

THE LIVING NAME

PART 5

A Guide to Chanting with Absorption

ŚARAṆĀGATI

In spiritual life we need to become a receiver of divine mercy. This is possible when we accept a mood of surrender – the confidence that the holy name will give us what we need. Bhakti is a gift from Kṛṣṇa; we cannot attain it ourselves. But is there anything we can do to move Kṛṣṇa to bestow it? Yes. Take shelter of him. Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura asks how to move the lord’s heart:

ṣaḍ-aṅga śaraṇāgati hoibe jāhāra
tāhāra prārthanā sune śrī-nanda-kumāra

“Whose prayer does Kṛṣṇa, the son of Nanda hear? The prayer of one who submits unconditionally to the sixfold path of surrender. Śrī Nandakumāra hears the prayer of those persons.”

(Śaraṇāgati, introductory song verse 5)

And Jagadānanda Paṇḍit says:

“If you wish to advance on the path of pure bhakti, not many rules in spiritual practices are necessary. Simply beg for the complete shelter of Kṛṣṇa-nāma and thus purify your heart and consciousness.”

(Prema-vivarta, chapter 7)

We find an example of such surrender in the life of Draupadī, when the Kauravas were trying to disrobe her in public. At that time she called out loudly the names of Kṛṣṇa. But Kṛṣṇa took a long time to arrive – her aggressors were almost successful in their sinful endeavor.

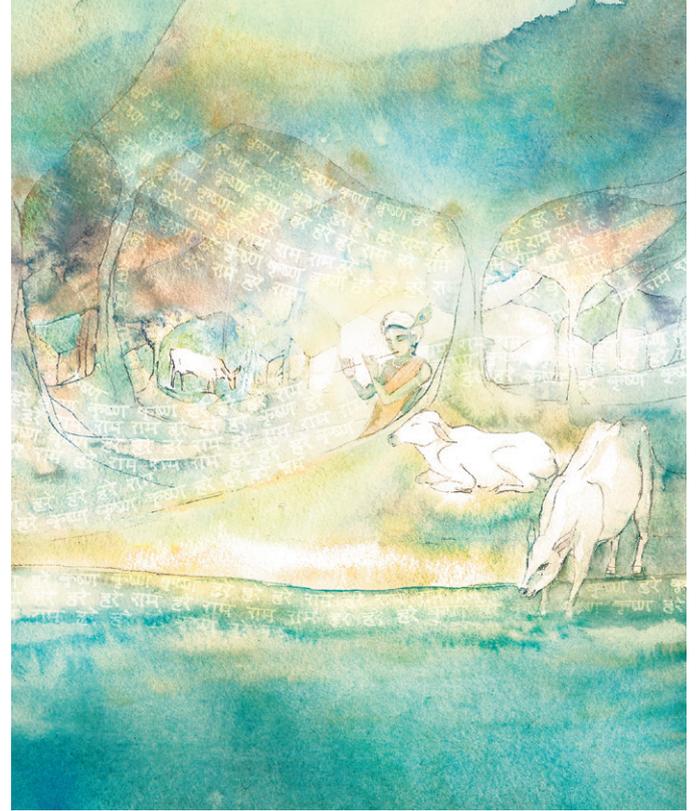
Why did Kṛṣṇa take so long? Because even as she called his name she turned to Grandfather Bhīṣma, her husbands, the assembled kings, and all others present for shelter. Only when she finally lifted her arms to the sky and surrendered body, mind, and heart was her calling out to Kṛṣṇa imbued with the quality that immediately attracted him to appear.

Śrīla Prabhupāda writes:

“In the Mahābhārata Kṛṣṇa says: ‘When I was away from Draupadī, she cried with the words He Govinda! This call for me has put me in her debt, and that indebtedness is gradually increasing in my heart ...’ The mātā-mantra is also simply an address to the Lord and His energy. So to anyone who is constantly engaged in addressing the Lord and His energy, we can imagine how much the Supreme Lord is obliged. It is impossible for the Lord to ever forget such a devotee ...”

(The Nectar of Devotion, 21.17)

Surrendering to Kṛṣṇa in the form of the Holy Name can mean so many things, for instance, chanting a certain number of rounds



every day, or to sing *kīrtana* regularly at a particular time. It can also mean to really listen with full attention, thus giving the Holy Name first-class aural reception, just as Śrīla Prabhupāda recommended, ‘Just try to hear yourself chant sincerely.’

I recommend reading and singing the ancient *Śaraṇāgati* prayers of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura. His devotion will certainly effect you and some of it will enter your heart. Of course, you may also like to read other suitable verses from scripture where the mood of surrender is expressed.

Surrender is a very personal affair. The principle is always the same though the expression differs from person to person. If you go deep inside you will most probably know what your next step in relationship to the Holy Name is, and also what needs to be ‘surrendered’ in order to take it.

TRY THIS:

- work diligently to remove all traces of *aparādha* or offences from your life
- chant with the inner orientation: I give myself to You.