# Śrī Hari-Nāma Mahā-Mantra

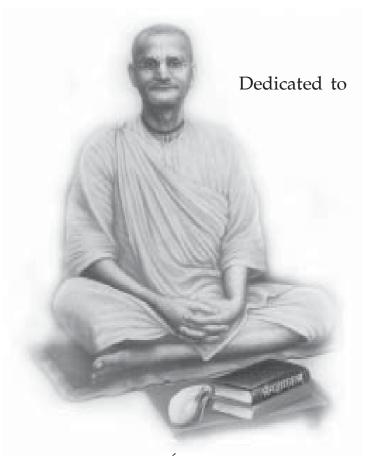
Compiled by

Tridaṇḍisvāmī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja

Gaudīya Vedānta Publications



Tridaṇḍisvāmī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja



the Founder of the Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti and the best amongst the 10th generation of descendants in the Bhāgavat-Paramparā from Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Mahāprabhu

> Śrī Gurupādapadma Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Ācārya Kesarī Nitya-līlā Praviṣṭa Oṁ Viṣṇupāda Aṣṭottaraśata

Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja

#### English titles by Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja:

The Nectar of Govinda-līlā Going Beyond Vaikuntha Bhakti-rasāyana Śrī Prabandhāvalī Śrī Śiksāstaka Śrī Bhakti-rasāmrta-sindhu-bindu Śrī Manah-śiksā Bhakti-tattva-viveka Rays of The Harmonist Śrī Gaudīva Gitī-Guccha The Essence of All Advice Śrī Upadeśāmrta The Pinnacle of Devotion Shower of Love My Śiksā-Guru and Priya-Bandhu Arcana Dīpikā Gaudīya Vaisnavism vs. Sahajiyāism Venu Gīta Secret Truths of the Bhagavata Śrīmad Bhagavad-Gītā Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī—His Life and Teachings

# Published by Gauḍīya Vedānta Publications

#### Books are available from:

Śrī Keśavajī Gaudīya Maṭha Śrī Devānanda Gaudīya Maṭha Mathurā, U.P. 281001, India Navadvīpa, West Bengal, Tel: (0565) 502334 India harekrishna@vsnl.com Tel: 03472-40068

Śrī Rūpa-Sanātana Gaudīya Maṭha Sevā Kuñja, Vṛndāvana U.P. 28112, India Tel: (0565) 443270 Śrī Gour Govinda Gauḍīya Maṭha 32 Handsworth Wood Road Birmingham B20 2DS, England Tel: 0121 682 9159 gourgovinda@hotmail.com

#### Second Edition Purusottama Month 2001

All copyrights reserved by Gaudīya Vedānta Publications

Printed in Singapore

## **Contents**

Śrī Hari-Nāma Mahā-Mantra	1
The Sequence of the Mahā-Mantra	3
Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and the Mahā- Mantra	17
Commentaries on the Mahā-Mantra	
Mādhurya-Mayī	
Aiśvarya-Mayī	
Yugala-Smaraṇa-Mayī	
Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī	
Śrīla Gopāla Guru Gosvāmī	
Śrīla Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī	
Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura	
Pada-kalpataru	
The Glories of Śrī Hari-Nāma	41
Nāma Svarūpa	
In Kali-Yuga Nāma Bestows All Perfection	
The Glories of Nāma as Described by the	
Ancient Ācāryas	42
The Glories of Chanting Nāma Exceed the Glories	of
Direct Brahma Realization	
The Superiority of Nāma Kīrtana	44
The Superiority of Nāma Kīrtana Compared to	
Dhyāna & Pūjā	44
Nāma is not Governed by Rules Regarding Time,	
Place or Circumstance	45
Nāma Saṅkīrtana is the Sādhana & the Sādhya	
for Everyone	46
'Hari-Nāma' by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Thākura	47

Hare Krsna Hare Krsna Krsna Krsna Hare Hare Hare Rāma Hare Rāma Rāma Rāma Hare Hare





# Śrī Hari-Nāma Mahā-Mantra

Ccording to eternal śāstras such as the Vedas, Upaniṣads, Purāṇas and Saṁhitās, the transcendental name (nāma-brahma), hare kṛṣṇa hare kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa hare hare | hare rāma hare rāma rāma rāma hare hare is the mahā-mantra (supreme mantra) for deliverance in Kali-yuga¹. The primary occupational duty (dharma) of this age is to chant and perform saṅkīrtana of this sixteen word mahā-mantra.

The name of Bhagavān is directly the personal form (svarūpa) of Bhagavān. Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa has filled His names with His sweet form, His sweet pastimes and all of His potencies. Bhagavān is the possessor of His name and is thus called nāmī. Although He (nāmī) and His name (nāma) are nondifferent, in certain circumstances, the mercy of nāma-brahma exceeds that of nāmī-brahma. By His causeless mercy Svayam Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa appears in the form of nāma to deliver the conditioned souls. One who is most fortunate takes dīkṣā in śrī-hari-nāma mahā-mantra from a bona fide guru who himself is constantly absorbed in śrī hari-nāma. In this way he worships Śrī Bhagavān by performing congregational chanting of His names (sankīrtana), daily chanting a fixed number of names (japa),

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> A *yuga* is defined as being one age within a cycle of four ages in the life of a universe. They are named Satya, Treta, Dväpara and Kali. Each age has consecutively less good qualities, longevity, auspiciousness, etc. The final, most degraded age is Kali-yuga (the age of quarrel and hypocrisy), in which we are now living. This age lasts for 432,000 years of which 5,000 have already passed.

and remembering Śrī Bhagavān's name (*smaraṇa*). Śāstra states that in Kali-yuga it is more glorious to perform *nāma-sankīrtana* loudly than to perform *nāma-smaraṇa* or *japa*.

japato hari-nāmāni sthāne śata-guṇādhikaḥ ātmānañ ca punāty uccair japan śrotṛn punāti ca (Śrī Nāradīya spoken by Prahlāda Mahārāja)

"A person who chants  $\dot{s}r\bar{\imath}$ -hari-nāma loudly is one hundred times superior to one who chants quietly. The person who chants quietly only benefits and purifies himself, whereas one who chants loudly also benefits and purifies all who hear him, such as animals, insects, birds, trees and creepers. Such entities cannot chant, but they can be delivered from the ocean of birth and death simply by hearing this  $hari-n\bar{a}ma$ ."

Thus, in this age of Kali, the crest-jewel of all kinds of sādhana is to perform saṅkīrtana of the sixteen word harināma mahā-mantra. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu is Pāvana-Avatārī, the most merciful avatāra who purifies Kali-yuga. He therefore instructs us to perform śrī hari nāma-saṅkīrtana—kīrtanīyaḥ sadā hariḥ. (Śrī Śikṣāṣṭaka 3)

The Brhad-Nāradīya-Purāna clearly states:

harer nāma harer nāma harer nāmaiva kevalam kalau nāsty eva nāsty eva nāsty eva gatir anyathā

"To make spiritual progress in Kali-yuga there is no other way, there is no other way, there is no other way than by chanting the holy name, chanting the holy name,"



# THE SEQUENCE OF THE MAHĀ-MANTRA

ne school of thought says that the *mahā-mantra* should be chanted in the following sequence:

hare rāma hare rāma rāma rāma hare hare hare kṛṣṇa hare kṛṣṇa krsna krsna hare hare

This understanding is based on the following points:

- 1) The *Kali-santaraṇa Upaniṣad*, published by Venkatesh Press, Mumbai, states that this *mahā-mantra* begins with the words *hare rāma hare rāma rāma hare hare* followed by *hare krsna hare krsna krsna krsna hare hare*.
- 2) In a book called *Kalyāṇa* from Gorakhpura, the *mahā-mantra* is written in the above mentioned sequence.
- 3) Śrī Rāma appeared in Tretā-yuga. Later Śrī Kṛṣṇa appeared in Dvāpara-yuga. It is therefore logical to chant hare rāma first and then hare krsna.

The above mentioned views are both illogical and unfounded:

- 1) Earlier publications of the *Kali-santaraṇa Upaniṣad* by Venkatesh Press, Mumbai, clearly state that the *mahā-mantra* begins with *hare kṛṣṇa* and not with *hare rāma*. These earlier publications are still preserved in libraries in Calcutta and Jaipura.
- 2) *Kalyāṇa*, published by Gītā Press, Gorakhpura, is not a bona fide proof with which to support the above perspective.

3) That Tretā-yuga is followed by Dvāpara-yuga has no effect on the eternal *mahā-mantra*. The *mahā-mantra* is beyond all *yugas* and time.

This topic can only be understood by chanting the *brahma mahā-mantra*, the deliverer of all *yugas*. Reference to Śrī Bhagavān's names in the different *yugas* can be found in the *Ananta-Saṃhitā*:

Satya-yuga:

nārāyaṇa-parā vedāh nārāyaṇa-parākṣarāḥ nārāyaṇa-parā-muktiḥ nārāyaṇa-parā-gatiḥ

"Nārāyaṇa is declared the Supreme in all the *Vedas*. Nārāyaṇa is the supreme combination of all letters. Realization of Nārāyaṇa is the supreme liberation. Nārāyaṇa is the supreme goal of life"

Tretā-yuga:

rāma nārāyaṇānanta mukunda madhusūdana kṛṣṇa keśava kaṁsāre hare vaikuṇṭha vāmana

"He Rāma! He Nārāyaṇa! He Ānanta! He Mukunda! He Madhusūdana! He Kṛṣṇa! He Keśava! He Kaṁsāre! He Hare! He Vaikuntha! He Vāmana!"

Dvāpara-yuga:

hare murāre madhu-kaiṭabhāre gopāla govinda mukunda śaure yajñeśa nārāyaṇa kṛṣṇa viṣṇo nirāśrayam mām jagadīśa rakṣa

"Hare, Murāre, Madhu-Kaiṭabhāre, Gopāla, Govinda, Mukunda, Śaure (Lord of all *yajñas*), Nārāyaṇa, Kṛṣṇa, Viṣṇu! *He* Jagadīśa, please protect me! I have no other shelter."

Kali-yuga:

hare kṛṣṇa hare kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa hare hare hare rāma hare rāma rāma rāma hare hare

sodaśaitāni nāmāni dvātrimśad varņakāni hi kalau yuge mahā-mantraḥ sammato jīva-tāraṇe

"Hare kṛṣṇa hare kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa hare hare | hare rāma hare rāma rāma rāma hare hare. This hari-nāma mahāmantra consists of sixteen names and thirty-two syllables. In Kali-yuga this mantra can deliver all jīvas."

Thus, in regard to the third point, it is evident that the *brahma mahā-mantra* (Kṛṣṇa's name) was present as the deliverer even in Tretā-yuga, before the appearance of Kṛṣṇa in Dvāpara-yuga, with names such as Mukunda, Madhusūdana, Kṛṣṇa, Keśava and Kamsāri. Therefore, the advice and arguments given about the reversed sequence of the *mahā-mantra* are invalid.

The ślokas of the Ananta-Samhitā clearly state that in the Upaniṣads, such as the Kali-santaraṇa Upaniṣad, the mahā-mantra is written in the following sequence: hare kṛṣṇa hare kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa hare hare / hare rāma hare rāma rāma hare hare.

Nāradajī received the *mahā-mantra* in this sequence from his *guru*, Brahmājī, and this tradition is still practiced today in the Brahma-Mādhva-Gauḍīya-Vaiṣṇava-Sampradāya. In other *sampradāyas*, however, this *mahā-mantra* does not descend through the *guru-paramparā*, and therefore its secret and sequence are unknown to per-

sons in those *sampradāyas*. It is no wonder that they reverse the sequence of the *mahā-mantra* and begin it with *hare rāma*.

