

Meditations for a Serious *Sādhaka*

(1)

Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī praises the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra* in his *Laghu-bhāgavatāmṛta* (1.4):

*śrī-caitanya- mukhodgīrṇā hare kṛṣṇeti- varṇakāḥ
majjayanto jagat premṇi vijayantām tad-āhvayāḥ*

The syllables “Hare Kṛṣṇa” and so forth emanated from the mouth of Śrī Caitanya, drowning the universe in *prema*. Let these names be glorified!

He longs to again attain the *darśana* of Śrī Caitanya’s calling out the Holy Names, as presented in *Stavamālā, Prathama Caitanyāṣṭakam* (5):

*hare kṛṣṇety uccaiḥ sphurita-rasano nāma-gaṇanā-
kṛta-granthi-śreṇī-subhaga-kaṭi-sūtrojjvala-karaḥ
visālākṣo dīrghārgala-yugala-khelāñcita-bhujāḥ
sa caitanyaḥ kim me punar api dṛśor yāsyati padam*

When will Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu - whose tongue is always dancing by loudly calling out “Hare Kṛṣṇa!”; who counts the names which He is calling out on the splendid strip of cloth from around His waist which has been tied with knots for chanting; whose eyes are so large that they seem to reach His ears; and whose arms extend down to His knees - again become visible to me?

Here the word “*uccaiḥ*”, “loudly”, is used for Mahāprabhu’s chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa. Śrīla Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa confirms in his *Stavamālā-vibhūṣaṇa-bhāṣya* that this indeed refers to the thirty-two syllable *mahā-mantra*:

*hare kṛṣṇeti mantra-pratīka-grahaṇam
śoḍaśa-nāmātmanā dvātriṁśad-akṣareṇa
mantreṇocair-uccāritena sphurita
kṛta-nṛtyā rasanā jihvā yasya saḥ*

The Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra* was resounding in His mouth. The mantra consisting of sixteen names and thirty-two syllables was uttered and dancing on His tongue.

Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī states in his *Śacī-Sūnvāṣṭakam* (5):

*nijatve gauḍīyān jagati pariḡṛhya prabhur-imān
hare kṛṣṇety evaṁ gaṇana-vidhinā kīrtayata bhoh
iti prāyām śikṣām caraṇa-madhupebhyaḥ paridiśan
śacī-sūnuḥ kim me nayana-saraṇīm yāsyati padam*

When will that son of Mother Śacī – who, taking the residents of Bengal as His own, inspired them to chant Hare Kṛṣṇa a prescribed number of times daily and who like a father gave them many cherished instructions – again become visible to me?

This verse uses the word “*kirtayata*” to describe Mahāprabhu’s chanting, adding that this chanting is “*gaṇana-vidhinā*”, “counted as prescribed”.

Sārvabhauma Bhaṭṭācārya states in his *Caitanya-śatakam* (64):

***viṣaṇṇa cittān kali-pāpa bhītān
saṁvikṣya gauro hari-nāma mantraṁ
svayaṁ dadau bhakta-janān samādiśet
kuruṣva saṅkīrtana-nṛtya vādyān***

Seeing the people of the world afraid of the sins of the age of Kali and dejected at heart, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu personally gave them the *harināma mantra* and also ordered them to do loud *saṅkīrtana* of this *mahā-mantra* while dancing and playing musical instruments.

Śrīla Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī states in his *Vṛndāvana-mahimāmṛta* (17.89):

***hare kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇeti kṛṣṇeti mukhyān mahāścarya-nāmāvalī-siddha-mantrān
kṛpā-mūrti-caitanyadevopagotān kadābhyasya vṛndāvane syām krtārthaḥ***

Śrī Caitanya Deva, the very form of mercy, sung the perfected *mantra*, “Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa” and so forth. When will He give His favor to me, causing me to attain Śrī Vṛndāvana?

Śrīla Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī also states in his *Caitanya-candrāmṛta* (16):

***badhnan prema-bhara-prakampita-karo granthīn kaṭī-dorakaiḥ
saṅkhyātum nija-loka-maṅgala-hare-kṛṣṇeti nāmnām japan
asru-snata-mukhaḥ svam eva hi jagannatham didrikshur gata-
yatair gaura-tanur vilocana-mudam tanvan hariḥ patu vah***

Engaged in japa of Hare Kṛṣṇa and so forth, His own Holy Names which bring auspiciousness to the world, His hand trembling with love as He touches the knotted string about His waist to count the number of names, His face bathed in tears as He comes and goes, eager to see His own form of Lord Jagannātha, and bringing great delight to the eyes of all – may the golden form of Lord Hari protect you all.

