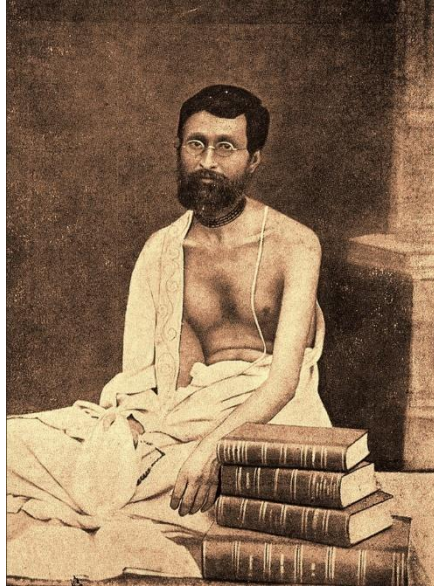


Mindfulness

Achieving Mindfulness has one primary obstacle: a distracted restless mind!

Distracted chanting can be overcome via the following instruction of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura. His instruction flowed from deep personal realization, having completed a 9-year vow begun at the age of 31: chanting 192 rounds per day [!!], or 300,000 names daily, to complete one billion names. How strong his mind had become, one can only conjecture.



Key Lesson: The ear has the power to conquer the distracted mind.



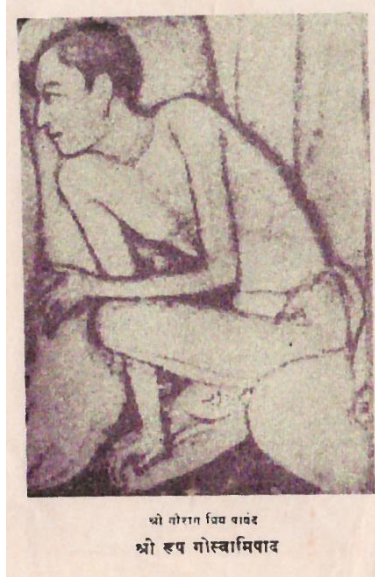
“The name of the Lord and the Lord Himself are not two separate entities, but one. When the sound of the Holy Name passes over the lips, the conditioned sense of hearing and the conditioned consciousness initially process the sound as if it were material, and that is how it is perceived. As a result, only the external ear hears it.

Since the other senses and the mind, which is the collector of sensory experience, are envious of the ear, which they consider to be an equal partner, the result is that such chanting does not affect the cleansing of anarthas.

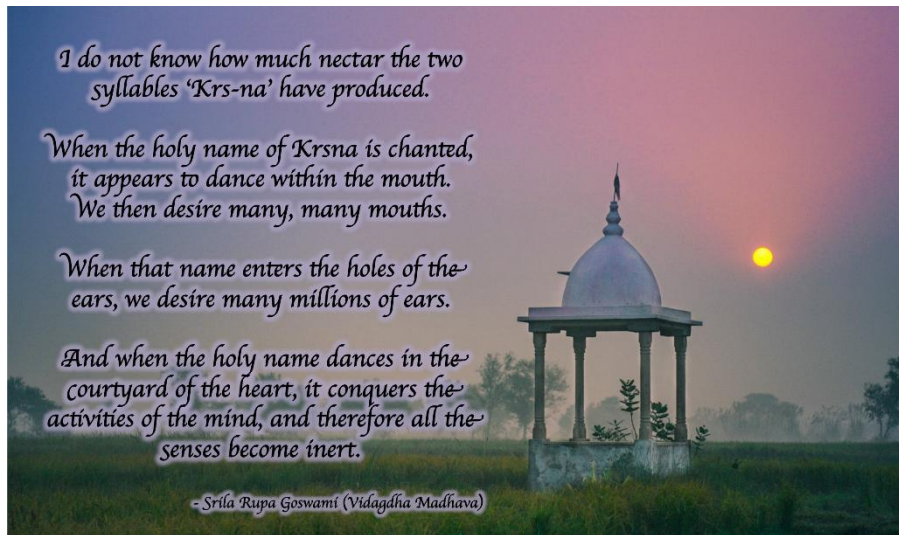
We do not have the capacity even to theoretically know that the name and the Lord of the name are one. Yet, just as piercing of the ear is one of the Vedic rites for a young child, **when our spiritual ear has been pierced by the Holy Name, the other senses give up their envy of the auditory sense.** They no longer quibble with the ear, which alone can perceive transcendental sound. Then the flood of prema pours forth from all the spiritual senses and cleans away the contaminants of opposition and malice.



Thereafter the Lord's beautiful form, qualities, associates, and pastimes are revealed in the name Himself, and experienced by the chanter as something quite distinct from his previous experiences in the mundane world. Then the kinds of worries and distractions of the mind that are typical of the conditioned living being cannot remain...



In poetic expression, Rupa Gosvami taught the same message in his *Vidagdha-mādhava*.



When the mind is stunned, or conquered, the heart feels a natural happiness - unknown within ordinary material conscious experience. In such a state of mind, the nectar of the Holy Name is accessed, naturally.



Assignment: Every day for the next 28 days, when chanting your japa, strive with each and every mantra to hear the Name with maximum attention. At the conclusion of your japa each day, in written form note two things: (a) Evaluate from 1-10 your effort to hear the Name; –AND- (b) make note of what happened at the heart level as a result. Each week, submit a report to a friend or a mentor, for sake of accountability.