Other bona fide *śāstras* give evidence regarding the form of the *mahā-mantra*:

śiṣyasyodaṅmukha-sthasya harer nāmāni ṣoḍaśa saṁśrāvyaiva tato dadyān mantraṁ trai-lokya-maṅgalam

(Śrī-jñānāmṛta-sāra)

"Śrī Gurudeva should recite the sixteen word hare kṛṣṇa mantra to the disciple before initiating him into the gopāla-mantra, which brings auspiciousness to the three worlds. To receive this gopāla-mantra, the disciple must sit facing north and receive the mantra in his right ear."

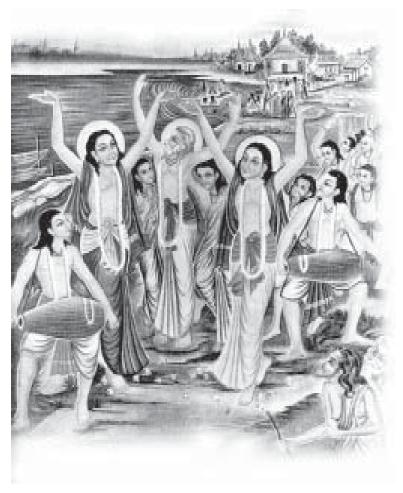
In *śāstras* such as the *Brahma Yāmala*, Lord Śiva describes the *svarūpa* (form) of the *mahā-mantra*:

harim vinā nāsti kiñcat pāpa-nistārakam kalau tasmāl lokoddhāranārtham hari-nāma prakāśayet

sarvatra mucyate loko mahā-pāpāt kalau yuge hare-kṛṣṇa-pada-dvandvam kṛṣṇeti ca pada-dvayam

tathā hare-pada-dvandvam hare-rāma iti dvayam tad-ante ca mahā-devi rāma rāma dvayam vadet

hare hare tato brūyād hari-nāma samuccararet mahā-mantram ca kṛṣṇasya sarva-pāpa-pranāśakam iti "He Mahādevī! Look! In Kali-yuga there is no easier way to eradicate sins other than śrī hari-nāma. It is therefore essential to propagate śrī hari-nāma among the general populace. The people in Kali-yuga can be easily liberated from the greatest hell by performing saṅkīrtana of this mahā-mantra. To chant the mahā-mantra, first chant hare kṛṣṇa twice, then chant kṛṣṇa twice, then hare twice. After that, chant hare rāma twice, then rāma twice and again hare twice. One should chant, articulate and perform sankīrtana etc., of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's mahā-mantra, which destroys all sins." This is described in these two stanzas.



The Rādhā Tantra states:

śṛṇu mātar mahā-māye viśva-bīja-svarūpiṇi hari-nāmno mahāmāye kramanavat sureśvari

"A bhakta prays, 'He viśva-bīja-svarūpiṇi (seed of the universe)! Sureśvari (who are worshipable by the demigods)! Mahāmāyā! Mātā! Please hear my prayer and explain to me the sequence of the mahā-mantra.' "

In response to this, Devī says:

hare kṛṣṇa hare kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa hare hare hare rāma hare rāma rāma rāma hare hare dvātrimśad akṣarāṇy eva kalau nāmāni sarvadam etan mantram putra-śreṣṭha prathamam śṛṇuyān naraḥ

"O best among sons! The *mahā-mantra* for Kali-yuga bestows all perfection. This *mahā-mantra*, Śrī Kṛṣṇa *nāma*, is composed of sixteen names and thirty-two syllables: *hare kṛṣṇa hare kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa hare hare | hare rāma hare rāma rāma hare hare*. Therefore, a person who desires his own welfare should first hear this *mahā-mantra* from his Gurudeva."

In the same *Rādhā-Tantra*, Tripurā Devī also suggests:

hari-nāmnā vinā putra dīkṣā ca viphalā bhavet guru-deva-mukhāc chrutvā hari-nāma parākṣaram

brāhmaṇa-kṣatra-viṭ-śūdrāḥ śrutvā nāma parākṣaram dīkṣām kuryuḥ suta-śreṣṭha mahā-vidyā-su-sundara "O best among sons, you are conversant with the greatest  $j\bar{n}\bar{a}na$ . Look! If you hear the  $gop\bar{a}la$ -mantra from Śrī Gurudeva before hearing the hare kṛṣṇa mahā-mantra, the results of the  $gop\bar{a}la$ -mantra will become void. Therefore, persons of all varṇas, such as  $br\bar{a}hmaṇas$  and kṣatriyas, first have to hear this  $mah\bar{a}$ -mantra from Śrī Gurudeva before they accept initiation into the  $gop\bar{a}la$ -mantra."

The Padma-Purāna also states:

dvātrimsad akṣaram mantram nāma ṣoḍasakānvitam prajapan vaiṣṇavo nityam rādhā-krsna-sthalam labhet

"Any Vaiṣṇava who constantly chants the hare kṛṣṇa mahā-mantra, which is endowed with sixteen names consisting of thirty-two syllables, will certainly attain the abode of Śrī Śrī Rādhā Krsna in Goloka Vrndāvana Dhāma."

In the *Rādhā-Ḥṛdaya-Khaṇḍa* of the *Brahmāṇḍa-Purāṇa*, Romaharsana Sūta prays to Śrī Veda Vyāsa as follows:

yat tvayā kīrtitam nātha hari-nāmeti samjñitam mantram brahma-padam siddhi karam tad vada no vibho

"He Vibho! He Prabhu! Please instruct me in the  $brahma-svar\bar{u}pa$   $n\bar{a}ma-mantra$  of Śrī Hari which is the bestower of all perfections."

In reply, Śrī Veda Vyāsa gives the following instruction:

grahaṇād yasya mantrasya dehī brahma-mayo bhavet sadyaḥ pūtaḥ surā-po 'pi sarva-siddhi-yuto bhavet tad aham te 'bhidhāsyāmi mahā-bhāgavato hy asi

hare kṛṣṇa hare kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa hare hare hare rāma hare rāma rāma rāma hare hare

iti şodasakam nāmnām tri-kāla-kalmasāpaham nātaḥ parataropāyaḥ sarva-vedesu vidyate

"O my son, I will certainly instruct you in that mahā-mantra, the acceptance of which a person in the bodily conception of life can be liberated and even a drunkard can quickly become purified and attain all perfection. I will instruct you because you are a mahā-bhāgavata and a suitable candidate. Just see! The sixteen word mahā-mantra, hare kṛṣṇa hare kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa hare hare | hare rāma hare rāma rāma rāma hare hare, can destroy the sins of the three worlds. The four Vedas do not mention a method for achieving liberation from material bondage superior to the chanting of this mahā-mantra."

#### Ananta-Samhitā also states:

hare kṛṣṇa hare kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa hare hare hare rāma hare rāma rāma rāma hare hare

sodasaitāni nāmāni dvā-trimsad varņakāņi hi kalāu yuge mahā-mantrah sammato jīva-tāraņe utsrjyaitān mahā-mantram ye tv anyat kalpitam padam mahā-nāmeti gāyanti te sāstra-guru-langhinaḥ

"All śāstras agree that the hare kṛṣṇa mahā-mantra, which is composed of sixteen names and thirty-two syllables, is the

supreme *mantra* for delivering the *jīvas* in Kali-yuga. Those who neglect this *mahā-mantra* and accept any other process, due to their own imagination or the imagination of others, disobey *guru* and *śāstra*. If someone asks, 'Why is this sixteen word *hare kṛṣṇa mantra* the *mahā-mantra*?' then the following answer is given. 'Among all of Kṛṣṇa's names, no name other than Hari can easily take away sins, great misfortune and ignorance. No name other than Kṛṣṇa can deliver *prema*. And no name other than Rāma can bestow liberation.' This is why the *mahā-mantra* is composed of these three primary names. Secondly, these sixteen names are an invocation. Thus *oni*, *namaḥ*, *klīm*, *svāhā*, etc., are not required to make the *mantra* more potent. For this reason it is called the *mahā-mantra*."

#### The Sanat-Kumāra-Samhitā states:

hare kṛṣṇau dvir āvṛttau kṛṣṇa tādṛk tathā hare hare rāma tathā rāma tathā tādṛk hare punaḥ hare kṛṣṇa hare kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa hare hare hare rāma hare rāma rāma rāma hare hare

This means first chant hare kṛṣṇa twice, then kṛṣṇa twice, followed by hare twice. Then chant hare rāma twice, rāma twice and then hare twice. By this we get the mahāmantra, hare kṛṣṇa hare kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa hare hare | hare rāma hare rāma rāma rāma hare hare.

In the *Yajur Veda*, the *Kali-santaraṇa Upaniṣad* also describes the *svarūpa* and glories of the *mahā-mantra* in this way:

hariḥ om. dvāparānte nārado brahmāṇam jagāma katham bhagavan! gām paryaṭan kalim santareyam iti. sa hovāca brahmā sādhu pṛṣto 'smi sarva-śruti-rahasyam gopyam tac chrnu yena kali-samsāram tarisyasi. bhagavata ādi-purusasya nārāyaṇasya nāmoccāraṇa-mātreṇa nirdhūta-kalir bhavati. nāradaḥ punaḥ papraccha. tan-nāma kim iti? sa hovāca hiraṇya-garbhaḥ, "hare kṛṣṇa hare kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa hare hare | hare rāma hare rāma rāma rāma hare hare." iti ṣoḍaśakam nāmnām kali-kalmaṣa-nāśanam. nātaḥ parataropāyaḥ sarva-vedeṣu dṛśyate. iti ṣoḍaśa-kalāvṛtasya jīvasyāvaraṇa-vināśanam. tataḥ prakāśate param brahma meghāpāye raviraśmi-maṇdalīveti. punar nāradaḥ papraccha. bhagavan ko 'sya vidhir iti? sa hovāca nāsya vidhir iti. sarvadā śūcir aśucir vā paṭhan brahmaṇaḥ sa-lokatām samīpatām sa-rūpa tām sāyujyatām iti.

"At the end of Dvārapa-yuga, Śrī Nārada went to Śrī Brahmā, and, after offering his obeisances inquired, 'O Lord, how can I cross beyond the influence of this age of Kali while wandering on this earthly planet?'

"Brahmājī replied, 'O son, you have asked an excellent question. Please hear the most confidential secret of the entire *Vedas* by which you can easily cross this world of Kali. By uttering the name of that *ādi-puruṣa* who is Bhagavān Śrī Nārāyaṇa (Kṛṣṇa), the personality of Kaliyuga begins to tremble.'

"Nāradajī further inquired, 'Which name of Śrī Bhagavān and what is its svarūpa?'"

"In reply Brahmājī said, 'Hare kṛṣṇa hare kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa hare hare | hare rāma hare rāma rāma rāma hare hare. This mahā-mantra, thus composed of sixteen names, can completely destroy all the sins of Kali-yuga. A superior sādhana does not appear in the entire Vedas. The mahā-mantra is covered by sixteen qualities, which means that it can destroy the five gross elements (pañca-bhūta) and the eleven senses which cover the jīva. Then Parambrahma manifests before the jīva, just like the sun whose rays shine brightly when the clouds' covering is removed.'

"Nāradajī then asked, 'Oh Lord, what are the rules and regulations for chanting this *mahā-mantra*?'

"Brahmājī said, 'There are no rules and regulations for chanting this *mahā-mantra*. One can chant in a pure or an impure state. Moreover, by clearly pronouncing this *mahā-mantra*, one can attain *brahma* (*salokya*, *samīpya*, *sarūpya* and *sāyujya*). Not only that, one can attain *kṛṣṇa-prema*, the fifth goal of human life (*pañcama-puruṣārtha*)."

