

THE LIVING NAME

A Guide to Chanting with Absorption

PART 2

SAMBANDHA

Chanting with the awareness of our eternal relationship with Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa

The Sanskrit word *sambandha* indicates ‘relationship’ but literally it means ‘bound together’ (*sam*: together; *bandha*: bound). *Sambandha* is that understanding which binds you to Kṛṣṇa. It is an inner orientation for chanting the Holy Name that brings you into the presence of the Lord.

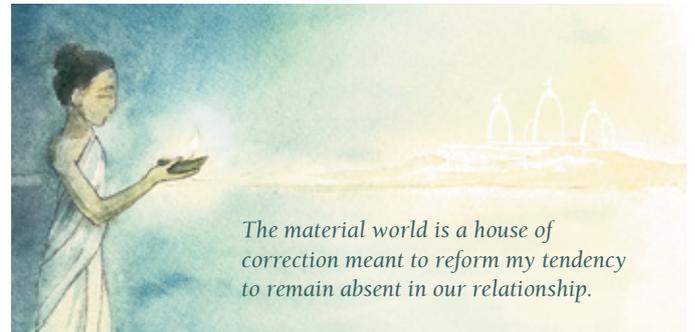
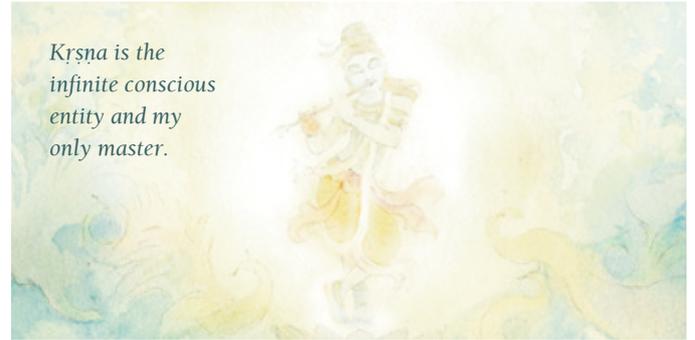
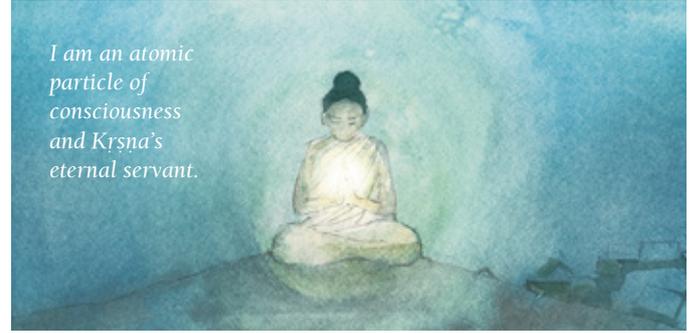
Sambandha begins with a general sense that ‘I am a part of Kṛṣṇa.’ Later, when you chant the Holy Name free from offences, your relationship with Kṛṣṇa becomes clearer. At the last stage, the Holy Name reveals your unique spiritual identity, including your spiritual body, character traits, and the particular service you have for Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa in the spiritual world.

THE REAL NAME VERSUS THE SHADOW NAME

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura states in *Harināma-cintāmaṇi* (3.15) that if we chant with no awareness of our relationship with Kṛṣṇa, we will attain only a shadow of the Holy Name, not the real Name. What will happen when you eat only a shadow of a meal? You remain hungry and will feel the need to go elsewhere to satisfy your appetite. Similarly, we tend to seek happiness in illusory things when we taste only a shadow of the Holy Name. Our heart feels spiritually weak and we become willing to offend the Holy Name. By these *anarthas*, or acts against our own interest, our spiritual progress can be almost permanently blocked.

To end “shadow chanting” Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura in his *Harināma-cintāmaṇi*, (3.25) recommends a simple meditation that fixed the mind in a correct understanding of our position in relation to Kṛṣṇa (*sambandha-jñāna*):

This, then, is an effective cure for the spiritual undernourishment that will force us to remain attached to this world. Chanting with a sense of relationship is nourishing. You are a soul, a part of Kṛṣṇa. You are in this world only to realize your relationship with him. Here is a powerful prayer to facilitate this awakening:



‘kṛṣṇa, tomāra haṇa’ yadi bale eka-bāra māyā-bandha haite kṛṣṇa tāre kare pāra

One is immediately freed from the clutches of māyā if he seriously and sincerely says: ‘My dear Lord Kṛṣṇa, although I have forgotten You for so many long years in the material world, today, I am surrendering unto You. I am Your sincere and serious servant. Please engage me in Your service.’ (Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya 22.33)

TRY THIS:

Before starting to chant pray, “My dear Lord Kṛṣṇa, although I’ve forgotten You for so many long years in the material world, today, I’m surrendering unto You. I’m Your sincere and serious servant. Please engage me in Your service.”

Then consciously address Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, whose Names you chant.