially attached to someone, we objectify him or her and deny them their own life in relation to God, making them objects of our sense indulgence. We are to see all living beings as manifestations of God—his sakti.

Change is at the heart of genuine spirituality but substantial change for the better is no easy task. Therefore we are advised to take help. There is great power in God's name. One can experience substantial change through the grace of the holy name of Krsna. As wonderful as Krsna is, so too is his name, in which he has invested all of his sakti (energy). Chanting Krsna nama can change anyone's heart. If we sincerely hear about nama dharma from someone whose heart is pure, such hearing will have a powerful effect. Attentive and prayerful repetition of Krsna's sacred name even has the power to melt stone, to make a rock cry. Our heart is like stone. It is petrified. Chant Krsna's name with the ideal of serving him eternally and it will melt and bring tears to your eyes. Your life will change dramatically for the better. Have faith in this.

Interestingly, this discussion on chanting Nama ties in with so many things we have already heard in the Gita so far, for example, following the varnasrama dharma.

Our Guru-maharaja explains that the essence of varnasrama dharma involves attaining balance in life between material well-being and spiritual pursuit. Unless one is properly situated in terms of one's psychophysical reality, one will have difficulty cultivating spiritual life. This balance, regardless of the social status it mandates, is what we call sattva, the intelligible essence of all that is physical, which appears in the psychic realm as our ability to comprehend. A state of clarity that gives rise to virtue and stability of character begetting peacefulness and goodness.

This essence of the varnasrama system is also implied in Freud's psychological world view. Freud teaches that the sublimation of Eros and Thanatos (the instinct of life, love and sexuality, and the instinct of death and destruction respectively), which are roughly analogous to rajas and tamas of the varnasrama system, involves harnessing them, enabling a person to accomplish positive goals. This sublimation resembles the balance that sattva implies. In contrast to the Gita's culture of sattva, Freud's cultivation of sublimation does not result in the transcendence of passion, but it does result in deferred pleasure, which is a characteristic of sattva mentioned in chapter eighteen (Bg. 18.37). We use the world view of Freud (others could be used to) only to illustrate the universality of this principle of sattva and its desirability.

While it may not be possible or relevant to establish the complete system of varnasrama dharma today, it is essential to understand its essence. It is possible to dynamically implement this essence for the benefit of all spiritual seekers. In this age, the chanting of Krsna nama is the most recommended form of spiritual practice, the essence of dharma. If with good guidance we can situate ourselves appropriately in consideration of our psychophysical reality and from that position sing the holy name of Krsna, dharma will be more than maintained. This is the teaching of the Bhagavata Purana, which is said to be the protector of dharma in this age following Krsna's departure from the world. Indeed, Krsna himself returned as Sri Krsna Caitanya in this age as a devotee of himself to exemplify the teaching of this Purana. Sri Krsna Caitanya has made the teaching of the Bhagavata Purana available to all regardless of their social status, and to the extent that we develop divine faith in him and this teaching we become

eligible to tread the path of bhakti and transcend varnasrama dharma altogether. Therefore, those of tender faith should be careful to seek the appropriate balance in life that will support the cultivation of faith. We call this daiva varnasrama, an adjusted form of varnasrama dharma tailored to serve the dharma of this age, Krsna nama sankirtana.

Krsna and Krsna nama are one and the same. If all opulence is found in Krsna, it is also found in his name. Furthermore, Srimad-Bhagavatam states the virtues of Hari katha thus (Bhag. 10.31.9):

"The nectar of Your words and the descriptions of Your activities are the life and soul of those suffering in this material world. These narrations, transmitted by learned sages, eradicate one's sinful reactions and bestow good fortune upon whoever hears them. These narrations are broadcast all over the world and are filled with spiritual power. Certainly those who spread the message of Godhead are most munificent."

In this verse all six of the principal opulences of God—knowledge, detachment, strength, fame, beauty, and wealth—are represented with regard to discussion about Krsna, which includes chanting his name. In this verse the gopis pray to Krsna, "Song about you is like the nectar of immortality (kathamrtam) that gives life to those who are suffering in the world of birth and death (tapta-jivanam). It therefore possesses the opulences of knowledge and detachment. Poets (kavibhir iditam) who know the value and meaning of words and their arrangement praise such song. Composers themselves are amazed at the beauty and efficacy of those songs about you, which are original and not of human origin. Great thinkers and speakers offer homage to your praise that appears from the lips of your devotees, having been infused within their hearts by you yourself. The by-product of your praise is the sum and substance of knowledge and detachment (jnana vairagya)."

"Song about you destroys the effects of sin (kalmasapaham). It is therefore virtuous and heroic, the very essence of dharma or righteousness, which is

real strength (viryaśya). Those who hear it become fortunate (śravaṇa-mangalam) and fame (yasaśah) accompanies them wherever they go. Thus their lives become spiritual and auspicious, for this good fortune and fame are not ordinary. This is so because by singing this song one attracts the attention of Sri, the Lord's consort who blesses such devotees. Thus the song is full of beauty, wealth, and spiritual power (śrīmad). Furthermore, this song spreads itself all over the world (atatam), yet never diminishes itself, and it is thus the greatest wealth and power (aiśvaryaśya). Just as you are full of opulences, so is song about you. Those who herald it throughout the land are not mere mortals. They are the greatest benefactors of human society. They represent you in every respect.”