Śrī Bhakti-Chandrika, 7th Paṭala states:

atha mantra-varam vakṣye dvātrimśad akṣarānvitam sarva-pāpa-praśamanam sarva-durvāsanānalam

catur-varga-pradam saumyam bhakti-dam prema-pūrvakam durbuddhi-haraṇam śuddha sattva-buddhi-pradāyakam

sarvārādhyam sarva-sevyam sarveṣām kāma-pūrakam sarvādhikāra-samyuktam sarva-lokaika-bāndhavam

sarvākarsaṇa-samyuktam duṣṭa-vyādhi-vināśanam dīkṣā-vidhi-vihīnam ca kālākāla-vivarjitam vāṇ-mātreṇārcitam bāhya pūjā-vidhy-anapekṣakam jihvā-sparśana-mātreṇa sarveṣām phala-dāyakam deśa-kālāniyamitam sarva-vādi-susammatam

"This mahā-mantra is endowed with thirty-two syllables and can destroy all sins. Just as fire destroys, this mahā-mantra can destroy all evil habits and bestow dharma, artha, kāma and mokṣa. Its beautiful form (svarūpa) is capable of stealing all of one's foolish, ignorant mentality,

and it is the giver of  $\acute{s}uddha$ -sattvika intelligence. It bestows the symptoms of  $\emph{prema-bhakti}$ . It is worshipable and is worthy of being served by all.  $\acute{S}r\bar{\imath}$   $n\bar{a}ma$  fulfills everyone's desires. All are qualified to serve this  $\emph{mah\bar{a}-mantra}$ , meaning all are qualified to perform  $\emph{saṅk\bar{\imath}rtana}$  of the  $\emph{mah\bar{a}-mantra}$ . This  $\emph{mah\bar{a}-mantra}$  is the personal well-wisher of everyone and is endowed with the potency to attract all. It is the destroyer of all afflictions. It does not consider the rules of  $\emph{d\bar{\imath}k}$ , and is not restricted by time. The  $\emph{mah\bar{a}-mantra}$  is worshipped just by saying it. No external paraphernalia is required. It is capable of giving results simply by its contact with the tongue, without considering the rules pertaining to time, place and circumstance."

The Pippalāda branch of the Athārva-Veda states:

sva-nāma-mūla-mantreṇa sarvam hlādayati vibhuḥ sa eva mūla-mantram japati harir iti krsna iti rāma iti

"That mahā-mantra, which is composed of the name, form, etc., of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the origin of all avatāras, is making everyone joyful. He Himself, in the form of Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Mahāprabhu, is clearly chanting the hare kṛṣṇa mahā-mantra, the source of all mantras."

The following *śloka* explains the result of performing *kīrtana* etc. of the *mahā-mantra*:

mantro guhyaḥ paramo bhakti-vedyaḥ nāmāny aṣṭāv aṣṭa ca śobhanāni tāni nityaṁ ye japanti dhīrās te vai māyām atitaranti nānye paramaṁ mantraṁ parama-rahasyaṁ nityam āvartayati

"The *mahā-mantra* is most confidential and can only be understood through *bhakti*. Eight of its sixteen charming words are *hare kṛṣṇa* and the other eight are *hare rāma*. Therefore, only those intelligent persons who constantly

chant these names will be liberated from  $m\bar{a}y\bar{a}$ —and not others. That is why intelligent persons always chant, perform  $k\bar{\imath}rtana$  of and remember the  $mah\bar{a}$ -mantra."

In the *Brahmāṇḍa-Purāṇa* (Northern Division, Chapter 6) Pippalāda mentions that Vṛṣabhānu Mahārāja once prayed to Kratu Muni, "O Lord, if you want to favour me, then please donate to me the names of Hari." At that moment the saintly Kratu Muni gave him the sixteen name *mahā-mantra*. Therefore, an intelligent person should constantly perform <code>saṅkīrtana</code> of this <code>mahā-mantra</code>: <code>nāma-saṅkīrtanam tasmāt sadā kāryam vipaścitā</code>.

"Once, Śrīmatī Rādhikā was feeling overwhelming distress due to separation from Her beloved Śyāmasundara and She meditated upon meeting Him. To remove Her fire of separation, She began to chant the hare kṛṣṇa mahāmantra. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, who is absorbed in the mood of Śrīmatī Rādhikā, also chanted these names."

Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī

# ŚRĪ CAITANYA MAHĀPRABHU AND THE MAHĀ-MANTRA

rī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, who established the chanting of śrī hari-nāma-saṅkīrtana, instructs the bhaktas to perform saṅkīrtana of the mahā-mantra.

Śrī Vāsudeva Sārvabhauma Bhaṭṭācārya says:

viṣaṇṇa-cittān kali-ghora-bhītān sanvīkṣya gauro hari-nāma-mantram svayam dadau bhakta-janān samādiśat saṅkīrtayadhvam nanu nṛtya-vādyaiḥ

"Out of His causeless mercy, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu Himself gave the *mahā-mantra* to the helpless, fearful *jīvas* of this Kali-yuga, and directed His devotees by saying, 'O *bhaktas*, you should collectively perform *saṅkīrtana* by singing and dancing.'

harer nāma-prasādena | nistaret pātakī janaḥ upadestā svayam krsna | caitanyo jagad-īśvarah

kṛṣṇa-caitanya-devena / hari-nāma-prakāśitam yena kenāpi tat-praptam / dhanyo' sau loka-pāvanaḥ

"By the mercy of hari-nāma, a sinner can also be delivered because the instructor of śrī hari-nāma is the Lord of the universe, Svayam Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Mahāprabhu. Therefore, a person who is fortunate enough to receive this hari-nāma, which has been inaugurated by Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Mahāprabhu Himself, can also purify others by his association."

The great poet Śrīla Kavi Karṇapūra states in his epic poem, Śrī Caitanya-Carita (11-54):

tataḥ śrī-gaurāṅgaḥ samavadad atīva pramudito hare kṛṣṇa hare kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa hare hare hare rāma hare rāma rāma rāma hare hare

"At the time of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's sannyāsa ceremony, the barber who had been asked to shave Him felt morose and was perturbed. Although he held the razor in his hand, he could not bring himself to shave off Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's beautiful hair. Instead he simply wept. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, who was fully immersed in rādhā-bhāva, became deeply pleased and said, 'O Barber! You must constantly and loudly chant hare kṛṣṇa hare kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa hare hare | hare rāma hare rāma rāma hare hare.' Upon hearing these instructions from Śrī Mahāprabhu, that barber began to chant, and, although he continued to weep in distress, he proceeded to shave off Mahāprabhu's hair. He became so absorbed in chanting the mahā-mantra that he manifested horripilation (romañca) and his bodily hairs stood erect (pulaka)."

### Śrī Caitanya-Mangala states:

bāhu prasāriyā prabhu brāhmaņe tulilā tāra ghare bhakti-bhare gāna ārambhilā

brāhmaņera ghara yena haila vṛndāvana hari-nāma śunibāre āise sarva-jana

hare kṛṣṇa hare kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa hare hare hare rāma hare rāma rāma rāma hare hare

"Once Mahāprabhu visited the home of a brāhmaṇa and embraced him. The kīrtana that followed made that home become just like Vrndāvana and a multitude of people gathered to hear and chant the mahā-mantra: hare kṛṣṇa hare kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa hare hare | hare rāma hare rāma rāma rāma hare hare."

Śrī Caitanya Mangala also states:

hare kṛṣṇa nāma prabhu bole nirantara prasanna śrī-mukhe hare kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa bali vijaya hailā gauracandra kutūhalī hare kṛṣṇa hare kṛṣṇa bali prema-sukhe pratyakṣa hailā āsi advaita-sammukhe

"Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu is always chanting śrī nāma. One day when He came to the home of Advaita Ācaryā, His face filled with pleasure as He chanted the hare krsna mahā-mantra."

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmrta states:

kṛṣṇa nāma mahā-mantra ei t'svabhāva yei jape tāra kṛṣṇe upajaye bhāva

(C.c.*Ādi-līlā* 7.83)

"The nature of the *hare kṛṣṇa mahā-mantra* is such that when a person chants it, he immediately develops his loving ecstatic relationship with Kṛṣṇa."

kṛṣṇa viṣayaka premā—parama-purusārtha yāra āge tṛṇa-tulya cāri puruṣārtha (C.c. Ādi-līlā 7.84)

"When the four goals of human life, *dharma* (perfectly performing one's occupational duty), *artha* (accumulating wealth), *kāma* (satisfying one's sensual desires) and *mokṣa* (attaining liberation), stand before *kṛṣṇa-prema*, the fifth and topmost goal, they appear as insignificant as straw in the street."

"pañcama-puruṣārtha—premānandāmṛta-sindḥu brahmādi-ānanda yāra nahe eka bindu" (C.c. Ādi-līlā 7.85)

"The pleasures derived from *dharma*, *artha*, *kāma* and *mokṣa* appear like a drop in the ocean in the presence of a person who has developed *bhāva*."

"kṛṣṇa-nāmera phal' premā, sarva śāstre kaya" (C.c. Ādi-līlā 7. 86)

"The conclusion of all  $\dot{sastra}$  is that the fruit of  $krsna-n\bar{a}ma$  is prema."

kali-kāle nāma-rūpe kṛṣṇa-avatāra nāma haite haya sarva-jagat-nistāra (C.c. Ādi-līlā 17.22)

"The holy name of Śrī Bhagavān, the hare kṛṣṇa mahā-mantra, is His avatāra in this age of Kali. Just by chanting this name, one associates with Śrī Kṛṣṇa directly. Anyone who does this is certainly delivered."

avatari' caitanya kaila dharma pracāraṇa kali-kāle dharma—kṛṣṇa-nāma-saṅkīrtana (C.c. Madhya-līlā 11.98)

"Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu has descended in Kaliyuga to propagate the *dharma* of the age, chanting the holy names of Kṛṣṇa."

> saṅkīrtana-yajñe tāṅre kare ārādhana sei ta sumedhā āra—kali-hata-jana (C.c. Madhya-līlā 11.99)

"A person who worships Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu by performing saṅkīrtana should be considered to possess great intelligence. It is understood that one who does not perform saṅkīrtana has no intelligence and is a victim of Kali."

nirantara kara kṛṣṇa-nāma-saṅkīrtana helāya mukti pābe, pābe prema-dhana (C.c. Madhya-līlā 25.154)

"Always chant *kṛṣṇa-nāma* and you will very easily achieve *mukti*. Finally you will receive the treasure of *kṛṣṇa-prema*."

eka 'nāmābhāse' tomāra pāpa-doṣa yābe āra 'nāma' laite kṛṣṇa-caraṇa pāibe (C.c. Madhya-līlā 25.199)

"Begin to chant the hare kṛṣṇa mahā-mantra and, at the stage of nāmābhāsa, when your chanting is almost pure, all your sinful reactions will be removed. When you perfectly chant hare kṛṣṇa, you will attain the shelter of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet."

nāmera phale kṛṣṇa-pade prema upajaya (C.c. Antya-līlā 3.178)

"The result of chanting  $n\bar{a}ma$  without offence is that a person will awaken his ecstatic love for the lotus feet of Krsna."

kali-kālera dharma—kṛṣṇa-nāma-saṅkīrtana (C.c. Antya-līlā 7.11)

"In Kali-yuga the *dharma* is to chant *kṛṣṇa-nāma-saṅkīrtana.*"

harṣe prabhu kahena— śuna svarūpa-rāma-rāya nāma-saṅkīrtana kalau parama upāya (C.c. Antya-līlā 20. 8)

"In great jubilation Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu said, 'My dear Svarūpa Dāmodara and Rāmānanda Rāya, understand that the easiest way to attain liberation in this age of Kali is by chanting *hari-nāma*.' "

sankīrtana-yajñe kalau kṛṣṇa-ārādhana sei ta sumedhā pāya kṛṣṇera caraṇa (C.c. Antya-līlā 20.9)

"In this age of Kali, the system for worshipping Kṛṣṇa is to perform *yajña* by chanting Śrī Bhagavān's name. Someone who does so is considered to be intelligent, and he will definitely attain the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa."

nāma-saṅkīrtane haya sarvānartha-nāśa sarva-śubhodaya, kṛṣṇa-premera ullāsa (C.c. Antya-līlā 20.11)

"By chanting kṛṣṇa-nāma, one can eradicate all anarthas. In this way all good fortune is awakened and the bliss of kṛṣṇa-pṛema begins."

khāite śuite yathā tathā nāma laya kāla-deśā-niyama nāhi sarva-siddhi haya (C.c. Antya-līlā 20.18)

"One who chants the name while eating or sleeping, regardless of time or place, attains all perfection."

ei mata hañā yei kṛṣṇa-nāma laya śrī-kṛṣṇa-caraṇe tāṅra prema upajaya (C.c. Antya-līlā 20.26)

"A person will definitely awaken *prema* for the lotus feet of Śrī Kṛṣṇa if he chants *kṛṣṇa-nāma* like this."

Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī states in the introduction to his commentary on the *mahā-mantra*:

ekadā kṛṣṇa-virahād dhyāyantī priya-saṅgamam mano-bāṣpa-nirāsārthaṁ jalpatīdaṁ muhur muhuḥ

> hare kṛṣṇa hare kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa hare hare hare rāma hare rāma rāma rāma hare hare

yāni nāmāni virahe jajāpa vārṣabhānavī tānye va tad-bhāva-yukto gauracandro jajāpa ha śrī-caitanya-mukhodgīrṇā hare kṛṣṇeti varṇakāḥ majjayanto jagat premṇi vijayantām tadāhvayāḥ

"Once, Śrīmatī Rādhikā was feeling overwhelming distress due to separation from Her beloved Śyāmasundara and She meditated upon meeting Him. To remove Her fire of separation, She began to chant the hare kṛṣṇa mahāmantra. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, who is absorbed in the mood of Śrīmatī Rādhikā, also chanted these names. Thus, Kṛṣṇa's sixteen names consisting of thirty-two syllables, the hare kṛṣṇa mahā-mantra, came from the lotus mouth of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. May this mahā-mantra, which makes the entire universe become absorbed in kṛṣṇa-prema, be graciously and conspicuously present above all else. Jaya ho! Jaya ho! Let there be complete victory for the mahāmantra!"

Reference to the *mahā-mantra* is also found in the *Brahmānda-Purāna*, *Uttara-khanda*, 6.55:

hare kṛṣṇa hare kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa hare hare hare rāma hare rāma rāma rāma hare hare

"The three names, Hare, Kṛṣṇa, and Rāma, which are in the vocative case, comprise the *mahā-mantra*."

The following *ślokas* from Śrī Caitanya-Bhāgavata also show the supremacy of hari-nāma: (Ādi 14.137,139-143), (Madhya 6.117), (Madhya 23.74-78) and (Madhya 28.28).

Then mahā-bhāgavatas see that their disciples are qualified, meaning that they are grateful, silent, victorious over their senses, pure-hearted and above all, that their hearts are full of attachment (anurāga) to Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Ramaṇa, they bless them by mercifully giving them the hare kṛṣṇa mahā-mantra, which is composed of three words."

Śrī Gopāla Guru Gosvāmī



# COMMENTARIES ON THE MAHĀ-MANTRA

### Mādhurya-Mayī

he *mahā-mantra* consists of three words. Each word is in the vocative case<sup>2</sup>, meaning it is a 'calling out', or an address. These words are Hare, Kṛṣṇa and Rāma.

vijñāpya bhagavat-tattvam cid-ghanānanda-vigraham haraty avidyām tat-kāryam ato harir iti smṛtaḥ

ānandaika-sukhaḥ śrīmān śyāmaḥ kamala-locanaḥ gokulānanda-do nanda nandanah krsna īryate

vaidagdhī sāra-sarvasvam mūrti-līlādhidaivatam śrī-rādhām ramaya nityam rāma ity abhidhīyate

(Brahmāṇḍa-Purāṇa)

"Śrī Bhagavān is sac-cid-ānanda vigraha, the embodiment of eternity, knowledge and bliss. Because He is able to eradicate all ignorance, the term Hari (one who takes away) is an appropriate way to remember Him. It is only lotus-eyed Nanda-nandana, Śrī Śyāmasundara, the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> The vocative case means to call out or to address someone. In Sanskrit grammar the last letter of a name will sometimes change in the vocative case e.g. 'Lalita', becomes 'Lalite'. The same rule applies to Harä, which becomes Hare. The names Kåna and Räma remain the same.

bestower of bliss to the residents of Gokula, who is referred to as Kṛṣṇa (the all-attractive one). Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the *līlā-vigraha* (personification of pastimes) and the crest-jewel of all expertise and wisdom. Because He eternally enjoys conjugal pastimes with Śrīmatī Rādhīkā, He is also known as Rāma (the enjoyer)."

### Aiśvarya-Mayī

The  $\bar{A}gama$ -ś $\bar{a}stra$  states:

harati tri-vidham tāpam janma-koṭi-śatodbhavam pāpam ca smaratām yasmāt tasmād dharir iti smrtah

kṛṣir bhū-vācakaḥ śabdo ṇaś ca nirvṛtir vācakaḥ tayor aikyam param brahma kṛṣṇa ity abhidhīyate

ramante yogino 'nante satyānande cid-ātmani iti rāma-padenāsau param brahmābhidīyate

"Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa is known as Hari because He destroys the three-fold afflictions of countless births as well as the sinful activities performed by the body, mind and words of those devotees who remember Him. Kṛṣ means 'all attractive' and ṇa means 'joyful'. The combination of these syllables refers to Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the all-attractive parabrahma. Yogīs on the transcendental platform derive great joy by meditating upon Him as the infinite form of supreme bliss (nityānanda-svarūpa), and as He who has a transcendental form (cinmaya-svarūpa). For this reason, He is called Rāma (the supreme enjoyer)."

### Yugala-Smarana-Mayī

Śruti-śāstra states:

mano harati kṛṣṇasya kṛṣṇāhlāda-svarūpiṇī tato harā śrī-rādhaiva tasyāḥ saṃbodhanaṁ hare

apagṛhya trāpam dharmam dhairyam mānam vraja-striyaḥ veṇunā karṣati gṛhāt tena krsno' bhidhīyate

ramayaty aniśam rūpa lāvaṇyair vraja-yoṣitām manaḥ pañcendriyānīha rāmas tasmāt prakīrtitah

"Śrī Rādhā is the hlādinī-śakti (pleasure potency) of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. She is known as Harā (one who steals away) because She can captivate Kṛṣṇa's mind. Harā is addressed as Hare. Vraja-rāja-kumāra, the Prince of Vraja, is known as Kṛṣṇa. Because the sound of His flute is so attractive to the cowherd damsels, they lose their natural shyness, sense of dharma, pride, composure and leave their households. Therefore, He is known as Kṛṣṇa. The extraordinary beauty of His form (rūpa-lāvaṇya) always surcharges the minds and senses of the cowherd damsels with ever-increasing bliss. For this reason He is glorified as Rāma."

# Commentary by Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī

Hare—Śrī Kṛṣṇacandra's transcendental beauty captivates the minds of all, but Śrīmatī Rādhikā captivates the mind of Śrī Kṛṣṇa by exercising Her unrivalled clever-

ness. Therefore, She is known as Harā. The vocative case of Harā is Hare.

**Kṛṣṇa**—Śrī Hari, who is adorned with qualities which bewilder the three worlds, attracts Śrīmatī Rādhikā by His youthful beauty and the sweet sound of His flute. Therefore, He is called Kṛṣṇa, the all-attractive one.

Hare—Śrī Kṛṣṇa kidnapped doe-eyed Śrīmatī Rādhikā, taking Her to a secluded *kuñja* within the *rāsa-maṇḍala*. This has been learned from the words of *mahā-puruṣas*. Therefore, Rādhikā is known as Harā. Harā in its vocative case becomes Hare.

**Kṛṣṇa**—The magnificent effulgence that emanates from His limbs can convert gold into *śyāma-varṇa* (a dark sapphire lustre). That Rādhā-Ramaṇa Śyāmasundara is called Krsna.

**Kṛṣṇa**—Śrī Hari manifested Śyāma Kuṇḍa, the topmost of all *sarovaras*, in the forest of Vraja near Govardhana. He did this in accordance with the desire of His beloved Śrī Rādhikā, and He attracted all *tīrthas* to it. Learned people who understand this deep secret therefore call Him Krsna.

**Kṛṣṇa**—Although His pastimes on the banks of the Yamunā in Vṛndāvana bewilder the world, the all-attractive *dhīra-lalita-nāyaka* Śrī Hari is attracted by the transcendental *prema* of Śrī Rādhikā which is celebrated by the name of *mahābhāva*. That is why learned people call Him Krsna.

Hare—Whilst living in Vraja, Śrī Kṛṣṇa stole away the life force of the strong bull-like demon, Ariṣṭāsura, and at that very moment Śrīmatī Rādhikā, in great jubilation, loudly chanted "Hari Hari!" For this reason Śrī Rādhā is known as Harā. Harā is addressed as Hare.

- Hare—Śrī Rādhikā sings the pastimes of Śrī Kṛṣṇa in indistinct tones and sometimes, out of intense affection, She sings loudly. Therefore, learned scholars who are discerning in *rasa-tattva* refer to Her as Harā. Harā is addressed as Hare.
- Hare—In Vṛndāvana, Śrī Rādhikā playfully steals away the flute as it falls from the hands of *rasa* immersed Śrī Kṛṣṇa.This is why Rādhikā Devī is known as Harā. The address for Harā is Hare.
- **Rāma**—Śrī Kṛṣṇa is *parirambha-vicakṣaṇa*, the crest-jewel amongst those ingenious in the arts of embracing. He is thus known as Rāma because He wanders with Śrī Rādhikā, playing and enjoying with Her in the *kuñjas* of Govardhana.
- **Hare**—Śrī Rādhikā is most merciful. She steals all the miseries of the *bhaktas* and daily bestows inner happiness upon them. Thus, She is known as Harā and is addressed as Hare.
- Rāma—The minds of the *bhaktas* who perform *bhajana* delight in *paramānanda-sindhu*, the topmost ocean of bliss, Śrī Kṛṣṇa. For this reason that Śyāmasundara *vigraha*, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, is known as Rāma.
- Rāma—In the *kuñjas* Śrīmatī Rādhikā pleases Śrī Hari with Her *prema*. Therefore, according to the definition of *ramayati ānandayati*, 'He who gives happiness and bliss', He is called Rāma. Śrī Kṛṣṇa is also known as Rāma because He unites with Śrī Rādhā.
- **Rāma**—When Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the giver of pleasure to the *bhaktas*, saw all the Vrajavāsīs fearful and weeping, He swallowed the forest fire, thus giving them great pleasure. Therefore, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who arranges for His *bhaktas* to enjoy with Him, is called Rāma.
- **Hare**—Śrī Kṛṣṇa went to Mathurā Purī to kill Kaṁsa and other demons. His sole intention was to return to Vraja

and meet with Śrī Rādhikā. She attracts Śrī Kṛṣṇa from dhāmas like Mathurā and brings Him to Vraja. For this reason She is called Harā (one who steals). Harā is addressed as Hare.

Hare—Śrī Nanda-nandana came from Mathurā and Dvārakā to steal away all the miseries of the Vrajavāsīs. That Nanda-nandana, who is endowed with pastimes that captivate the mind of Śrī Rādhikā, is called Hari. The word Hari becomes Hare in the vocative case.

Thus ends the commentary on the mahā-mantra by Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī

## Commentary by Śrī Gopāla Guru Gosvāmī

Mahā-bhāgavatas eternally remember the all-blissful śyāma-kiśora-vigraha, Śrī Rādhā-Ramaṇa, who can destroy ignorance as well as material existence arising from ignorance.

When *mahā-bhāgavatas* see that their disciples are qualified, meaning that they are grateful, silent, victorious over their senses, pure-hearted and above all, that their hearts are full of attachment (*anurāga*) to Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Ramaṇa, they bless them by mercifully giving them the *hare kṛṣṇa mahā-mantra*, which is composed of three words.

Hare—Fire can burn anything, even without our desiring it to burn. Similarly, Prabhu can remove all the sins of a person with a wicked mind regardless of his mood in remembering Him. Thus His name is Hari, He who steals away.

Sac-cid-ānanda-vigraha Bhagavān reveals His tattva in the hearts of those who chant and remember His names. Simultaneously, He destroys the ignorance that lies there. That Prabhu is remembered by the name Hari.

