

Śaranagati

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THE POWER OF FAITH

Why do we not relish chanting? It is because our senses cannot grasp transcendental objects. For us, spiritual life is intangible. We are like a blind person walking through a flower garden. There is only one remedy for this situation: to develop transcendental perception.

The first step in this process is to invest faith into one's spiritual practices. Just like a blind person can go anywhere if he or she invests faith into his or her guide, we can progress on our path if we invest faith into our guides. Invest your faith into what the scriptures and ācāryas teach about the holy name – only when you fully trust that Kṛṣṇa and his name are identical, then you will be able to feel that you are associating with him when you chant.

There is a mystery in the procedure of faith investment. By the mercy of Lord Nityānanda the customer is reimbursed his original payment multiplied by an unlimited sum. This would be like buying something, let us say a laptop for \$480, and then noticing that by the influence of the salesman the money in your wallet has multiplied! By investing a little faith, your faith will increase and you will attain immense spiritual results. However, do make sure that your intentions are pure and selfless; otherwise your faith will not be the transcendental faith you need to attain the real name.

Chanting with faith will uncover your spiritual sense perception and give you the taste for the holy name.

Excerpt from Śacīnandana Swami (2012). Marketplace of the Holy Name (Amrita Vani), part one.

BECOMING ABSORBED BY FEELINGS OF SEPARATION



Whilst chanting, we should think of Kṛṣṇa and bring some feeling into our practice. At the moment, the most realistic and relevant way of thinking about him is in the mood of separation: “I am now separated from Kṛṣṇa and I want to be reconnected to him.” When you think of Kṛṣṇa with deep feelings, he will come into your heart.

Most of us already cry out in separation – but we cry for the wrong things. We cry for personal enjoyment, not for Kṛṣṇa. If you want to leave your attachments to matter behind, then you have to learn to redirect your feelings of separation towards Kṛṣṇa. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura writes, “The feeling of separation from Krishna, or transcendental vipralamba is the only practice by which the spirit soul can achieve perfection. Material feelings of separation give rise to a despondency that reveals the attachment one has for matter, whereas the despondency that results from the feelings of separation for Krishna are the best proof of one's desire to bring pleasure to His senses.” (Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura in a purport to Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Antya 8.26-31).

The last sentence of this quote beautifully expresses the idea of vipralamba-bhāva. A devotee feels: how unfortunate I am being separated from Kṛṣṇa because in this state, I am not able to serve him and I cannot fulfill my eternal dharma.

Chanting in this mood will bring about an inner meeting, as Śrīla Prabhupāda writes “Those under the shelter of the lotus feet of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu can understand that His mode of worship of the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa in separation is the real worship of the Lord. When the feelings of separation become very intense, one attains the stage of meeting Śrī Kṛṣṇa.” (Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Ādi 4.108)

Excerpt from Śacīnandana Swami (2012). Krishna Samadhi (Amrita Vani), part six.

HOW TO READ SACRED SCRIPTURES



There are guidelines for “prayerful reading”, which stem from an ancient method of attentive hearing described by Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura.

This method consists of four steps:

- 1) *Śravaṇa* – hearing the text (this is like eating a meal).
- 2) *Manāḥ* – reflecting on the text (this is like chewing the food).
- 3) *Nididhyāsana* – applying what you hear (this is like swallowing and absorbing the food).
- 4) *Prayer* – this point has been added by a different ācārya (Śrīla Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa), because the full realization of a spiritual text is always dependent on the merciful blessings of guru and Kṛṣṇa. Therefore we should pray: “My dear lord, please help me realize and apply this knowledge.”

Excerpt from Śacinandana Swami (2011). Tempel of the Heart (Amrita Vani), part three.

