

Chapter 12: The Three Secrets

1. What are the three secrets in our system (Rahasya Traya)?

The first and the most important is called Ashtakshara. This consists of 8 syllables and is in the form of three words.

The first word is a single syllable Om. The second word is Namaha. The third word is Narayanaya.

So, the ashtakshara is OM NAMO NARAYANAYA. This means “Salutation to Narayana”. We will discuss the deeper meaning later.

2. What is the second secret?

The second secret is called Dvaya. This is in two parts. The first part is “Sriman Narayana Charanau Saranam Prapadye”. This means “I seek refuge at the feet of Sriman Narayana.”

The second part is “Srimate Narayanaya Namaha”. This means “My salutation to Sriman Narayana.” We will discuss the deeper meanings later.

3. What is the third secret?

The third secret is Charama Sloka, which occurs in the last chapter of Bhagavad Gita. This sloka says: “Having already given up dharmas, as a means to attain moksha; surrender yourself fully to Me. I will free you, from all the sins; do not grieve.” These are the words of Krishna.

Here, again we will discuss the inner meanings later.

So, these are the three important secrets which we should know.

4. What is the meaning of the three secrets.

We start with the most important secret, Ashtakshara. This is Om Namō Narayanaya. The Om has three letters A,U & M.

5. What is the meaning of A?

A means Narayana or Vishnu.

6. How do you say that?

There are three reasons.

1) According to Sanskrit dictionary and grammar, A means Vishnu.

2) A is the beginning of all letters. Similarly, Vishnu is the origin of all beings. Hence A denotes Vishnu.

3) The letter A is the shortened form of the Verb “Ava”, which means “to protect”. Since Vishnu is the protector of all the worlds, the letter A means Vishnu, who is the protector.

7. What is the meaning of the letter U?

The letter U means two things. 1) It means Lakshmi. 2) Another meaning is “only”..

8. What does the letter M mean?

The letter M means the soul or Jivatma.

9. How do you say that?

Now the letter M (Ma) is the 25th alphabet among consonants in Sanskrit. Similarly, the soul or Jivatma is the 25th tattva.

10. How do we know that the Jivatma is the 25th tattva?

The first tattva is matter. The second is the mahat. The third is ahankara. Then we have the five gross elements starting with ether, etc. Then five subtle elements, starting with sound, etc. Then we have the five senses of knowledge and then the five senses of action. So, the total number of tattvas so far is $3+20=23$. The 24th tattva is the mind or manas. So, soul or Jivatma is the 25th tattva.

1) Since the letter M (Ma) is the 25th alphabet among consonants in Sanskrit, it means the Jivatma, who is 25th tattva.

2) Secondly, the letter M is derived from the verb, which means “to know”. Jivatma is a knower, who knows things. So also, M denotes the Jivatma.

3) The Letter M is also derived from the verb, which means “measure or limit”. Since the Jivatma is limited in size as atomic, M denotes Jivatma.

Thus M denotes the Jivatma

11. What is the meaning of the word Om?

1) If we take the letter U to mean Lakshmi, then the word Om means that the Jivatma is the servant (sesha) of Vishnu and Lakshmi.

Here we have to take A (and U) with dative (4th) i.e. as “for A and U”. So, M, Jivatma is for A and U; i.e. the servant of A and U, i.e. Vishnu and Lakshmi.

2) Suppose we take the meaning of U as “only”. In this case, this will mean that the Jivatma is subservient to Vishnu only; and to no one else. This includes himself viz; he is not subservient to himself also. Of course Lakshmi always goes with Vishnu.

12. What is the meaning of Namoh or Namaha?

Namaha has two meanings.

1) If you take it as one word, it means salutation or worshipping.

2) The second meaning is got by splitting Namaha as Na and Maha. Then, this will mean “not mine”.

13. Please clarify. What is the meaning of “not mine”?

We have to add M (Jivatma) in the context. There are four meanings:

- 1) I am not mine. I am subservient to the Lord, I belong to the Lord.
- 2) Everything is not mine. In other words, nothing is mine. Everything belongs to the Lord.
- 3) Independence is not mine. I am not independent. I am depending on the Lord.
- 4) Mastership is not mine. I am not the master of anybody, including myself. Narayana is the master of everybody.

So, these are the four meanings of “not mine”.

14. What is the meaning of the word ‘Narayanaya’?

Now we go step by step.

- 1) “ra” means to perish. So, ra denotes achetana, which is perishable.
- 2) “nara” means that which does not perish. Hence, nara means chetana or Jivatma.
- 3) “Nara” means the group of naras or jivatmas.

There is a second interpretation also. Nara means, which does not perish. So, Nara means the Lord also. Nara is also a name in Vishnu Sahasranama.

So, Nara means those belonging to Nara, viz., the Lord . So Nara means Lord’s qualities; and also Jivatmas and achetanas (which belong to Him).

15. What is the meaning of the word Ayana?

The word Ayana has three meanings:-

- 1) a resting place, or support or abode.
- 2) upaya or means.
- 3) fruit or objective.

16. What is the meaning of the word Narayana?

We will take the first meaning of the word, ayana, as the resting place. According to Sanskrit grammar, Narayana (Nara-ayana) means two things:

- 1) One, who is the resting place of Naras i.e. all chetanas and achetanas.
- 2) One whose resting place is Naras, i.e. all chetanas and achetanas.

If you take the first meaning, this means that all things – chetanas and achetanas – exist or abide in Narayana.

If you take the second meaning, this means that Narayana abides or exists in all things. This is possible because He is the soul of all chetanas and achetanas.

Thus, the two meanings show that 1) all chetanas and achetanas rest in Narayana; 2) Narayana rests in all chetanas and achetanas.

17. Please clarify these two meanings.

1) The first meaning shows that He is the resting place of all chetanas and achetanas. All these abide in Him. This shows that He contains all chetanas and achetanas. All chetanas and achetanas are contained in Him. So, He is bigger than all these.

This quality of the Lord is called as Bahirvyapti.

2) The second meaning shows that He rests in all chetanas and achetanas. This shows the exact opposite of 1) above, i.e. He is smaller than all these.

This quality of the Lord is called Antaryyapti.