He is called Hari because He removes the threefold miseries of the moving and non-moving living entities. The minds of worldly people are captivated by hearing and chanting His transcendental qualities. Therefore, His name is Hari. His sweet beauty captivates the minds of millions of *kāmadevas* (Cupids). Thus the Prince of Vraja, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, is known as Hari. The vocative form of Hari is Hare.

To fulfill the loving pleasure of *rāsa*, Śrīmatī Rādhikā captivates the mind of Kṛṣṇa by Her form, qualities and by the nourishment of Her *prema*. Thus, gentle persons talk and sing about the *hlādini-śakti* of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Vṛṣabhānu-nandinī Śrī Rādhā, by using the name Harā. Harā is addressed as Hare.

**Kṛṣṇa**—The verb *kṛṣ* means all-attractive and *ṇa* means all-blissful. When combined, they indicate the all-attractive and blissful *parabrahma*, known by the name Śrī Krsna.

That Śrī Govinda, whose body is eternal, full of knowledge and bliss, who is primeval and the cause of all causes, is known by the name Krsna.

The son of King Nanda, who has lotus eyes and a dark blue complexion, is the only source of bliss for the residents of Gokula. He is referred to as Krsna.

**Rāma**—Śaṅkarajī said to Pārvatī, "He Devī! By pronouncing the first syllable of the word Rāma ( $r\bar{a}$ ) all sins leave the body, and when one chants the syllable ma, the door of the mouth closes so they cannot re-enter.

Yogīs meditate on para-tattva, the transcendental, unlimited truth and the embodiment of pleasure. That paratattva param brahma is known as Rāma.

The predominating deity (adhiṣṭhātṛ-deva) of all rasa filled pastimes, the crest-jewel of the clever, rasika-śekhara Śrī Kṛṣṇa eternally enjoys with Śrīmatī Rādhikā. Thus, He is referred to as Rāma.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa attracts the mind of Śrī Rādhikā and thus enjoys performing pastimes with Her. He is, therefore, known as Rāma. In the *Krama-dīpikā*, Śrī Kṛṣṇa spoke to Candramā, the moon. "Rādhā's name is superior to hundreds of My names. Even I do not know what benefit awaits that person who always chants and remembers Śrī Rādhā."

Hare—kṛṣṇasya mano haratīti harā rādhā, tasyāḥ sambodhane he hare: Śrīmatī Rādhikā, who steals the mind of Kṛṣṇa, is called Harā. The vocative of Harā is Hare.

**Kṛṣṇa**—rādhāyā manaḥ karṣatīti kṛṣṇaḥ tasya sambodhane he kṛṣṇa: Kṛṣṇa means He who attracts the mind of Śrī Rādhā. The address to Him is 'He Krsna!'

Hare—kṛṣṇasya loka-lajjā-dhairyādi sarvam haratīti harā rādhā, tasyāh sambodhane he hare: Śrī Rādhikā causes Kṛṣṇa to lose (harā) all His reputation as shy, sober, patient and modest, etc. The address to Her is 'He Hare!'

**Kṛṣṇa**—rādhāyā loka-lajjā-dhairyādi sarva-karṣatīti kṛṣṇaḥ, tasya sambodhane he kṛṣṇa: He who attracts Śrīmatī Rādhikā in such a way that She loses all Her shyness and patience is called Kṛṣṇa. The address to Him is 'He Kṛṣṇa!'

Kṛṣṇa—yatra yatra rādhā tiṣṭhati gacchati vā tatra tatra sā paśyati kṛṣṇo māṁ spṛśati, balāt kañcukādikaṁ sarvaṁ haratīti kṛṣṇaḥ, tasya saṁbodhane he kṛṣṇa: Wherever Śrīmatī Rādhikā stands or goes, She sees Śrī Kṛṣṇa touching Her and forcibly attracting Her. For this reason He is called Kṛṣṇa (the all-attractive) and addressed 'He Kṛṣṇa!'

Kṛṣṇa—punar harṣatām gamayati vanam karṣatīti kṛṣṇaḥ, tasya sambodhane he kṛṣṇa: He gives pleasure to Śrī Rādhā, who again ventures to the forest of Vṛndāvana, being attracted irresistibly by the sound of His flute. For this reason He is called Kṛṣṇa and addressed 'He Kṛṣṇa!'

Hare—yatra kṛṣṇo gacchati tiṣṭhati vā tatra tatra paśyati rādhā mamāgre pārśve sarvatra tiṣṭhati viharati iti harā rādhā, tasyāḥ sambodhane he hare: Śrī Kṛṣṇa sees Rādhā next to Him wherever He stands or moves—in every direction—and hence His consciousness becomes captivated by Her. Therefore, She is called Harā. The address to Her is 'He Hare!'

Hare—punas tam kṛṣṇam harati sva-sthanam abhisārayatīti harā rādhā, tasyāḥ sambodhane he hare: She again steals away Kṛṣṇa to a secret rendezvous, therefore, the address to Her is Harā. Harā changes to Hare in the vocative case.

Hare—kṛṣṇam vanam harati vanam āgamayatīti harā rādhā, tasyāḥ sambodhane he hare: Śrī Rādhā forcibly takes Kṛṣṇa to the forest groves of Vṛṇdāvana. Thus, Śrī Rādhika is called Harā. The address to Her is 'He Hare!'

Rāma—ramayati tām narma-nirīkṣaṇādineti rāmaḥ, tasya sambodhane he rāma: Śrī Kṛṣṇa's playful smile, laughter and glance create pleasure for Śrīmatī Rādhikā, and therefore His name is Rāma. He is addressed 'He Rāma!'

Hare—tāt-kālikam dhairyāvalambanādikam kṛṣṇasya haratīti harā rādhā tasyāh sambodhane he hare: The association of Śrī Rādhikā causes Kṛṣṇa to suddenly lose His composure. Therefore, She is Harā. The address to Her is 'He Hare!'

**Rāma**—cumbana-stanākarṣaṇālinganādibhiḥ ramate iti rāmaḥ tasya sambodhane he rāma: by means of confidential caresses, embraces, and so forth, Kṛṣṇa enjoys Śrī Rādhā. The address to Him is 'He Rāma!'

**Rāma**—punas tām puruṣocitām kṛtvā ramayatīti rāmaḥ, tasya sambodhane he rāma: Kṛṣṇa is He who enjoys conjugal pastimes with His consort, Śrī Rādhā, by making Her play the dominant role in love. He is thus called Rāma (the enjoyer), and is addressed 'He Rāma!'

**Rāma**—punas tatra ramate iti rāmaḥ, tasya sambodhane he rāma: Because He repeatedly enjoys pleasure, He is called Rāma and is addressed 'He Rāma!'

Hare—punarāsānte kṛṣṇasya mano hṛtvā gacchatīti harā rādhā, tasyāḥ saṃbodhane he hare: As rāsa-līlā concludes, She steals away Śrī Kṛṣṇa's mind and goes away. She is therefore called Harā. She is addressed 'He Hare!'

Hare—rādhāyā mano hṛtvā gacchatīti hariḥ kṛṣṇaḥ, tasya sambodhane he hare: Similarly, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, at the conclusion of rāsa-līlā also captures Śrī Rādhikā's mind. Thus He is called Hari. The address to Kṛṣṇa here is 'He Hare!'

Thus ends the commentary on the mahā-mantra by Śrī Gopāla Guru Gosvāmī

## Śrī-Raghunātha-Gosvāmi-kṛtā mahāmantra-vyākhyā

A Confidential Commentary on the Mahā-mantra composed by Śrila Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī

ekadā kṛṣṇa-virahād dhyāyantī priya-saṅgamam mano-bāṣpa-nirāsārthaṁ jalpatīdaṁ muhur muhuḥ hare kṛṣṇa hare kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa hare hare hare rāma hare rāma rāma rāma hare hare

he hare— sva-nāma-śravaṇa-mātreṇa sva-mādhuryeṇa ca mac-ceto harasi.

tatra hetuḥ: he kṛṣṇa iti. kṛṣ-śabdasya sarvārthaḥ ṇaś ca ānanda-svarūpa iti svārthe ṇaḥ. sac-cid-ānanda-svarūpaka iti svīyena sārva-dik-paramānandena sārvādhikaparamānandena vā pralobhya iti bhāvaḥ.

tataś ca he hare— vamśī-vādane mama dhairya-lajjāgurubhayādikam api harasi. tataś ca he kṛṣṇa— svānga-saurabheṇa mām sva-gṛhebhyo vṛndavanam pratyākarṣasi.

tataś ca he kṛṣṇa— vanam praviṣṭāyā me kañcukīm sahasaivāgatya karṣasi.

tataś ca he kṛṣṇa— svānga-lāvaṇyena sarvādhikānandena ca mām pralobhya mat kucau karṣasi (nakhair ākarṣasi).

tataś ca he hare— sva-bāhu-nibaddhām mām puṣpa-śayyām prati harasi.

tataś ca he hare— tatra niveśitāyā me antarīyam api balād harasi.

tataś ca he hare—antarīya-vasana-haraṇa-miṣeṇātma-virahapīḍām sarvam eva harasi.

tataś ca he rāma — svacchandam mayi ramase.

tataś ca he hare— yad avaśiṣṭaṁ me kiñcid vāmyam āsīt tad api harasi.

tataś ca he rāma— mām ramayasi svasmin puruṣāyitām api karosi.

tataś ca he rāma— ramaṇīya-cūḍā-maṇe tava navīna-vaktramādhuryam api niḥśaṅkaṁ tad-ātmānaṁ tava rāmaṇīyakaṁ man-nayanābhyāṁ dvābhyām evāsvādyate iti bhāvaḥ.

tataś ca he rāma— ramaṇam ramaḥ ramasya bhāvaḥ rāmaḥ; he rāma! tadā tvam sākṣād ramaṇa-vid eva bhāva-rūpo'prākṛta-kandarpa eva bhavasi, athavā na kevalam ramaṇa-rūpeṇāpi ramaṇa-kartu ramaṇa-prayojakaḥ kintu tad-bhāva-rūpā rati-mūrtir iva tvam bhavasīti bhāvah.

tataś ca he hare—mac-cetanā-mṛgīm api harasi, mām ānanda-mūrcchitām karoṣīti bhāvaḥ.

yato he hare— simha-svarūpa! tad api tvam rati-karmani simha iva mahā-prāgalbhyam prakaṭayasīti bhāvaḥ evam bhūtena tvayā preyasā viyuktāham kṣaṇam api kalpa-koṭim iva yāpayitum katham prabhāvāmīti svayam eva vicārasya ii nāma ṣoḍaśakasyābhiprāyaḥ. tataś ca nāmabhiś cumbakair iva krsnah krsnayā sahasaivākrsto milita-

paramānanda eva. tasyāḥ sva-sakhīnām tat-parivāra-vargasya tad-bhāva-sādhakānām arvācīnānām api śrī-rādhā-kṛṣṇau mānasam sampūrayataḥ.

Thus ends the commentary on the mahā-mantra by Śrī Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī

### Commentary by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura

*He* Hare!—*mac-cittam hṛtvā bhava-bandhān mocaya*: *He* Hare! Please captivate my mind and release me from material existence.

He Kṛṣṇa!—mac-cittam ākarṣa: He Kṛṣṇa! Please attract my restless mind towards You.

*He* Hare!—sva-mādhuryeṇa mac-cittaṁ hara: He Hare! Captivate my mind with Your spontaneous mādhurya.

He Kṛṣṇa!—sva-bhakta-dvārā bhajana-jñāna-dānena maccittam śodhaya: He Kṛṣṇa! Please make my mind pure with the knowledge of bhajana as given by Your bhaktas who understand the science of bhakti-tattva.

He Kṛṣṇa!—nāma-rūpa-guṇa-līlādiṣu man-niṣṭhām kuru: He Kṛṣṇa! Please make me have staunch faith in Your name, form, qualities and pastimes.

