

মহামন্ত্র

Mahāmantra



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শ্রী সুন্দরানন্দ দাস

by

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by  
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# Mahāmantra

## Mantra and Mahāmantra

Śrī Gaurahari, the source of all descents (*avatāra*) who purifies the Age of Kali, referred to a specific, sixteen-name, thirty-two syllable set of names of Śrī Kṛṣṇa as the *mahāmantra* (the great *mantra*):

Master himself instructed all:  
“Hear joyfully this Mahāmantra  
Of the holy names of Kṛṣṇa:  
‘Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Kṛṣṇa  
Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Hare Hare!  
Hare Rāma Hare Rāma  
Rāma Rāma Hare Hare!’”  
Master said: “Now I have spoken  
this Mahāmantra; repeat (*japa*) it  
one and all, with persistence (*nirbandha*).  
From it will come every success for all.  
Say it each and every moment;  
here there is no other rule!”<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Caitanya-bhāgavata*, Madhya (2), 23.75-78:

আপনে সবারে প্রভু করে উপদেশ  
কৃষ্ণ-মহামন্ত্র শুনহ হরিষে  
হরে কৃষ্ণ হরে কৃষ্ণ কৃষ্ণ কৃষ্ণ হরে হরে  
হরে রাম হরে রাম রাম রাম হরে হরে  
প্রভু বলে কহিলাও এই মহামন্ত্র

Generally, a word with power deposited in it by sages and that has descended through a line of aural (*śrauta*) gurus, that is connected with a seed (syllable), that has a sage, a meter, and a divinity and is adorned with the word *namas* (meaning “bow, salutation”), that consists of a name of Bhagavān with the fourth or dative case and that establishes a relationship with Bhagavān is called a *mantra*. But, the sixteen names in the vocative case (signifying calling to someone) are not merely called “*mantra*” by that source of descents who purifies the Age of Kali (Śrī Gaura) but “*mahāmantra*.” Before the word “*mantra*” he used the word *mahat* (“great, large, big, huge, ample, extensive, long, abundant, numerous, considerable, important, high, eminent”) to indicate something most special about it.

## Śrī Gaurahari, Both the Form and Giver of the Mahāmantra

The *mahāmantra* is the source of all *mantras*. The *mahāmantra* is Gaura-sundara, the love-in-separation form of the combined body of Rādhā and Govinda. Śrī Gaurahari, the combined embodiment of Rādhā and Mādhava, enacted his sport of giving *bhaktas* and instructing them in the *mahāmantra*, which contains the two names Harā and Kṛṣṇa as calls or addresses and which is beautified by feelings of love-in-separation, and then spread it himself. This kind of compassion, which has not been offered for a long time, is very rare in the world.

## The Whole and the Part

Within the *mahāmantra* the quality of being a *mantra* is included. Beyond that, the generosity and sweetness of the holy names, which

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ইহা জপ গিয়া সবে করিয়া নিবন্ধ  
ইহা হৈতে সবসিদ্ধি হৈবে সবার  
সর্বক্ষণ বল, ইথে বিধি নাহি আর



are the essence of all *mantras*, are present in full measure. The power of causing liberation, or the quality of carrying one beyond, that belongs to *mantras* and the power of bestowing divine love, or the quality of taking one to the highest limit, both exist simultaneously and completely in the *mahāmantra*. Within the whole, the parts are always existent.

## Mahāmantra Not to be Revealed Like Other Mantras?

*Mantras* are generally not to be recited loudly or revealed to others. If one reveals a *mantra* that one has received from one's *gurudeva* to another person one becomes an offender and a resident in unlimited hells. Still, is that the situation in the case of the *mahāmantra* also? Should the *mahāmantra* not be recited loudly or in the hearing of others? Are there no rules and restrictions for the *mahāmantra* like there are for other *mantras*? In other words, *mantras* are (1) to be heard from an aural *guru*'s lips, are not (2) to be revealed to anyone else, are (3) to be chanted as *japa* (silently) and not recited loudly or in the form of songs, and finally (5) are to be counted.<sup>2</sup> Are these kinds of restrictions not to be applied to the *mahāmantra* which is the very image of generosity?

## Evidential Sources

In the subject, if one wants to arrive at the proper conclusion one has to search for evidence in the scriptures and in the instructions and practices of the source-descent who purifies the Age of Kali (Śrī Kṛṣṇacaitanya) and his companions, such as the exemplary teacher

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<sup>2</sup>Only after extracting the following promise from a person who seeks instruction, does a *guru* instruct that person in *mantra*:

संख्यां विना मन्त्रजपस्तथा मन्त्रप्रकाशनम्

Reciting (*japa*) a *mantra* without counting and revealing it to anyone, [these should not be done]. (*Hari-bhakti-vilāsa*, 2.177)

of the holy names, Ṭhākura Haridāsa, Gosvāmins such Śrī Rūpa, Śrī Raghunātha, and so forth, and other companions of Śrī Gaura.

## The Instruction through Practice of Gaurahari

The *gurudeva*, outside the hearing of others, recites the *mantra* in the ear of his disciple and that *mantra* is not to be revealed to others—this has already been stated.<sup>3</sup> But when Mahāprabhu taught the *mahāmantra* to his *bhaktas* did he do that outside the hearing of others, only in the ear of a specific *bhakta*, or did he teach it to many *bhaktas* loudly? Did Mahāprabhu say that this *mantra* is not to be revealed to others like other *mantras* and only recited to oneself (*japya*), or did he teach that it is to be spoken every moment? By the practice and instruction of Mahāprabhu, whose sport was to teach the people, it is proven that the *mahāmantra* is not only to be recited to oneself (*japya*) like that other Viṣṇu *mantras*, but it is to be repeated (*kīrtanīya*) loudly as well. This is not hard to conceive; it has been revealed in Mahāprabhu’s own practice in many places. Later, those will be cited.

