

Namaparadha, Namabhasa, and Shuddha Nama

It is mandatory to know the difference between *Namaparadha* (**Offences against the Holy Name**), *Namabhasa* (**Semblance of the Holy Name**) and *Shuddha Nama* (**Pure Holy Name**) from a genuine *Jagat Guru* or World Preceptor in the Preceptorial Line of Succession for attaining the ultimate aim of human life which is Sri Krishna Prema. Mechanical and unscientific chanting of the Holy names even for crores of ages will not benefit us if we wish to attain Sri Krishna Prema.

These three stages viz. *Namaparadha*, *Namabhasa* and *Shuddha Nama* can be compared with darkness, twilight and light respectively. Twilight dispels darkness. Similarly the darkness of *Namaparadha* is removed when *Namabhasa* dawns on the horizon of one's mind. Both the darkness of *Namaparadha* and *Namabhasa* vanish when the bright light of the divine sun of *Shuddha Nama* or the Pure Holy Name appears in the horizon of our *vishuddha-sattva* or super pure existence full of love for Sri Krishna.

Namaparadha is the worst stage. It can yield worldly enjoyments or *bhukti* (opposite of Bhakti) only. One who commits *Namaparadha* can never go beyond this material universe. Sufferings are in store for such a person in every other birth as *Namaparadha* is many times heavier than all other offences and sins. Hence a true *Guru* or Divine Master will always instruct his disciples to be cautious about the offences against the Holy Name.

Namabhasa is a better stage. It frees us from the bondage of *Maya*. It enables us to chant the Name without offence. With the appearance of *Namabhasa* all kinds of evils like sins, offences etc. automatically disappear from our minds. It yields *mukti* or liberation. The mind thus freed from all worldliness can take to the chanting of the pure Holy Name of the Lord. However neither *Namaparadha* nor *Namabhasa* is desirable for those who desire Sri Krishna Prema.

For such devotees nothing less than **Shuddha Nama or Pure Names of the Lord** will be beneficial. The pure Name of the Lord is one and the same with Sri Krishna Himself. They are identical. However Krishna's Name is more merciful and kind than Krishna Himself. Pure *Nama* yields Krishna Prema or Divine Love for Krishna. This is called the *Panchama Purushartha* or the fifth object of human pursuit. The joys of pursuing *dharma*, *artha*, *kama* and *moksha* (religion, wealth, material desires and liberation) dwindle into insignificance in front of the ever-renewing and ever-increasing bliss of *Sri Krishna Prema* or Divine Love for Sri Krishna. This *Prema* is the result of offenceless chanting of the Names of Sri Krishna. This kind of divine love or *Prema* is the summum bonum of human life.

It is important to know what is meant by Namaparadha. *Srila Vyasdeva* has most mercifully discussed in the *Padma Purana* a list of the ten offences most frequently committed against the Holy Names. Offences are different and graver than sins. To read about the ten offences in detail refer to the discourse: [Ten offences against the Holy Names of the Lord](#).

What is Namabhasa or Semblance of the Holy Name?

It is that condition of the chanter where there is no offence against the Holy Name but at the same time there is no loving relationship with the Lord.

Even before sunrise, the sun dispels darkness and drives away thieves, fierce animals etc by its faint light. Similarly the Name-Sun has not yet risen; but its twilight appearance is *Namabhasa* which drives away sins, offences, ignorance, worldly attachment and all other evils and illumines the heart, making it fit for serving the Pure Holy Name.

Namabhasa is of four kinds:

1. **Sanketa:** means to utter the Lord's Name while aiming at something else or calling somebody else.

Example: *Ajamila* performed *Namabhasa* at the time of his departure from this world by calling his youngest son *Narayana* (The Lord's Name). In this case he actually wanted to call his son and not the Lord. Yet by dint of *Namabhasa* he became free from all sins and liberated from the clutches of *Maya*. Then he performed *Shuddha Nama bhajan* or pure chanting of the Names of the Lord and attained *Vaikuntha*, the Abode of Lord *Narayana*.