*He* Kṛṣṇa!—rucir bhavatu me: He Kṛṣṇa! May I develop a taste for Your name, form, qualities and pastimes.

*He* Hare!—*nija-sevā-yogyaṁ māṁ kuru*: *He* Hare! Please make me qualified to serve You.

*He* Hare!—sva-sevām ādeśaya: He Hare! Please make me qualified and order me to serve You.

He Hare!—sva-preṣṭhena saha svābhīṣṭa-līlāṁ śrāvaya: He Hare! Please make me hear of Your sweet pastimes with Your dearmost bhaktas.

He Rāma!—preṣṭhayā saha svābhīṣṭa-līlām mām śrāvaya: He Rāma! Rādhikā-Rāmaṇa! Make me hear Your most cherished pastimes and Your sweet affectionate voice in Goloka in the company of Your beloved Rādhikā.

He Hare!—sva-preṣṭhena saha svābhīṣṭa-līlāṁ māṁ darśaya: He Hare! Śrīmatī Rādhike! Please give me darśana of Your dearest pastimes with You and Your beloved Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

*He* Rāma!— *preṣṭhayā saha svābhīṣṭa-līlāṁ māṁ darśaya*: *He* Rāma! Rādhikā-Rāmaṇa! Please reveal to me Your pastimes with Your beloved.

He Rāma!—nāma-rūpa-guṇa-līlā-smaraṇādiṣu mām yojaya: He Rāma! You who perform pastimes with Your eternal associates, please engage me in remembering Your name, form, qualities and pastimes.

He Rāma!—tatra mām nija-sevā-yogyam kuru! O You who give pleasure to Your eternal associates, Śyāma! Please make me qualified to serve You while remembering Your name, form, qualities and pastimes.

*He* Hare!—*mām svāngī kṛtya ramasva*: *He* Hare! Please accept this fallen, wicked person and play with me as I deserve.

*He* Hare!—*mayā* saha ramasva: He Hare! Please perform Your transcendental sports with me. This is my only prayer at Your lotus feet.

(Śrī Caitanya-Śikṣāmṛta)

Thus ends the commentary of Śrī Saccidānanda Bhaktivinoda Thākura

### Commentary in the Śrī Pada-kalpataru

nara harināma antare acchu bhāvaha habe bhava-sāgare pāra dhara re śravaṇe nara harināma sādare cintāmaṇi uha sāra

"O brother! When you have internally realized this hari-nāma, you can cross the ocean of samsāra. When this hari-nāma is very respectfully placed in the ear, it can be drunk, heard and absorbed because its very essence is cintāmaṇi."

yadi kṛta-pāpi ādare kabhu mantraka rāja śravaṇe kare pāna śrī kṛṣna caitanya bale haya tacchu durgama pāpa tāpa saha trāna

"Even if sinful persons or kings drink śrī-nāma by respectfully hearing this mantra, then Caitanya Mahāprabhu says that all of their sins will be vanquished along with all the miseries in the burning fire of this material world (adhyātmika, adhibhautika and adhidaivika)."

karaha gaura-guru-vaisṇava-āśraya laha nara harināma-hāra samsāre nāma lai sukṛti haiyā tare āpāmara durācāra

"O brother! Accepting the shelter of Gaura, Guru, and Vaiṣṇavas, take this garland of Śrī Hari-nāma. Even the most wretched and sinful people in this samsāra will become purified through chanting hari-nāma."

ithe kṛta-viṣaya-tṛṣṇa pahuñ-nāma-hārā yo dhāraṇe śrama-bhāra ku-tṛṣna jagadānanda kṛta-kalmaṣa kumati rahala kārāgāra

"But one who having abandoned Śrī Bhagavān-Nāma and desirous of gratifying the senses, carries a heavy bur-

den of labour. Thus the lusty, sinful and evil-minded Jagadānanda remains within this prison."

(Śrī Pada-kalpataru Gaurapada-taraṅgiṇī, Taraṅga 1, uchhvāsa 2, pada 59)

	pāra:	sāra	рапа	trāņa	hāra:	cāra:	bhāra .	8 ā r a ;	•••			
	re		re	ha	ma			rā	Đ	4		<b>D</b>
	<u>ā</u> §a	п	ka	sa	inā	$du$ $rar{a}$	śra	kā				ceale
	be bhavasāga <b>re</b> pāra	cintāmaņi u <b>ha</b>	rā ja śravaņe ka re	pāpa tāpa sa <b>ha</b> trāṇa	nara harinā <b>ma</b>	āpāmara	yo dhāraņe śra <b>ma</b>	ma ti rahala kā rā gāra			e e	<i>itra</i> con e page.
	ре	cint	ja s	рари	пак	āpā	yo u	ti			re ha e har	ī-mar posit
m 🕒	ha	re	rā	ma	ha	re	rā	ma			na han a har	<i>mahā</i> 1e opj
	аһа	āda	nantraka-	ya tacchudurga	la	ta	sṇa pahuñ-nāma-hā	ku			ta kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa rām ta rāma rām thare kṛṣṇa	<i>kṛṣṇa</i> on th
	bhāvi	re acchu bhavaha ha ri-nāma sāda re kabhumantraka-			va āśraya la	kự ti haiyā ta		<b>kṛ</b> ta-kalmaṣa ku				hare song
	иссни		Ja ta	va ā	i ha	oahuñ-	a-kaln			re kṛṣṇ re rām	als the pataru	
	re (			ha 1	èis s	† ;	iia 1	t i	7	2	hare kṛṣṇa hare kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa hare hare hare rāma hare rāma rāma rāma hare hare	This illustration reveals the hare kṛṣṇa mahā-mantra concealed within the Pada-kalpataru song on the opposite page.
	anta	nara		bal	ru-va		ta - viṣaya - tṛ	<b>șņa</b> jagadānanda				
	ri-nāma		ta-pāpi	caitanya bale	gaura-guru-vai							
<b>— ©</b>	ha	re	kŗ	eüs	ha	re	kŗ	siia				
	nara	dhara	yadi	śrīkŗ	kara	saṁsā	ithe	kutr				

rī Kṛṣṇa-nāma is the sweetest of the sweet and the most auspicious of all that is auspicious. It is the flourishing creeper, the eternal, fully ripened fruit of the Bhāgavata, and the embodiment of knowledge, cit-śakti. O best of the Bhṛgu dynasty! Even if someone chants the holy name only once, with faith or indifference (helā), he is immediately delivered from this ocean of birth and death!"



# THE GLORIES OF ŚRĪ HARI-NĀMA

One can find an abundance of glorification of Śrī Bhagavān's name in śāstra. A portion of those glories will be mentioned here.

#### Nāma-Svarūpa

nāma cintāmaniḥ kṛṣṇaś caitanya-rasa-vigrahaḥ pūrnaḥ śuddho nitya-mukto 'bhinnatvān nāma-nāminoḥ (Śrī-Bhakti-Rasāmṛta-Sindhu Eastern Division, 2nd Wave 108)

"Because there is no difference between nāma (Kṛṣṇa's name) and nāmī (Kṛṣṇa), Śrī kṛṣṇa-nāma is therefore cintāmaṇi-svarūpa (the original wish-fulfilling gem), and is Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself who is caitanya-rasa-vigraha (the fully conscious form of rasa). Śrī Nāma is complete, beyond māyā and eternally liberated."

### Nāma Bestows All Perfection in Kali-Yuga

kaler doṣa-nidhe rājann asti hy eko mahān guṇaḥ kīrtanād eva kṛṣṇasya mukta-saṅgaḥ paraṁ vrajet (Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 12.3.51)

"My dear King, although Kali-yuga is an ocean of faults, there is still one good quality in this age. Simply by chanting the *hare krsna mahā-mantra*, one can become free

from material bondage and achieve the shelter of Bhagavān."

kṛte yad-dhyāyato viṣṇuṁ tretāyāṁ yajato makhaiḥ dvāpare paricaryāyāṁ kalau tad dhari-kīrtanāt (Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 12.3.52)

"The result which is attained in Satya-yuga by meditating on Śrī Bhagavān (*dhyāna*), in Tretā-yuga by performing opulent *yajñas*, and in Dvāpara-yuga by performing *arcana*, is easily available in Kali-yuga by performing *harināma-kīrtana*."

kali-kāle nāma-rūpe kṛṣṇa-avatāra nāma haite haya sarva-jagat-nistāra (Śrī-Caitanya-caritāmṛta Ādi 17.22)

"In Kali-yuga, the *avatāra* of Śrī Kṛṣṇa comes in the form of His name. Simply by chanting this name, the entire world can be delivered."

nāma vinā kali-kāle nāhi āra dharma sarva-mantra-sāra nāma ei śāstra-marma (Śrī-Caitanya-caritāmṛta Ādi 7.74)

"In Kali-yuga there is no other *sādhana* but to chant *hari-nāma*. It is the essence of all Vedic *mantras*. This is the essential teaching of all *śāstras* on *nāma-tattva*."

### The Glories of Nāma as Described by the Ancient Ācāryas

amhaḥ sanharate 'khilam sakṛd udayād eva sakala-lokasya taraṇir iva timira-jaladhim jayati jagan-mangalam harer nāma (Śrī-Padyāvalī, śloka 16, composed by Śrīla Śrīdhara Svāmī) "All glories to *hari-nāma*, which is auspicious for the entire world! Just as the rising sun dissipates all darkness, if *hari-nāma* rises just once, it can destroy all of a person's sins."

ākṛṣṭiḥ kṛta-cetasām sumanasām ucchāṭanam cānhasām ā-caṇḍālam amūka-loka-sulabho vaśyaś ca mukti-śriyaḥ no dīkṣām na ca sat-kriyām na ca puraścaryām manāg īkṣate mantro 'yam rāsanā-spṛg eva phalati śrī-kṛṣṇa-nāmātmakaḥ (Śrī-Padyāvalī 18)

"The minds of those who are <code>gunātīta</code> (beyond the three modes) are attracted to <code>nāma</code>. <code>Nāma</code> eradicates all sins. Śrī Kṛṣṇa <code>nāma-svarūpa</code> (Kṛṣṇa in the form of the <code>mahā-man-tra</code>) is easily accessible to those who are lower than <code>cānḍālas</code> and also captivates the opulence of <code>mukti</code>. It awards results even by its initial contact with the tongue. It does not consider whether or not a person has taken <code>dīkṣā</code>, performed pious activity, or taken vows of austerity."

### The Glories of Chanting Śrī Nāma Exceed the Glories of Direct Brahma Realization

yad-brahma-sākṣāt-kṛti-niṣṭhayāpi vināśam āyāti vinā na bhogaiḥ apaiti nāma-sphuraṇena tat te prārabdha-karmeti virauti vedaḥ (Śrī-Kṛṣṇa-Nāmāṣṭakam 4, Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī)

"O nāma! The Vedas loudly declare that a bhakta's fructified sinful reaction (prārabdha-karma), which cannot be eliminated even by resolute meditation on impersonal brahma, is at once mitigated by Your appearance on the tongue even without his undergoing any suffering."

### The Superiority of Śrī Nāma-Kīrtana

agha-cchit-smaraṇam viṣṇor bahv-āyāsena sādhyate oṣṭha-spandana-mātreṇa kīrttanas tu tato varam (Śrī-Hari-Bhakti-Vilāsa, 11/236 Vaiṣṇava-Cintāmaṇi-Vākya)

"Although Śrī-Viṣṇu-smaraṇam destroys all sins, it can only be fully realized after a person has endeavoured with great difficulty over a prolonged period of time. Viṣṇu-kīrtanam however is superior because when Śrī Kṛṣṇa-nāma merely vibrates upon a person's lips, (ie. nāmābhāsa), he becomes liberated from bondage to the cycle of saṃsāra."