Śrīla Kavi-karṇapūra describes the shaving-ceremony of Śrī Caitanya in his *Caitanya-carita-mahākāvya* (11.54):

***tataḥ śrī-gaurāṅgaḥ samavadad atīva pramudito
hare kṛṣṇetyuccair vada muhur iti śrīmaya-tanuḥ
tato ’sau tat procya prativalita-romaṅca-lalito
rudaiṁs tat-tat-karmārabhata bahu-duḥkhair vidalitaḥ***

When Śrī Gaurāṅga accepted *sannyāsa*, the barber took the blade in his hand but was not able to shave any of the Lord’s curly locks out of grief. Resplendent Śrī Gaurāṅga told him in great joy to repeatedly chant Hare Kṛṣṇa out loud. Then the barber loudly

chanted the same and, looking beautiful with goose bumps all over his body, began his job of shaving while he wept in great lamentation.

Śrīla Vṛndāvana dāsa Ṭhākura describes the Lord's instructions to Tapana Miśra in the *Caitanya-bhāgavata* (1.14.143-147) as follows:

*sādhya-sādhana-tattva ye kichu sakala
hari-nāma-saṅkīrtane milibe sakala
harer nāma harer nāma harer nāmaiva kevalam
kalau nāsty eva nāsty eva nāsty eva gatir anyathā
hare kṛṣṇa hare kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa hare hare
hare rāma hare rāma rāma rāma hare hare
ei śloka nāma bali' laya mahā-mantra
śola-nāma batrīsa-akṣara ei tantra
sādhite sādhite yabe premāṅkura habe
sādhya-sādhana-tattva jānibā se tabe*

Everything is accomplished by *hari-nāma-saṅkīrtana*, including the goal of life (*sādhya*) and the means for its attainment (*sādhana*). In this age of Kali, the only means for deliverance is the chanting of the names of Hari. There is no other way, there is no other way, there is no other way. “*Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Hare Hare Hare Rāma Hare Rāma Rāma Rāma Hare Hare.*” This verse of names is called the *mahā-mantra*. It contains sixteen names of the Lord, consisting of thirty-two syllables. Chanting this *mantra* again and again will awaken the sprout of *prema* within the heart, and thus the goal of life and the means for its attainment is understood.

The following famous instructions of Śrī Caitanya are related in the *Caitanya-bhāgavata* (2.23.75-78):

*āpane sabāre prabhu kare upadeśe
“kṛṣṇa-nāma mahā-mantra śunaha hariṣe
hare kṛṣṇa hare kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa hare hare
hare rāma hare rāma rāma rāma hare hare”
prabhu bale,—“kahilāṅga ei mahā-mantra
ihā japa' giyā sabe kariyā nirbandha
ihā haite sarva-siddhi haibe sabāra
sarva-kṣaṇa bala' ithe vidhi nāhi āra*

The Lord ordered everyone in great joy: “Listen to the *kṛṣṇa-nāma mahā-mantra*: *Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Hare Hare Hare Rāma Hare Rāma Rāma Rāma Hare Hare.*” The Lord said: “I have spoken the *mahā-mantra*. Perform *japa* of this *mantra* a prescribed number of times. All perfection will be attained through this. Chant this *mantra* every moment – there is no other rule.”



An Inspiration

*tuṅḍe tāṅḍavinī ratim vitanute tuṅḍāvalī-labdhaye
karṇa-kroḍa-kadambinī ghaṭayate karṇārbudebhyah sprhām
cetaḥ-prāṅgaṇa-saṅginī vijayate sarvendriyāṅām kṛtīm
no jāne janitā kiyadbhir amṛtaiḥ kṛṣṇeti varṇa-dvayī*

I do not know how much nectar the two syllables “Kṛṣ-ṇa” have produced. When the Holy Name of Kṛṣṇa is chanted, it appears to dance within the mouth. We then desire many, many mouths. When that name enters the holes of the ears, we desire many millions of ears. And when the Holy Name dances in the courtyard of the heart, it conquers the activities of the mind, and therefore all the senses become inert.

— Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī’s Second Meeting With the Lord, CC Antya 1.120