

64. Stick to the name and form of the Lord you adore

Now, one has to be careful even in matters relating to the realisation of God. Whatever inconveniences one may encounter, one must try to carry on spiritual practices without any break or modification in the disciplines. One should not be changing the name that one has loved and cherished and selected for remembrance (*smarana*). Concentration is impossible if the name is changed once every few days. The mind won't attain one-pointedness. All spiritual discipline has this one-pointedness as its ultimate aim. Therefore, avoid constant adoption and rejection of names and forms of the Lord. One single name must be used throughout for repetition of the name (*japa*) and meditation.

One has also to get the strong conviction that all the Lord's names and forms are but the name and form that one is repeating. That name and form must not give the slightest feeling of dislike or disaffection.

Taking all worldly losses, sufferings, and worries as merely temporal and transitory, and realising that all this repetition of the name and meditation is only to overcome such grief, the spiritual aspirant should keep the two things separate, without mixing up that with this and this with that. The aspirant must understand that loss, suffering, and worry are external, belonging to this world, and that repetition of the name and meditation are internal, belonging to the realm of the love for the Lord. This is called chaste (*pathivratha*) devotion. The other variety, where the spiritual aspirant selects one name and one form and after some time discards them for another name and form, is called unchaste (*vyabhichara*) devotion.

Changing the name and form is not a fault if it is done in ignorance, but having once known that it is wrong and harmful, and after continuing repetition of the name and meditation on the one name and form faithfully, subsequently changing them is certainly wrong. Sticking faithfully to the name and form is the highest vow, the highest austerity. Even if elders advise you, don't give up the path approved by your mind! Of course, which elder would suggest that you should change the name of the Lord and give up the name that you adore? Consider those who tell you to do so not as elders but as dullards.

As far as possible, see that the time and place of meditation and repetition of the name are not changed and shifted. For example, while traveling, keep the time unaltered even if it becomes necessary to change the venue. At the specified time, at least recall to mind the meditation and repetition of the name done at the same time in the past, even if you are in a railway train, a bus, or some such inconvenient surrounding.

In this way, accumulating spiritual wealth, one can surely become the master, and attain the *Atma*.