### The Superiority of Śrī Nāma-Kīrtana Compared to Dhyāna & Pūjā

jayati jayati nāmānanda-rūpam murārer viramita-nija-dharma-dhyāna-pūjādi-yatnam katham api sakṛd āttam mukti-dam prāṇinām yat paramamṛtam ekam jīvanam bhūṣaṇam me (Śrī-Bṛhad-Bhāgavatāmṛtam 1.1.9, Śrīla Sanātana Gosyāmī)

"All glories, all glories to Śrī Kṛṣṇa Murāri's name, the embodiment of divine bliss! It halts the cycle of birth and death and relieves one of all painful endeavours in practicing religion, meditation, charity, deity worship and austerity. It awards liberation to one who utters it even once. Kṛṣṇa-nāma stands alone as the supreme nectar and sole treasure of my life."

yena janma-śataiḥ pūrvāṁ vāsudevaḥ samarcitaḥ tan-mukhe hari-nāmāni sadā tiṣṭhanti bhārata (Śrī-Hari-Bhakti-Vilāsa 11. 237)

"O great descendant of Bharata! The name of Śrī Hari will remain eternally on the lips of those who have already performed *arcana* of Vāsudeva for hundreds of births."

### Śrī Nāma is not Governed by Rules Regarding Time, Place or Circumstance

na deśa-niyamo rājan na kāla-niyamas tathā vidyate nātra sandeho viṣṇor nāmānukīrttane

kālo 'sti dāne yajñe ca snāne kālo 'sti saj-jape viṣṇuḥ sankīrttane kālo nāsty atra pṛthivī-tale (Śrī-Hari-Bhakti-Vilāsa 11. 206)

"O King! It is stated unequivocally that time and place are not considered in the performance of  $k\bar{\imath}rtana$  of Śrī Viṣṇu's names. Such rules apply to giving in charity, performing  $yaj\tilde{n}a$ , and chanting other types of japa. On this earth planet, however, such considerations do not apply to the performance of  $sank\bar{\imath}rtana$  of Śrī Viṣṇu's names."

na deśa-niyamas tasmin na kāla-niyamas tathā nocchiṣṭādau niṣedho 'sti śrī-harer nāmni lubdhaka (Śrī-Hari-Bhakti-Vilāsa 11. 202, quoted from Viṣṇu-dharmottara) "O Hunter! In the performance of Śrī Hari's nāma-kīrtana, there is no consideration of time and place nor is there any prohibition with respect to being in an unclean state due to eating, passing stool etc.

madhura-madhuram etan mangalam mangalānām sakala-nigama-vallī-sat-phalam cit-svarūpam sakṛd api parigītam śraddhayā helayā vā bhṛguvara nara-mātram tārayet kṛṣṇa nāma (Śrī-Hari-Bhakti-Vilāsa 11.234, quoted from Skanda-Purāṇa)

"Śrī Kṛṣṇa-nāma is the sweetest of the sweet and the most auspicious of all that is auspicious. It is the flourishing creeper, the eternal, fully ripened fruit of the Bhāgavata, and the embodiment of knowledge, cit-śakti. O best of the Bhṛgu dynasty! Even if someone chants the holy name only once, with faith or indifference (helā), he is immediately delivered from this ocean of birth and death!"

# Śrī Nāma-Saṅkīrtana is the Sādhana and the Sādhya for Everyone

etan nirvidyamānānām icchatām akuto-bhayam yoginām nṛpa nirṇītam harer nāmānukīrtanam (Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 2.1.11)

"O King! Previous ācāryas have declared the following to be siddhānta: chanting and remembering the name of Śrī Hari again and again is the primary sādhana and sādhya for those persons who are indifferent to sense pleasure, for the exclusively dedicated bhaktas, for those who desire liberation, promotion to heaven, etc. and for the self satisfied yogīs."



### ŚRĪ HARI-NĀMA by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura

he ocean of material existence is very difficult to cross without the mercy of Parameśvara. It is not only difficult, but impossible. Even though the jīvas are superior to matter, they are by nature weak and dependent on Bhagavān as their sole protector, guardian and saviour. The jīva is anu-caitanya, an atomic conscious being. He is dependent on and is the servant of Parama-Caitanya Bhagavān. In other words, Parama-Caitanya Bhagavān is the shelter for all jīvas. This world of matter is created by māyā and, therefore, the position of the jīva is the same as that of an offender who is in prison. The jīva wanders throughout samsāra as a result of his opposition to Bhagavān. Those jīvas who are opposed to Bhagavān are called baddha-jīvas (conditioned souls) because they are chained by  $m\bar{a}y\bar{a}$ , whereas those *jīvas* who follow Bhagavān are released from *māyā* and are called *mukta-jīvas* (liberated souls). This difference is due to the variagated conditions in which the unlimited jīvas are situated. Hence, there are two divisions, baddha-jīvas and mukta-jīvas.

By performing *sādhana*, the *baddha-jīva* attains the mercy of Bhagavān thus he becomes capable of breaking the powerful chains of *māyā*. After lengthy contemplation, our great *maharṣis* have established three types of *sādhana*: *karma*, *jñāna* and *bhakti*.

Varṇāśrama-dharma, tapasyā, yajña, dāna, vrata and yoga are mentioned in śāstras as limbs of karma and their results are clearly described. By deeply understanding the distinct nature of these results, the primary effects of executing karma are revealed. They are: 1) enjoyment on

the earthly planets, 2) enjoyment in the heavenly planets, 3) relief from disease and 4) the knowledge that great fortune will arise by performing good  $karma^3$ . If we separate the fourth effect—performance of good karma will result in great fortune—from the other three, it seems that the results of enjoying the heavenly planets, enjoying the earthly planets and curing disease, which the  $j\bar{\imath}va$  acquires by performing karma, are all perishable. They will be destroyed in Śrī Bhagavān's wheel of time. It is not possible to become free from the bondage of  $m\bar{a}y\bar{a}$  by attaining these results. On the contrary, the desire to execute more karma will increase, and this will lead to further bondage to  $m\bar{a}y\bar{a}$ . The results of good karma are negligible if that karma is not performed in accordance with the rules and regulations of  $s\bar{a}stra$ .

In this regard, Śrīmad Bhāgavatam (1.2.8) states:

dharmaḥ svanuṣṭhitaḥ puṁsāṁ viṣvaksena-kathāsu yaḥ notpādayed yadi ratiṁ śrama eva hi kevalam

"The main purpose of *varṇāśrama-dharma* is to simplify the life of a person who is performing his natural occupational duty, so that he has sufficient time to hear *hari-kathā*. However, if an attraction for *hari-kathā* is not inspired, then all the religious activities he performs in accordance with *varṇāśrama-dharma* will be so much useless labour." The ocean of material existence cannot be crossed by *karma*. I will explain this briefly:

 $J\tilde{n}\bar{a}na$  is also considered a  $s\bar{a}dhana$  by which a high goal is achieved. The result of  $j\tilde{n}\bar{a}na$  is  $\bar{a}tma-\dot{s}uddhi$  (purification of the soul).  $\bar{A}tm\bar{a}$  (soul) is beyond matter, but when a  $j\bar{v}va$  forgets this reality and takes shelter of matter, he becomes lost on the path of karma.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> *Karma* is defined as a term for work, or activity in general; pious persons in the four *varëas* perform *karma* through Vedic guidance, which leads to material gain in this world or to the higher planets after death.

By discussing  $j\bar{n}\bar{a}na$ , a person can understand that he is not composed of matter but is transcendental. This type of  $j\bar{n}\bar{a}na$  is generally called naiskarmya (self-realization). In the stage of naiskarmya, the  $j\bar{i}va$  is only able to relish a limited amount of bliss ( $\bar{a}nanda$ ). This stage is also called  $\bar{a}tm\bar{a}r\bar{a}ma$  (in which one finds pleasure in the self,  $\bar{a}tm\bar{a}$ , alone). But when the  $j\bar{i}va$  begins to realize his eternal nature, and starts to relish his relationship with Kṛṣṇa, the stage of naiskarmya, or  $\bar{a}tm\bar{a}r\bar{a}ma$ , becomes completely insignificant. For this reason Devarṣi Nārada states in  $\hat{S}r\bar{i}mad$   $Bh\bar{a}gavatam$  (1.5.12):

naiṣkarmyam apy acyuta-bhāva-varjitam na śobhate jñānam alam nirañjanam

"Although knowledge of self-realization is free from all material affinity, it is not pleasing to the heart if devoid of a conception of the infallible Personality of Godhead."

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (1.7.10) also mentions:

ātmārāmāś ca munayo nirgranthā apy urukrame kurvanty ahaitukīm bhaktim ittham-bhūta-guno hariḥ

"Parama-Caitanya Hari possesses one extraordinary quality: He attracts all varieties of persons who are ātmārāma and are thus free from all kinds of material bondage, to engage in sevā to Him."

Therefore, jñāna and karma can only be called limbs of sādhana when karma, by its effect, provides great fortune to perform increasingly improved karma and then jñāna renounces useless karma. This performance of good karma and the rejection of impersonal jñāna will lead us to bhakti-sādhana. In and of themselves, jñāna and karma are not accepted as limbs of sādhana except when they lead us to bhakti. It is then that they have some significance. Therefore, only bhakti is called sādhana. When karma and jñāna

lead us to *bhakti*, they are considered a *sādhana*. Otherwise, *bhakti*, by its very nature, is the exclusive *svarūpa* (form) of *sādhana*.

The decision of  $\acute{S}r\bar{\imath}mad\text{-}Bh\bar{a}gavatam$  (11.14.20) clearly explains this:

na sādhayati māṁ yogo na sāṅkhyaṁ dharma uddhava na svādhyāyas tapas tyāgo yathā bhaktir mamorjitā

"He Uddhava! Karma-yoga, sāṅkhya-yoga or varṇāśrama-dharma cannot please Me, nor can study of the *Vedas*, austerity or renunciation. Only the performance of pure *bhakti* actually pleases Me."

Performing bhakti is the only way to please Bhagavān. There is no other means. There are nine kinds of sādhanabhakti: śravaṇa (hearing), kīrtana (chanting), smaraṇa (remembering), arcana (worshipping), vandana (praying), pādasevanam (offering obeisances), dāsya (service), sakhya (friendship) and ātmā-nivedana (full surrender). Śravaṇa, kīrtana and smaraṇa are the primary limbs of sādhana. Their sādhya or object should be Śrī Bhagavān's nāma, rūpa, guṇa and līlā (His name, form, qualities and pastimes). And of these four, śrī nāma is the original seed (bīja-svarūpa). Thus, according to śāstra, hari-nāma is the root of all worship.

harer nāma harer nāma harer nāmaiva kevalam kalau nāsty eva nāsty eva nāsty eva gatir anyathā (Śrī-Bṛḥan-Nāradīya-Purāna 3.8.126)

"In Kali-yuga there is no deliverance for the jīva except by the chanting of hari-nāma."

By the word kalau it is to be understood that although there is never a time when  $śr\bar{\imath}$  hari-nāma is not the sole means for deliverance, in the age of Kali since the various other

mantras and practices have become weak, it is especially appropriate to take shelter of this all powerful hari-nāma.

In relation to hari-nāma Śrī Padma-Purāṇa states:

nāma cintāmaṇiḥ kṛṣṇaś caitanya-rasa-vigrahaḥ pūrṇaḥ śuddho nitya-mukto 'bhinnatvān nāma-nāminoh

Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī writes in his commentary on the above śloka:

ekam eva sac-cid-ānanda-rasādi-rūpam tattvam dvidhāvirbhūtam ity arthaḥ

"Śrī-kṛṣṇa-tattva is the non-dual form of eternity, knowledge and bliss (advaya-sac-cid-ānanda-svarūpa)." He has appeared in two forms: (1) nāmī, the form of śrī-kṛṣṇa-vigraha and (2) nāma, the form of His name."

