

Balvikas: Nama Sankeertana

The method to get to God in our Kali age is Nama Sankeertana. This is the only way we can clear our minds of all the clutter so that we can see God clearly.

What does Nama Sankeertana mean?

Keertanam– singing

Sankeertanam- community singing

Nama – Name

Activity 1

The following passage is from a discourse given by Baba himself on the deeper meaning of Namasankeertana. In your groups read the discourse aloud and answer the questions in your teams.

Devotees recite or sing the names of the Lord in two ways. One is *Keerthanam* and the other is *Sankeerthanam*. *Keerthanam* is done individually and benefits only the devotee concerned. *Sankeerthanam* is done collectively for the good of the world as a whole.

Keerthanam is of various kinds. First is *Guna Keerthana*---praising the qualities and attributes of God through song. Second is *Bhava Keerthana*---expressing the inner feelings and emotions of the devotee. Reflecting the feelings of peace, companionship, yearning, filial love or sweetness experienced by the devotee, these songs give vent to the emotional outpouring of the devotee.

The third is *Leela Sankeerthanam*---praising in song the sports and divine play of the Lord. This is done through singing the *Ashtapadi* (of Jayadeva) or describing the sports and miraculous deeds of the Lord.

The *rasa krida* is also in this category. The fourth is *Nama Sankeerthanam*--- singing the names of the Lord. This is the most efficacious of all forms of devotional singing.

But in actual practice the devotees derive joy from singing all types of devotional songs.

Special significance of Nama Sankeerthana

What is the special significance of *Nama Sankeethana*---singing the names of the Lord? "*Nama*" is made up of three letters: "*Na*" "*aa*", "*ma*". All music is based on the seven *swaras*---the seven notes. According to the science of numerology the letters "*Na*", "*aa*" and "*Ma*" have the numerical values: 0, 2 and 5 making up seven in all. The seven notes are *Sa, ri, ga, ma, pa, da, ni*. The *Gopikas* made use of these seven notes to combine music, rhythm and devotion in the *Rasa Krida* dance with Krishna. In this group dance, the *Gopikas* were so completely lost in devotion and song that they experienced oneness with the Divine. In this way, *Sankeerthan* (community singing) in praise of Krishna became popular and helped to develop devotion and promote collective prayers for the welfare of the world.

Similarly community singing in the name of Rama also came into vogue. Numerologically, the letters in the name of Rama (*Ra+aa+ma*) add up to seven. Besides the seven notes, the mystic number seven is associated with many sacred things like the seven islands, the seven oceans, the seven sages and so on. In accordance with this concept, seven-day festivals and *yajnas* are held.

Samyag keerthanam = Sankeerthanam. Sankeerthanam means singing extremely well.

This means that in community singing, the participant should sing with full-throated joy and deep feeling. He should not bother about his voice or his musical ability. Purity of feeling will make up for everything. Picture the Lord in your heart and utter the Name---then you will feel the joy of singing the. Name. You will also evoke joy in others.

Baba's Discourse at the Prasanthi Mandir, on 8-11-1986, the day of Akhanda Bhajan.

QUESTIONS

- 1) What are the different types of Keertana?
- 2) Which is the best type of keertana and why?
- 3) Nama means name in its ordinary meaning but what is its special significance?
- 4) With what feeling should we sing Bhajans and why?

Activity 2

We have learnt what Bhajans are about and how we should sing them. We also know how much we love Baba so today we are going to have a Bhajan session and close our eyes and sing the following Bhajan with all our hearts, concentrating on the form of Krishna.

When you sing imagine the form of Krishna and your love for him and sing from the heart.

Govinda Narayana Gopala Narayana

Govinda Govinda Narayana

Govinda Gopala Narayana

Govinda Govinda Narayana

Sai Govinda Ananda Gopala Narayana

These are all names of Krishna

Govinda – Lord of the cows as Krishna was a cowherd

Gopala – protector of the cows

Narayana – is another name for Vishnu. Krishna was an avatar or incarnation of Vishnu

Narayana literally means Narayana means "born of water." This is because water, seen as the base principle for life as we know it on earth, the nourisher of plants and animals alike, the very substance of cyclic existence, is essential to preservation. Vishnu, who in avatara form comes down to earth to help preserve dharma, is epitomised by the principle of water, being himself the God of Preservation. As water is commonly seen as being blue, and Vishnu is said to sleep in Yoga Nidra, floating on cosmic waters on Shesha (a snake-god), it is only natural that Vishnu's representations are all blue. By syllogism, it transferred to his great avataara, Krishna.

Ananda – means bliss, this is the highest form of happiness that you can get and you can only get it from being with God

(taken from <http://www.wordiq.com/definition/Krishna>)