



RAM NAVAMI 2013 MESSAGE

Chanting of 'mantras', recital of 'shlokas' and individual or group singing of devotional songs (Aarti) is considered to be an important component of worship, not only pertaining to the Deities, but also the 'Gurus' in Hinduism. As has been found, devotees find it to be an easier task to sing devotional songs like 'Aartis' and 'Bhajans' in comparison with the chanting of 'Mantras' and 'Shlokas'. This is so because the 'Bhajans' and 'Aartis' are written in Hindi or other regional Indian languages and on the other hand, the 'Mantras' and 'Shlokas' are mostly in the Vedic style of Sanskrit, written thousands of years ago. Some of them were created even before the formulation of the Sanskrit language. The 'Puranas', were written in a later period, somewhere between the 6th Century AD and the 14th Century AD.

Generally this part of the puja activity, i.e., recital of 'mantras' and Sanskrit 'shlokas', in temples and even homes is delegated to the 'Punditji' and 'Pujari'. Many such 'Pandits' and 'Pujaris' are found to be ignorant about the real purport or the complete meaning of the 'Mantras' and 'Shlokas'. Some of them just go on reciting these as a matter of professional habit. At times the pronunciation of Sanskrit is highly defective and conveys different and awkward meanings. If the original authors of the 'Mantras' could listen to the present day archaic style of presentation, they would perhaps turn in their graves. Further, there are 'Mantras' for every occasion, be it a deity's birthday or death anniversary of some one's father. However, one comes across erudite 'Pundits' in some temples, but they are rarely to be found.

Thus the ignorant but gullible devotee is waylaid in the devotional path by some of these so called 'Punditji's at huge cost of their time, money and energy. The unfortunate devotee has no choice but to agree to whatever the 'Punditji' says, does or prescribes to be done, with the fear of losing God's blessings or incurring a divine

curse or losing the good will of the 'Punditji' who often usurps the role of an intermediary between God and his devotees!

What the simple devotee does not understand is that the entire system of worship of God or 'Guru' is meant to establish and sustain an emotional rapport between the God or 'Guru' and the devotees. That is possible only when the devotee is truthful in his emotional beseechment or prayers. This part can't be delegated to the 'Punditji' to be manipulated through the process of uttering of a few Sanskrit words (Mantras), the meaning of which, he may not be aware of.

That is why the enlightened souls like Shri Nanakji ('Guru Vani' written in Gurumukhi), Shri Tulsi Das ('Shri Rama CharitaManas' written in Hindi), Shri Sharala Das (Mahabharata written in Odia) and many others had tried to make it easy for the devotee to develop a direct emotional bond with God (or the Deity) by giving vent to his feelings through the medium of regional, local and understandable language. In Maharashtra, saint Tukaram wrote 'abhangs' in Marathi language and in Bengal, Shri Ramakrishna Paramahansa used to deliver his discourses in simple Bengali language and style. Such changes brought about by these enlightened souls were fully accepted by the common man of the society and were highly beneficial in their spiritual progress. Shri Shirdi Sai Baba also prescribed His devotees to appeal to God in a faithful and truthful spirit in whatever language the devotee found it to be easy to do so. Therefore, the devotees, who recite mantras, should try to understand the meaning of the 'Mantras' and 'Shlokas' and then recite them during worship and prayer, rather than doing it mechanically. Worship (Puja) without Bhava (devotional emotion) is an exercise in futility. Bhava is the pulsation of heart uniting the human soul with God and there is no role of an intermediary character.

Shirdi Sai used to tell His devotees just to recite His name Sai-Sai lovingly. History has shown that numerous simple, uneducated (in the formal sense of the term) but faithful souls realised God in this manner.

MAY SHRI SAI BLESS US ALL

Jai Shri Sai.

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