There are so many names of God in relation to His Svarupa Shakti. Yasoda Nandana, etc. It is a very user friendly way of connecting with God in His most intimate expression.

The name of God has special quality. If we want to know someone, we get their name. Materially speaking there is much to a name. We give nicknames and often they represent the quality of a person.

There is a relationship between sound and the object. The more perfect the language is, the more the sound corresponds with the object. Buddha means wisdom, intelligence, the enlightened mind of the Absolute. Allah means almighty one. The Name corresponds.

There are two types of names, indirect and direct. Indirect are names like the Almighty One, the Enlightened One, the Empowered One. They are indirect because they speak about God in relation to the world mostly. They speak about God from our perspective in this world. They speak about God in relation to what He does for us. He is the provider, God provides, etc. They are placing God in a secondary position. He is providing, but He is providing for us.

We gave the example last week of the drama where God was in the balcony, saying I bless you, I condemn you. The Gaudiya Vaishnava said it

was interesting but pointed out that we place God in the centre. Secondary names are names in relation to what God can do for me.

Then there are primary names. They are about what we can do for Him. Krishna is one of those names. Govinda. Gopala. They are names of Krishna in lila. They describe the Absolute in relation to devotees who are giving entirely of themselves to the Absolute. Through them He is playing, the joy that He is constituted of, His Ananda is manifesting. God becomes the centre-stage.

All these names of God speak about God directly or indirectly. As much as the sound itself corresponds with the object, they are perfect. There is quality to the sound. The way they are uttered. There are letters and how we utter them. The language of God is not English though, not Hindi, not Sanskrit. It is love.

Love is the language in lila. To speak this name of Krishna, you have to learn the language of love. So there is a changing and a cleansing of the heart that takes place. As a certain point, Krishna expresses love for us. That is bhava, that descends this ecstasy in the heart. That reciprocation allows that individual soul to sing that name with ecstasy, with feeling, with love. This propels them into eternal relationship.

It is not just these four letters, for example Rama. That is an external representation of that. We speak of the chanting in terms of not paying attention, Nama aparadha, the stage of offensive chanting. Then there is the shadow of the full name, Nama-abhasa.

Then there is Suddha Nama, the pure name. We will discuss these more next week. These are all relating to the conditions of the heart. The degree of which we are withdrawn from worldliness and have entered the world of the inner landscape, and are moving there.

These direct names are all related to the lila itself. They are related to the life of God, to the romantic life of God. If you are speaking about the romantic life of God, that's a little embarrassing. If I speak of a couple and say they were arguing last night in their home (which is a type of love), it is embarrassing. Krishna is arguing with Radha in the lila or example.

Some devotees, through their meditation are aware of that. They see that. This is embarrassing to the Absolute in this world, to share that kind of information. So He will come and silence the devotee and take them there. The internal names correspond with the lila. Krishna will be like, "You know that about ME." That is not to share with anybody and everybody. Most people are not interested in my problems with my love life. How Radha won't let me into the grove, into the bushes. You can't speak about that, you better come and stay with Me. So it is a powerful way to attract His attention.

I'd like to share an excerpt from the commentary of the second verse of Siksastakam by my Guru-maharaja that brings out many of these important points to understand the differences between names of God:

"Continuing to trumpet the glories of Krishna nama, Sri Krishna Caitanya expresses his amazement with the words etadrishi tava kripa bhagavan: "O Bhagavan, your mercy is so great." In the opinion of Mahaprabhu, magnanimous dispensation reaches its zenith with the appearance of Krsna nama. Krsna nama is so high, so great, yet he nonetheless makes himself so readily available. Although nondifferent from Krsna himself, Krsna nama is more merciful.

After reciting this second verse of his Siksastakam, Gaura Krsna began to discuss its significance by explaining to Rama Raya and Svarupa Damodara that God has many names because people have many desires. By this we learn that there is a relationship between the desires of the jivas and Bhagavan's names, just as there is between the condition of the jivas' hearts and Bhagavan himself. He reciprocates with the jivas in consideration of their desires. In the Bhagavad-gita Sri Krsna tells Arjuna, "As people surrender to me, I reciprocate accordingly. Everyone follows my path in all respects, O Partha."

How many names does Bhagavan have? He has as many names as there are desires in the hearts of jiva souls! For that matter,

Vedanta-sutra informs us that every word indicating an object or power is first and foremost a name for God:

Words primarily denote God for he resides in all things, both the mobile and immobile. But that words refer to God is only known with time after hearing from scripture.