The essence of tattva is that Krsna is sarva-śaktimān, the possessor of all potencies. The splendour of the supreme purusa is the splendour of His śakti. Krsna's śakti takes shelter of Him, and without Krsna's *śakti* no one can understand Him. The effect of śakti manifests darśana of Krsna's form. The blissful effect of krsna-nāma advertises itself. Thus krsna-nāma is cintāmani-svarūpa, krsna-svarūpa and caitanya-rasa-svarūpa. Just by chanting Šrī Kṛṣṇa's name, krsna-rasa rises spontaneously in the core of the heart. *Nāma* is complete in itself. This means that it does not depend on the construction of mantras, such as krsnāya or nārāyanāya, which are formed by a combination of names. Nāma is always transcendental—not lifeless like material syllables. Only nāma is caitanya-rasa. Nāma is ever liberated. It cannot be produced by the material tongue. Only a person who has tasted the mellow of *nāma* can understand this explanation. One who imagines that *nāma* is lifeless is not eligible to relish *caitanya-rasa*, nor is he satisfied with this explanation.

A person may say that *nāma*, which we continuously chant, is dependent on material syllables, so how can it be said that *nāma* is eternally liberated and not a material object? Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī responds to this adverse opinion as follows:

ataḥ śrī-kṛṣṇa-nāmādi na bhaved grāhyam indriyaiḥ sevonmukhe hi jihvādau svayam eva sphuraty adaḥ (Śrī-Bhakti-Rasāmṛta-Sindhu, Eastern Division 2/109)

"The material senses can perceive a material object. *Kṛṣṇa-nāma* is transcendental, therefore, it can never be perceived by the material senses. The *nāma* that initially manifests on the tongue is only a result of a *sphūṛti*—a pulsating of the transcendental senses of the soul. But at the time that the soul's transcendental (*aprākṛta*) tongue utters *kṛṣṇa-nāma*, the *parama-tattva* appears in person upon their material (*prākṛta*) tongues and begins to dance. As *aprākṛta-rasa* pervades the senses the *bhakta* laughs out of bliss (*ānanda*), weeps and laments out of affection (*sneha*) and dances out of love (*prīti*). In this way by means of the tongue *śrī kṛṣṇa-nāma-rasa* pervades throughout."

The *nāma* practiced during *sādhana* is but *chaya-nāma*, a shadow of *nāma* or *nāmābhāsa* (chanting which is covered by clouds of ignorance and *anarthas*). It is not the real name. Continuous chanting of *nāmābhāsa* will eventually develop into a taste for *aprākṛta-nāma*. Examples of this are evident in the lives of Vālmīki and Ajāmila.

The jīva has no taste for nāma because of his offences. When the jīva chants kṛṣṇa-nāma without offence, the caitanya-rasa-vigraha (the fully conscious reservoir of all pleasure) transcendental śrī hari-nāma manifests Himself within his heart. At that time his heart becomes joyful, streams of tears flow from his eyes, and symptoms of sāttvika ecstasy appear in his body. Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (2.3.24) thus states:

tad aśma-sāram hṛdayam batedam yad-gṛhyamāṇair hari-nāma-dheyaiḥ

#### na vikriyetātha yadā vikāro netre jalam gātra-ruheşu harşah

"When a jīva chants hari-nāma, the following symptoms manifest: he experiences a change of heart, tears flow from his eyes and his bodily hairs stand erect. When, despite chanting kṛṣṇa-nāma, a person does not experience any of these symptoms, it is to be understood that his heart has become very hard due to offences."

The primary duty of a *sādhaka* is to chant *hari-nāma* without offence. It is, therefore, necessary to know how many types of offences there are, and in this way one can save himself from committing them.

*Śāstra* mentions ten offences in relation to *hari-nāma*:

- 1. To blaspheme devotees and saintly persons.
- 2. To consider demigods like Lord Siva to be equal to Bhagavān or independent of Him.
- 3. To disobey Śrī Guru, who reveals the truth about *hari- nāma*.
- 4. To criticise *sat-śāstra*, which describes the glories of *hari-nāma*.
- 5. To consider the glories of *hari-nāma* to be an exaggeration.
- 6. To consider the meanings of hari-nāma revealed in śāstra to be imaginary, in other words to consider the names kṛṣṇa, rāma etc. to be a product of imagination.
- 7. To commit sinful activities on the strength of chanting *hari-nāma*.
- 8. To equate chanting of hari-nāma with materially auspicious activities recommended in the karma-kānda sections of the Vedas.

- To instruct faithless persons on the glories of harināma.
- 10. To not have faith in śrī kṛṣṇa-nāma despite hearing His glories.
- 1) A person commits an offence to *hari-nāma* if he disbelieves in the saintly *bhaktas* and blasphemes the *mahājanas*, whose characters are spotless. Thus, one who accepts *hari-nāma* must first reject with his whole heart the tendency to disrespect or disregard any Vaiṣṇava. If a doubt arises about the activity of a Vaiṣṇava, one should try to inquire about the cause of that behaviour and avoid criticising him. Our primary duty is to have faith (*śraddhā*) in the *sādhus*.
- 2) To consider demigods like Lord Śiva to be nondifferent from Bhagavān is nāmāparādha. Bhagavat-tattva is one without a second. Demigods like Lord Śiva are not independent of Śrī Bhagavān's authority, nor are they separate from Him. If a person honours demigods like Śiva as guṇāvatāras or as bhaktas of Bhagavān, he will not form the misconception that they are independent of Him. Those who consider Mahādeva (Śivajī) an independent and separate demigod worshipping him alongside Viṣṇu, do not actually honour the true glory of Mahādeva who is the greatest among Vaiṣṇavas. They therefore become offensive to both Viṣṇu and Śiva. Those who chant harināma should reject this kind of misconception.
- 3) To disobey Śrī Gurudeva is nāmāparādha. He who gives the highest teachings of nāma-tattva should be accepted as ācārya, and as that person who is most dear to Bhagavān. One can attain firm faith in hari-nāma by cultivating staunch bhakti for Śrī Guru.
- 4) The bona fide *śāstras* should never be blasphemed. Revealed *śāstras* like the *Vedas* describe *bhagavata-dharma* and detail the importance of *śrī nāma*. Therefore, to blas-

pheme these *śāstras* is an offence to the holy name. The glories of *hari-nāma* are described throughout the *Vedas*.

vede rāmāyane caiva purane bhārate tathā ādāv ante ca madhye ca hariḥ sarvatra gīyate

(*C.c. Ādi-līlā* 7.131)

"How can a person develop love for hari-nāma if he blasphemes bona fide śāstras? Some people consider the śāstras' descriptions of the importance of hari-nāma to be simply praise. It is nāmāparādha to chant hari-nāma with such an attitude, and those who do so will never achieve any tangible result. They conclude that śāstra falsely praises the glories of hari-nāma, as it falsely praises karma-kāṇḍa just so that people will develop a taste in it. Those who think like this are unfortunate. On the other hand, Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (2.1.11) describes the faith of fortunate persons:

etan nirvidyamānānām icchatām akuto-bhayam yoginām nṛpa nirṇītam harer namānukīrtanam

"A *yogī* thinks that by obtaining detachment from the world, he can become free from all fear, and concludes that his wholesale duty is to chant *hari-nāma*. Persons who have such faith can achieve the result of *hari-nāma*."

5) Some people do not understand the difference between  $n\bar{a}m\bar{a}bh\bar{a}sa$  and  $n\bar{a}ma$ . They believe that  $n\bar{a}ma$  is only a combination of syllables that will definitely grant results whether one has faith or not. They use the life and character of Ajāmila as an example, as well as  $Śr\bar{\imath}mad-Bh\bar{a}gavatam$  (6.2.14):

sänketyam pärihäsyam vä stobham helanam eva vä vaikuntha-näma-grahanam aśeṣāgha-haram viduḥ

- "One who chants *hari-nāma* is immediately freed from the reactions to unlimited sins, even if he chants indirectly (to indicate something else), jokingly, for musical entertainment, or neglectfully. This is concluded by all the learned scholars of the *śāstras*."
- 6) Previously hari-nāma has been described as caitanya-rasa-vigraha, which cannot be perceived by the material senses. This proves that it is not possible to achieve the results of chanting when one commits nāmāparādha. He who chants without faith does not achieve the result of chanting; rather, within a few days he attains some faith in nāma. Faithless persons who believe that nāma is a limb of karma-kāṇḍa propagate that nāma is only a material syllable and, therefore, equal to other names. They are actually conditioned souls and nāmāparādhīs. Vaiṣṇavas diligently endeavour to avoid this offence.
- 7) Some people believe that by taking shelter of *harināma*, they have attained a cheap remedy for the results of all their sins. With this idea they think that they can steal, perform acts of fraud, act illicitly, and then chant *harināma* to eradicate all their misdeeds. A person who believes this is certainly a *nāmāparādhī* (offender to *nāma*). One who has once tasted the transcendental mellows of *hari-nāma* will never again become attached to temporary material activities.
- 8) Some believe in pious activities (*karma*), such as performing *yajña*, giving in charity, behaving according to *dharma*, and visiting holy places. They also include the chanting of *nāma* as a pious activity, therefore, they are *nāmāparādhīs*. *Nāma* is always transcendental, whereas all pious activities are material. Thus pious activities are foreign to *nāma*. Anyone who considers *nāma* to be equivalent to pious activities becomes indifferent to *nāma* and cannot relish its mellows (*nāmarasa*). There is a difference between diamonds and glass.

Similarly, there is a vast difference between *hari-nāma* and pious activity.

- 9) One who instructs faithless persons about *hari-nāma* or gives them the *mantra* is also a *nāmāparādhī*. It is useless to give a string of pearls to a hog. The hog will simply regard it as an insult or completely disregard them. Similarly, it is extremely improper to give instruction on *nāma* to a faithless person. It is wise to first make an effort to develop his faith, and then instruct him on *hari-nāma*. Those who act as *guru* and give instructions on *hari-nāma* to faithless persons will definitely fall down—because they are committing *nāmāparādha*.
- 10) If a person does not have exclusive faith in *harināma*, even after hearing its extensive glories, and if he is still attached to or dependent on  $s\bar{a}dhanas$  such as karma,  $j\bar{n}\bar{a}na$  or yoga, then he is a  $n\bar{a}m\bar{a}par\bar{a}dh\bar{i}$ .

In this way, *hari-nāma* will not arise unless we avoid *nāmāparādha*.

Upon seeing the miseries of the *jīva*, the deliverer of Kali-yuga, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, instructs us with a compassionate heart:

tṛṇād api sunīcena taror iva sahiṣṇunā amāninā mānadena kīrtanīyaḥ sadā hariḥ

(Śrī Śikṣāṣṭaka: 3)

"By thinking oneself to be even lower than straw in the street, being more tolerant than a tree, not accepting honour but giving honour to everyone, a jīva becomes eligible to chant hari-nāma."

The primary meaning of this *śloka* is that one is to chant *hari-nāma* with a pure attitude. One who considers himself more lowly and fallen than anyone else never

criticises sādhus nor disregards demigods like Lord Śiva. He differentiates, but with respect. He never disregards guru, blasphemes the bona fide śāstras, or doubts the glories of *hari-nāma*. He never combines false speculation with dry arguments to equate nirguna-brahma with the name of 'Hari', nor does he make offences on the strength of nāma. He does not accept pious activities to be on an equal level with hari-nāma. He never gives hari-nāma to faithless persons, and he doesn't have a scent of disbelief in nāma. He constantly endeavours to be aloof from the ten types of nāmāparādha. He never follows those who either ridicule or are inimical to nāma. Even though he works for the entire world, he does not possess any false ego of being the enjoyer or the doer. Thinking himself to be a servant of the world, he serves the whole world. When a qualified person chants hari-nāma, the spiritual world which is situated in the core of his heart radiates transcendental light and thus keeps the darkness of māyā far away. Therefore, O mahātmās, constantly perform hari-nāma-kīrtana without offence. There is no shelter for the jīvas other than hari-nāma.

Trying to save oneself from drowning in this ocean of material existence by taking shelter of  $j\bar{n}ana$  and karma is as useless as taking shelter of a piece of straw to cross a great ocean. Therefore, accepting the shelter of the great ship of the  $mah\bar{a}$ -mantra, cross this ocean of material existence.