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (2.8.4) mentions three important points regarding how to read the *Bhāgavatam* so Kṛṣṇa will manifest in the heart. One should read:

- 1) with faith (*śraddhayā*)
- 2) regularly (*nityam*)
- 3) and with a special endeavor (*sva-ceṣṭitam*)

Read with faith – even a theoretical faith – thinking that Kṛṣṇa is god surrounded by his many inconceivable (*acintya*) energies. make reading a regular practice; consciously schedule it into your day. The special endeavor referred to here means that we make a systematic attempt to hear or read with rapt attention. In order to read attentively, however, we have to be pure in mind and habits. Śrīla Prabhupāda expressed it like this: “Simple hearing is not all; one must realize the text with proper attention. ... no one can give rapt attention who is not pure in mind. no one can be pure in mind who is not pure in action. no one can be pure in action who is not pure in eating, sleeping, fearing, and mating.” (Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, 1.3.44, purport).

You can become pure in mind and habits by regular and proper spiritual practice. This practice supplies the fertile earth you need to allow the seeds of the *Bhāgavatam*’s message to grow and eventually bring forth the sweet fruits of deep realization.

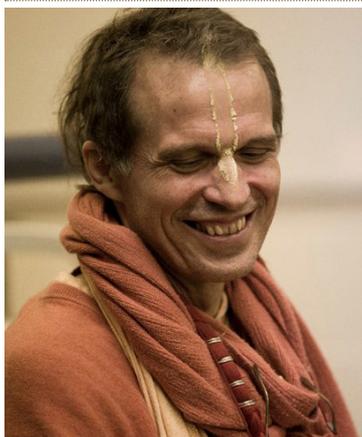
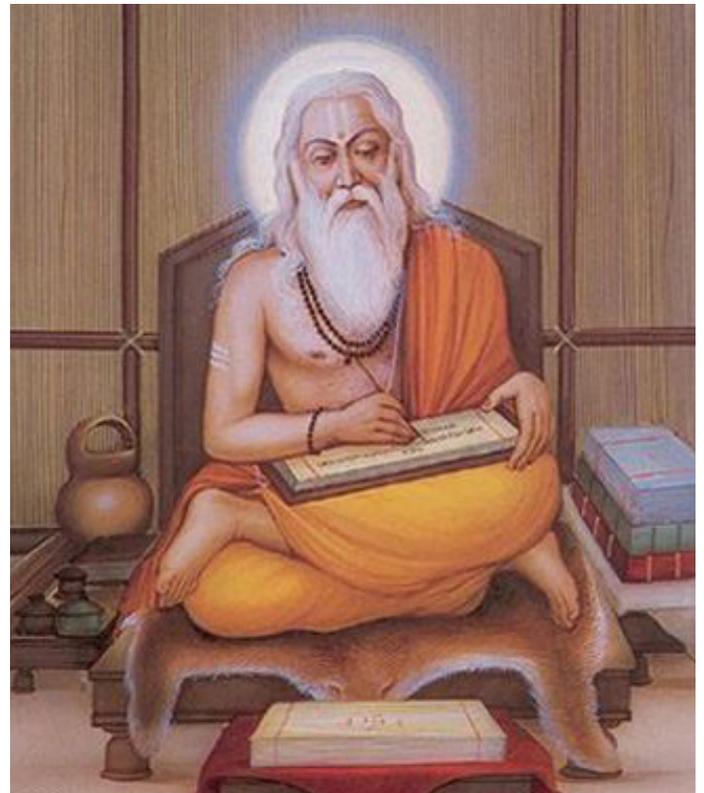


Photo by Mickey Shah

MEET ŚACĪNANDANA SWAMI

upcoming seminars & events:

Feb 8-13	Seminar & Vyāsa-pūjā celebrations, Zagreb, Croatia
Feb. 19-20	Kīrtana in London, Leicester College Visit, UK
Mar. 16	Gaura-pūrṇimā, Berlin, Germany
May 10-11	Birmingham 24h Kīrtana, Birmingham, UK

Read more: www.sacinandanaswami.com