Mahaprabhu personally realized this sutra's import that all words are names of God. In his youth he was renowned for his scholarship and had many students. After he received Vaishnava diksha from Sri Isvara Puripada and learned the conclusions of the bhakti-sastra under his guidance, he began to explain all Sanskrit words designating material objects as primarily referring to Krsna and only secondarily to the objects themselves. He identified the particular aspect of Krsna residing in each material object that caused it to be called by a particular word. He realized that all words denoting power or energy also refer by extension to their underlying energetic source and that what is desirable in any object is so because of God's presence therein. Baladeva Vidyabhusana asserts that such realization is the goal of Vedanta—vasudeva' sarvam iti. Commenting in his Govinda-bhasya on the above sutra he writes, "The object of Vedanta is to give rise to the knowledge that every word is really the name of God."

Although all words are names of God, Gaura emphasizes in this stanza of Siksastakam names of Krsna that directly refer to Sri Krsna's person, form, qualities, and lila. Mahaprabhu says that Bhagavan Sri Krishna has manifested many names in this world (on the tongues of his devotees) and that these names are filled with all of Krsna's personal sakti. These names are those that identify him in lila with his devotees—his primary names chanted by his unalloyed devotees. They are names that each of his devotees holds most dear to his or her heart because they correspond with a particular sentiment of love for Bhagavan. Names such as Brahman and Paramatma, on the other hand, are secondary names of God and do not refer to him in divine play energized by his internal sakti.

Krsna's unalloyed devotees are embodiments of his svarupasakti, in reciprocation with which Krsna makes his appearance. Their love—Krsna's svarupa-sakti invested into their hearts causes Krsna to appear in a form that corresponds with their purified hearts. Where then does Krsna reside? He resides in the hearts of his devotees. What is his name but that by which they refer to him out of love? It should come as no surprise, therefore, when we hear that Krsna nama is invested with Krsna sakti, for Krsna is completely invested in his devotees, causing them to address him affectionately. This is the Vedanta of Sri Krishna Caitanya: the supreme energetic (saktiman) is simultaneously one and different from his energy (sakti), acintya-bhedabheda-tattva.

What is in a name? Everything. We are advised to be careful not to give out our name—nowadays our social security number—lest our identity be stolen. If we are present to this extent in our material name, how much more is Krsna present in his name? Those names that are filled with his personal sakti often tell us more about him than he himself is aware of, for they speak of Krsna as he is experienced by his devotees. Nothing is more endearing to Krsna than hearing these names because they are expressions of his devotees' love for him.

As Gaura Krsna continues to glorify nama-sankirtana, he speaks about the ease with which it is performed. It can be done at any time, in any place. Mahaprabhu explained this glory of nama-sankirtana to Rama Raya and Svarupa Damodara: "There are no rules governing time or circumstance; even by chanting the name while eating or sleeping one can attain perfection."

Although Mahaprabhu is talking about the ease of performing nama-sankirtana in this second verse of Siksastakam, it is worth noting that he uses the word smarane, indicating nama-smaranam as well. Japa of Krsna nama, wherein the holy name of Krsna is whispered or remembered within the mind while counting on one's japa-mala, is considered to be namasmaranam, as opposed to

nama-kirtana. This meditation on Krsna nama, like nama-sankirtana, is not dependent on particular conditions to be fruitful. Unlike meditation in the yogamarga, which must be done under certain conditions and requires a pure heart for it to be fruitful, meditation on Krsna nama can be executed while walking or sitting and at any time, whether one's heart is pure or impure. Because the spiritual discipline of Krsna nama is ultimately an expression of the highest love transcending religious decorum, it is not bound by the regulations governing other spiritual disciplines, such as yoga and jnana.

By comparison, the jnana-marga is not easy to tread. It emphasizes renunciation of the world (sannyasa), the study of Vedanta, and introspection, all of which are difficult in comparison to nama-sankirtana. Although Mahaprabhu accepted sannyasa, he did not tread the jnana-marga, and thus he was not preoccupied with the study of Vedanta and a life of introspection. Indeed, Sri Isvara Puri, Mahaprabhu's diksha guru, advised him not to occupy himself with the typical duties of the sannyasa order, such as the study of Vedanta. By calling Gaura a fool and telling him that he was not qualified to study Vedanta, Sri Isvara Puri revealed that in Kali-yuga people are not eligible for such practices. The study of Vedanta is a long and tedious undertaking, and in Kali-yuga time is short and memory poor. Instead of study, the simple practice of nama-sankirtana is mandated.

The ease and simplicity with which nama-sankirtana is performed does not diminish its value. On the strength of his experience of nama-sankirtana, Mahaprabhu converted many sannyasis in Benares from the study of Vedanta (jnana-marga) to bhakti-marga. At first these sannyasis thought that Sri Krishna Caitanya was merely a sentimentalist and that singing and dancing were inappropriate for a sannyasi, who is to be ruled by reason and scripture rather than mind and emotion. However, Mahaprabhu demonstrated that spiritual love, unlike material love, is grounded in knowledge, Vedanta. Indeed, Mahaprabhu made it clear that the simple expression of love that is at the heart of nama-sankirtana is the essence of Vedanta."

Next time we will continue to look at kirtan. We will look at types of kirtan, the quality of kirtan, as well as the significance of Mahaprabhu's kirtan. We will also look at some misconceptions. Then the week after we will move on to other parts of verse 9.14.