

# Loud Chanting Is the Most Excellent Form of Chanting

Once there was an impious *brāhmaṇa* who lived in the village of Harinadī. One day, he once angrily said to Haridāsa.

“O Haridāsa, what is this behavior? Why are you are loudly chanting the names of the Lord? The injunction is that one should chant in his mind. Which scripture says that one should chant loudly? Who has taught you to chant the name of Hari loudly? Please give your explanation before this assembly of learned scholars.”

Haridāsa said, “You all know the glories of Lord Hari’s Holy Names. Therefore I have simply repeated and will repeat whatever I have heard from you. If one chants loudly, he gets one hundred times more benefit. The scriptures never condemn loud chanting, rather they glorify it.

*The result one achieves by mentally chanting the names of Hari is multiplied one hundred times by chanting loudly. This is the injunction of all scriptures. It is a fact that by chanting loudly one obtains one hundred times greater results. And there is no fault in such chanting. It is to be understood that those who consider the Hare Kṛṣṇa mahā-mantra should only be chanted softly in japa are averse to realizing the purport of the scriptures. The three names of address—Hare, Kṛṣṇa, and Rāma—are meant both for japa and kīrtana. One can call the Lord in his mind or out loud. If one calls the Lord loudly, then many persons can hear the name of the Lord and obtain auspiciousness by such hearing. Hearing the names of the Lord is one of the nine principle limbs of devotional service. Unless the sādhus loudly chant the names of Hari, no one becomes qualified for the devotional process of hearing. Therefore the false arguments of those who are averse to loud chanting are certainly incited by Kali.....but those devotees who chant the names of Hari remove the wicked habits of such victims of Kali and chant the unlimited glories of the Holy Names for the eternal benefit of such people. This is the actual medicine for their argument-infected hearts.*

If one loudly chants the Holy Names of the Lord, he obtains one hundred times more benefit than by chanting softly or remembering the Holy Names.

The *brāhmaṇa* said, “How does one get one hundred times more benefit by loud chanting?”

Haridāsa replied, “My dear sir, listen to the verdict of the *Vedas* and *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* in this regard.”

Haridāsa then revealed the purport of all the scriptures as he began his explanation in the ecstasy of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

“Listen, dear *brāhmaṇa*. If even animals, birds, or insects hear the Holy Names from the mouth of a pure devotee, they will go to Vaikuṅṭha. Although animals, birds, and

insects cannot chant, when they hear the Holy Names they will all be delivered. If one silently chants the names of Kṛṣṇa, then he is delivered; but if one loudly chants, then he delivers others also.

*One who softly chants the transcendental names benefits only himself, whereas one who loudly and congregationally chants the transcendental names can benefit the audience along with himself. Only a spiritual master who is engaged in kṛṣṇa-kīrtana is compassionate to all living entities and able to perform the highest welfare activities for all.*

Therefore the scriptures say that one gets a hundred times more benefit by chanting loudly. One who loudly chants the Holy Names of the Lord is a hundred times greater than one who silently chants, because those who chant silently purify only themselves, while those who chant loudly purify themselves as well as those who hear them. The *Purāṇas* say that a person who chants the Lord's name loudly is a hundred times more pious than the person who chants to himself.

*Persons who loudly and congregationally chant the Holy Names of Hari obtain one hundred times better results than those who chant the Holy Names softly. If a person secretly hears some ordinary words on the pretext of hearing hari-nāma from a foolish so-called guru and, being tempted by material enjoyment, engages in motivated worship, then he will never achieve eternal auspiciousness. Whereas if one loudly chants the pure Holy Names heard from the mouth of a liberated mahā-bhāgavata spiritual master, then other Vaiṣṇavas who hear that chanting will discuss the glories of hari-nāma amongst each other. As a result, the loud chanters are more benefited than the soft chanters. Those who cannot realize the difference between nāma-aparādha, nāmābhāsa, and śuddha-nāma often commit the first of the ten nāma-aparādhās—criticizing a sādhu or Vaiṣṇava who has fully taken shelter of the Holy Names—and they commit the grave offense of disregarding the spiritual master by considering him a mortal being and envying him. They commit offense by considering material objects as worshipable and seeing Lord Viṣṇu, the controller of all, as equal to the demigods. As a result, they become Vaiṣṇava offenders by not having faith in the unalloyed Vaiṣṇavas. They then become inattentive in the service of Śrī Nāma Prabhu, and the offenses of considering the glories of chanting the Holy Names as imaginary and giving some interpretation on the Holy Names capture them. They then consider the Holy Names as equal to pious activities and become attached to committing sinful activities on the strength of chanting the Holy Names. Being greedy for donations, such people accept the garb of a guru and, like common merchants, pretend to give instructions on the Holy Names to faithless people. In this way they bring inauspiciousness to the entire world. Being overwhelmed by thoughts of “I” and “mine,” they gradually become averse to the Vedic literatures and literatures in pursuance of the Vedic version. These ten offenses result in the falldown of such chanters; but by the influence of good association, the loud chanters of the Holy Names understand all these offenses and therefore reject the inconvenience of nirjana-bhajana.*

O *brāhmaṇa*, listen carefully to the reason behind this. One who softly chants the Holy Names liberates only himself. One who loudly chants the names of Govinda, however,

liberates himself along with all living entities who hear him. Although all living entities have a tongue, only the human beings are able to chant the names of Kṛṣṇa. Tell me, what is wrong with that activity by which living entities who have taken useless births will be delivered? One person may maintain himself, while another may maintain a thousand people. Of the two, consider carefully who is better. This is the superior characteristic of loud chanting.”

*A selfish person maintains himself, whereas another person may maintain a thousand persons apart from himself. Of the two, whom should we accept as greater? If we carefully consider, we will understand that loud chanters are not selfish; rather, they are selfless benefactors of others. Therefore loud chanters are superior to those who only chant softly, and loud chanting is hundreds and thousands of times superior to chanting only softly.*

— **CB Ādi 16.267-72, 73+p, 74-77, 80, 81+p, 82-83, 84+p, 85-89, 90+p**