

How To Chant 64 Rounds - Lesson 4

By Dharmavir Das Prabhu

Introduction to the verse 2 of Sri Siskastakam - The Eight Instructions of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu

Before I start explaining verse two of the Sikshastakam, I would like to share with you a story to explain why it took me so long to continue the lessons. Once there was a Christian minister who gave a phenomenal sermon. The following week he gave exactly the same sermon and the week after he gave the same sermon and the third, fourth and fifth week.

Some Church elders decided to pull the minister aside and check if he was okay. They informed him that in the last five sermons he had given exactly the same talk.

The minister smiled and said he was very pleased they had noticed. Then they asked him why he was repeating the same lecture week after week. He said he gave the same sermon and he would continue to do so until the congregation starts applying the lesson practically in their lives.

Theory Without Practice

I wish to ask the members of this group the same question: Have you applied my lessons to your lives? If you haven't, then I don't see the point of your continuing the lessons. Mere reading and getting theoretical knowledge without applying it will not be effective. It's like hearing but not listening.

Please understand that my intention is to help you achieve the ultimate goal of life and become totally happy and fully satisfied. Therefore I ask you to re-read the lessons and you may ask me directly any questions regarding the same.

One may ask why I want to help you since I don't even know you personally. I want to help you because that is the order of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu. His mission is to help the conditioned souls to get free from this miserable material life and to go back to our real home in Goloka Vrindavan.

Sri Krishna's Compassion

Sri Krishna displayed the same compassion in Bhagavad Gita. Krishna is so kind that He is personally canvassing:

sarva-dharmān parityajya
mām ekaṁ śaraṇaṁ vraja
ahaṁ tvāṁ sarva-pāpebhyo
mokṣayiṣyāmi mā śucaḥ
[Bg 18.66]

"Abandon all varieties of religion and just surrender unto Me. I shall deliver you from all sinful reaction. Do not fear."

The basis of this shloka is that if you surrender to Krishna, then you don't have

to be bothered about your past sins because He guarantees protection. From the above we see that Krishna asked us to surrender but He did not distribute Himself so easily. But in His incarnation as Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, He makes no such condition.

Also Krishna who taught Bhagavad-gita requires knowledge and understanding, but Lord Caitanya introduced a process that is simply joyful - simply chant and dance to drive away our suffering. The difference is that Krishna demands that you surrender to Him. He says - "I am your Father and I can see that you are unhappy, therefore I have come to give you all protection". We are all servants of Krishna and it is our duty to serve Him for our own happiness.

The Proper Way Of Understanding

To properly understand the second verse of Sikshastakam, we must take lessons from the commentaries of our Guru parampara.

mnām akāri bahudhā nija-sarva-śaktis
tatrārpitā niyamitaḥ smaraṇe na kālaḥ
etādṛśī tava kṛpā bhagavan mamāpi
durdaivam īdṛśam ihājani nānurāgaḥ

"O my Lord, Your holy name alone can render all benediction to living beings, and thus You have hundreds and millions of names, like Kṛṣṇa 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." [Sri Siksastakam verse 2]

Primary And Secondary Names

The name of Krishna is the original seed and Krishna says in Bhagavad Gita that He is the 'seed giving Father'. Included in the holy names is the form of the lord, His qualities and His pastimes. Here it is explained that the Lord has many names which are all non-different from Him. The names Krishna, Govinda, Rama, Narayana, Vishnu and so on are His primary names.

Brahma, Paramatma are His secondary names. The primary names are invested with all the potencies. The Lord has not made any restrictions on chanting these names in regards to time and place. This is an example of the Lord's mercy on the conditioned souls.

In the Vedas considerations of time, place and performer is emphasized. For example, if one performed pooja for the killing of a goat, there are so many rules regarding time, place and performer recommended for getting relief from this sin. But in chanting the holy names of God such rules and regulations do not apply.

The only reason why one does not build attachment for the holy name is due to offenses while chanting the holy names. The Padma Purana lists ten kinds of offenses which I shall discuss in the next lesson.

Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Prabhupada explains that the primary names are divided into two: aishvarya and madhurya. Madhurya represents the intimate feature of the Lord and aishvarya represents the awe and reverence feature. Included in the madhurya category is Krishna, Radha-Ramana and Gopijana-vallabha. The aishvarya feature is Rama, Laxmi Narayana, Nrisihmadev. The secondary names are only partially endowed with select potencies.

Prescribed Number Of Rounds

Srila Prabhupada said that we should chant a minimum of 16 rounds even though Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakur said that if one does not chant 64 rounds, Sri Krishna would not accept ones offering. Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu also took prasadam only in the houses of devotees who chanted 100,000 holy names daily.

Srila Prabhupada did make a concession to chant 16 rounds but we should gradually increase to 25, then to 32, then to 48 and then to 64 rounds. We must not remain on the beginning level for the rest of our lives.

Again I will tell you the secret of how Srila Prabhupada saved thousands of Jagais and Madhais and made them give up the the four sinful activities namely meat eating, intoxication, gambling and illicit sex. Srila Prabhupada recommended all his students to chant the Panca-tattva mantra before every round of the Hare Krishna mantra: Sri Krishna Caitanya Prabhu Nityananda Sri Advaita Gadadhara Srivasadi Gaura bhakta vrinda.

By chanting the Panca-tattva mantra we properly invoke Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu's full mercy. [For more reference see: CC Adi 8.31; CC Adi 8.5; CC Adi 8.7 and my Lesson 2]

Here are all the lessons for download:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/chanting64rounds/files/>

Your servant,
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