2. **Parihas:** means to utter the Names of the Lord while mocking at or mimicing someone. If such an utterer has no offence it is considered to be *Namabhasa*.
3. **Stobh:** means to utter the Lord's Names while singing some songs or uttering some words. In this case the person is unmindful of the Lord's Name that comes in his songs or words. Yet it is considered *Namabhasa*.
4. **Hela:** means to utter the Lord's Names carelessly i.e. while eating, sleeping, playing and so on.

These four types of *Namabhasa* occur ignorantly or without the knowledge of the person uttering the Names of the Lord. If such chanter has no offence, he will attain freedom from *Maya* as a result of *Namabhasa*.

After *Namabhasa*, pure Name appears. Gone is the darkness of night. Gone is the twilight before sun-rise. Now the sun has risen in all its pristine glory. The Name-Sun now reveals His infinite variety of ever-renewing beauty, bliss, love and wonderful pastimes to the chanter. By the grace of the Name, the pure chanter now sees his own identity and the identity of the Lord. In this stage he attains Krishna Prema, the Supreme Need of human life. The more he chants the pure Name, the more he gets increasingly intoxicated with the nectarine bliss of Divine Love towards Krishna and His Names. A pure chanter of the Holy Name is overpowered by eight *Sattwika Bikaras* (Transcendental Symptoms of Love):

1. **Stupor**
2. **Sweat**
3. **Horripilation**
4. **Breaking of Voice**
5. **Tremor**
6. **Pallor**
7. **Tears**
8. **Fainting**

Thakur Srila Bhaktivinode has beautifully depicted this stage in one of his songs of *Saranagati* beginning with the line *Krishnanaam dhare kato bal*.

Srila Rupa Goswamipada, the most intimate and loving associate of Sri *Chaitanya Mahaprabhu* has written a beautiful verse glorifying the Holy Name in his celebrated book *Bidagdha Madhav* (1-12). This verse reveals the transcendental feelings of the heart of a chanter of Pure Name in the following words:

“Tunde tandaviniratim vitanute tundavali labdhaye

Karnakroda-karambini ghatayate Karnarbudevayah spriham,

Chetah prangana-sangini vijayate sarvendriyanam kritim

No jane janita kiyadbhramritaih Krishneti varnadwai.”

“I don’t know what ambrosia the letters of the name of Krishna are made of. Lo! when this Name dances in my mouth, I pine for possessing many a mouth. When this Name enters my ears I yearn for having a hundred million ears. When this name appears as a beloved friend in the courtyard of my heart, the sweetness of His company overpowers the functions of all my senses.”

Results of the pure chanting of *Sri Harinama*

Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, the Redeemer of the fallen souls of *Kali Yuga* has mercifully delineated the seven results of pure chanting of the Names of the Lord in his celebrated *Shri Shikshastakam*:

The chanting of the Holy Names of Sri Krishna, if done properly,

1. Sweeps off all dirt from the mirrors of our hearts
2. Extinguishes the great fire of suffering from the cycle of births and deaths
3. Sheds moonlight upon the lily of eternal good
4. Is the very life of the bride of real learning
5. Swells the ocean of ecstatic bliss
6. Gives the full taste of pure nectar at every utterance
7. And bathes the whole self including the body, mind and soul in Divine Bliss.

Such is the power of the pure Name of Sri Krishna if uttered once. Those who are unable to experience the above results of chanting need to realize that they are not chanting *Shuddha Nama* or the Pure Name. Chanting with offence will not be beneficial even if done for infinite number of years. Serious devotees thus need to make sincere efforts to avoid offenceful chanting.

Transcendental humility and complete surrender to the Preceptor or *Gurudev* is mandatory to be able to reach the level of *Shuddha Nama* or pure chanting. The *Acharyas* also stress the importance of chanting the Names of *Sri Sri Gauranga*, *Nityananda* and Their Divine Associates to avoid committing offences while chanting. These Names are more merciful towards the fallen souls of *Kali Yuga* and give the same benefit as the chanting of the *Hari Nama* or *Maha Mantra*. The Pancha Tattva mantra if chanted sincerely all the time helps devotees to develop attachment for pure Hari Naam.

The Pancha-tattva mantra is as follows:

***Srikrishnachaitanya Prabhu Nityananda,
Sri Advaita Gadadhar Sribasadi Gaurbhaktabrinda.***