

Chapter VII. Remember God and Meditate

Whatever the tangle in which people are caught, if they get immersed in the Lord's name, it will make them free. Moreover, by this means, they can realise without fail the name and form through which they constantly remember the Lord. There is no iota of doubt in this.

All religions remember the Lord's name

The spiritual disciplines of *yoga*, breath control (*pranayama*), and penance (*tapas*) are beset with pitfalls at every step, and they are also full of dangers. But in the spiritual practices of repetition of the name (*japa*), meditation (*dhyana*), and remembrance of the name (*namasmarana*) there is no likelihood of a fall or of any other danger. In the former type of spiritual disciplines, the practices differ according to the caste or religion. In the practice of the name (*nama-sadhana*), there is not even a trace of such distinction. Hindus, Muslims, and Christians may differ on many points, but they are all one in the glorification of the name of the Godhead. All of them take the name of the one Lord, though the language through which the name is expressed is different. Each one recites, repeats, and remembers the name as formed on his own tongue. Each one turns with his fingers the rosary appropriate to their religion. But for everyone there is nothing so fruitful, so universal, or so holy among spiritual disciplines as these: repetition of the divine name, meditation, and remembrance of the Lord's name.

Crave the Lord's name rather than the form

The Lord and His name are both one, but the sweetness of the name is seldom found in the form. When the name of the flower, rose, is remembered, its fragrance, tender petals, and deep colour spring to memory; its thorns and the trouble one has undergone to get the flower are all forgotten. Instead, if its origin and previous story are considered, and if the plant, leaves, and branches are taken into account, the flower—the most important, most beautiful, and most attractive part—is likely to be forgotten and only “the plant” is discussed.

See this from another angle. As soon as the name *mango* is mentioned, one is reminded of an incomparable sweetness. Instead, if an actual mango is held in the hand, the doubt first arises in the mind whether it is sweet or sour; then one is engaged in distinguishing the skin, fibre, juice, nut, rind, seed, etc. When the name alone is repeated, these things do not come to mind. Only the sweetness is brought to memory.

Such is the difference between the Lord and the Lord's name! The pure essence of sweetness is in the name. In the case of the form, there is the chance of dread mixed with respect—sometimes, even attributes causing fear show themselves.

Here is another reason why the name of the Lord is to be craved more than the form. Riches are needed to secure any article in the world. With riches, articles are acquired, so it follows that the riches are superior to the articles obtained by means of them, right? With riches, one can get any article, any time. So too, it is by means of the riches of the name that the article, “the form (*rupa*) of the Lord” is to be earned. If the riches called name (*nama*) are steadily accumulated, the Lord can be realised through the path of meditation, easily and without difficulty.

Another special thing about repetition of the name (*nama-smarana*) is this: It is possible to acquire various occult powers (*siddhis*) through *yoga* and penance (*tapas*). And there is every likelihood of the Lord being for-

gotten when these powers come. Blinded by this pride, a person might even let go the basic victory won by their spiritual practices. This is not the case with remembrance of the name, repetition of the name, and meditation; no such dangers beset these paths. These three paths make love (*prema*) grow in people more and more. Through love, peace (*santhi*) is achieved. Once peace of mind is achieved, all other conditions are automatically attained. Through *yoga* and penance, extraordinary power; through remembrance of the name, repetition of the name, and meditation, extraordinary love —this is the difference between the two.

Do not discuss the path with everyone

However, be careful not to discuss these paths with all and sundry, because each one's path appears the best. If the people consulted are treading another path, they will decry your practice of repetition of the name and meditation and treat them with scant respect. They will look down upon them, as if they were very elementary and as if you were but a beginner in school. As a result, you will start doubting the efficacy of your chosen path! You will get concern where before you had joy, disgust where before you had love.

Therefore, reflect within yourself which among these is sweeter. Or, you can approach those who have tasted the nectar of that name and ask for details of their experiences. Do not argue about these things with everyone you meet. The time spent in these haphazard disputations is best used for the cultivation of joy through the repeated bringing of the name (*nama*) to memory and meditation on the form (*rupa*) of the Lord.

Mere weighing of the pros and cons, like which is greater among the two, will end only with the quick loss of all the success gained after great efforts through spiritual discipline. Until you become an expert, bring the name constantly to memory and repeat it firm and unruffled, either alone or in the company of devotees. Then, nothing can waver you.

Look at the fish! In early stages, it breeds its newly hatched young ones in a quiet shallow spot. Then, it pushes them into the wide open sea, rough and rude with its monstrous denizens! They can then survive there, courageously, and grow without fear. If the young ones were bred in the open sea from the earliest stage, they would certainly be swallowed up even by minor fishes! So, remembrance of the name (*namasmarana*), repetition of the name (*japa*), and meditation (*dhyana*) have to be practised with a great deal of care, according to a planned routine, and without any discussion with others.

Repeating the name is safest and easiest

Nowadays, many aspirants are discarding the name and taking up *yoga* and breath control (*pranayama*). These are fraught with many dangers. To follow them correctly is difficult. Even if correctly followed, preserving and protecting the fruits achieved is even more difficult.

If people grope in the water while spreading the net on the bank, can they find fish in the net? To give up repetition of the name and faith in that path and to sit in *yoga* and penance is as foolish as hoping to catch fish by this means. If the name is taken as the refuge and support, He can be realised tomorrow —if not today. If the name of a thing is known, the thing itself can be easily acquired. But if the name is not known, even if the thing is right in front, it cannot be recognised.

So repeat the name without intermission or faltering. By means of the name, love (*prema*) is developed; through love, meditation of the Lord can be practised. If love is deeply rooted in you, God, who is composed of

love, becomes your own. However many the paths for the realisation of the Lord, none is as easy as this.

Note this. When a peculiar disease is prevalent in a country, the drug that can cure it is also found in that very country, more so than anywhere else. Though available after vigorous search in other lands, it will not be so good or plentiful. Similarly, this specific drug is available now, in the present age (the *Kali-yuga*)! In this age (*yuga*), the ghastly evils of injustice, immorality, and falsehood infect the world. That is why the scriptures (*sastras*) have been proclaiming again and again, with greater and greater emphasis, that in this *Kali* age there is no means of salvation other than the name! Of the four ages, the *Kali-yuga* is the best on account of this. Remembrance of the name, repetition of the name, and meditation strain out the evil in mankind. Human nature is guarded and protected by these three. Hence, the fruits of meditation are greater than those secured with great difficulty through *yoga*, sacrifice (*yajna*), or breath control (*pranayama*).