## Uncounted Recitation

Now here there is a doubt. If the *mahāmantra* is not only to be recited to oneself like other *mantras*, but is also to be repeated loudly, then does that other unavoidable rule of keeping count of one’s repetitions also not apply to the *mahāmantra*? Because, it is clearly stated in Prabhu’s teaching: “Say it every moment; in this there is no other

<sup>3</sup> *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa*, 2.136, citing a verse from the *Nārada-pañcarātra*:

स्वमन्त्रो नोपदेष्टव्यो वक्तव्यश्च न संसदि  
गोपनीयं तथा शास्त्रं रक्षणीयं शरीरवत्॥

The *mantra* taught by one’s *guru* is not to be taught to anyone else, nor is it to be spoken in assembly. Similarly, sacred text is to be kept secret and protected like one’s own body.

rule.” In other words say the *mahāmantra* every moment—repeat it loudly; in this there is no other rule. That is, repeating it loudly is the only rule; in this there is no room for any other rule.

Is this the meaning of Prabhu’s statement? Let’s revisit the statements of the *Caitanya-bhāgavata* to determine the meaning of Prabhu’s statements:

Master said: “Now I have spoken  
this *mahāmantra*; chanting (*japa*) it  
one and all, with perseverance (*nirbandha*),  
from it will come every success for all.  
Say it each and every moment; in this there is no other  
rule!”<sup>4</sup>

If one reconciles the prior and the latter of the four verses of Prabhu’s statement cited above, it is clearly understood that “reciting” or *japa* “with perseverance” (*nirbandha-sahakāre*), that is, keeping count of one’s repetitions in a regulated way, and “saying it every moment,” or *kīrtana* (saying it loudly) are together the only rule for partaking of *mahāmantra*. Apart from that, there is no other rule. If you take it in any other way, the prior and the latter are not reconciled. If, for instance, apart from “saying it every moment” or in other words, doing it as *kīrtana*, there were no other rule or, in other words, if repeating it “with perseverance” or in a counted manner were not a rule, then the rule about reciting (*japa*) it “with perseverance” (i.e., with counting) in the prior verse would be meaningless. Therefore, apart from the rule of repeating the *mahāmantra* “with perseverance” mentioned in the prior verse there is no second rule. That means that, unlike with other *mantras* (as is described in the *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa*, in the section on the rule of counting in reciting), there are no approved good or bad times for repeating it nor any

<sup>4</sup> Vṛndāvana Dāsa, *Caitanya-bhāgavata*, Madhya, 23.77-78:

প্রভু বলে কহিলাঙ এই মহামন্ত্র  
ইহা জপ গিয়া সবে করিয়া নিবন্ধ  
ইহা হৈতে সবসিদ্ধি হৈবে সবার  
সর্বক্ষণ বল, ইথে বিধি নাহি আর

rules for initiation or purification rites and so forth. This is clear from Mahāprabhu's order that the *mahāmantra* should be spoken every moment.

Some people may say: "Another meaning can be made out of Prabhu's statement—the *mahāmantra* when recited (as *japa*) is to be done with counting and when it is "to be said at every moment" or as *kīrtana*, it is not dependent on any rule. In other words, only when one recites it is there a rule for keeping count. When one says it loudly as in *kīrtana* there is no necessity to count it or observe any rule at all."

If one accepts this meaning then the instruction through practice of Mahāprabhu, who performed *kīrtana* of the *mahāmantra* at every moment, as well as of the Teacher of the Holy Name (Śrī Haridāsa Ṭhākura) and of other companions of Śrī Gaura becomes meaningless. This will be clearly discussed in another place.

Here may arise another question—when there is a rule for the saying of the *mahāmantra* at every moment, or for doing it as *kīrtana*, can one sing it with musical instruments and so forth, too?

## Kīrtana of the Mahāmantra with Musical Instruments

When the *mahāmantra* is sung with the accompaniment of musical instruments, if the one and only rule enjoined by Mahāprabhu, that repetition of the holy name be counted, is an impediment to that then how can it be repeated with singing and musical accompaniment? Among all of the *kīrtanas* that Mahāprabhu and his *bhaktas* performed with singing and instruments, as described in the Caitanya biographies and hymns, nowhere is there an example of a *kīrtana* of the holy name performed with singing and musical instruments in which the holy names were not counted. Then again, if someone performs, with singing and musical instruments, songs from the *Caitanya-bhāgavata* that describe Mahāprabhu's teachings on the holy name, they can do so without counting that *mahāmantra*. But, that is not cultivation of the *mahāmantra*, because in uttering

(*japa*) or singing (*kīrtana*) the *mahāmantra*, there is the instruction that it should be repeated more than once and in that instruction there is the rule of keeping count of the number of times it is repeated. Therefore, among the kinds of practice Mahāprabhu demonstrated through his *bhaktas*, the following is found:

Prabhu said, “Do you know  
Whom I call a Lakh-lord?  
One who says a hundred thousand  
Holy names each day.”<sup>5</sup>

Prabhu said, “If you are aged,  
Do a smaller number.  
You have your accomplished body.  
Why do you insist on practice? ...  
Now do a smaller number in your *kīrtana*.”<sup>6</sup>

In the *Caitanya-maṅgala* Locanadāsa Ṭhākura says:

Smiling said Prabhu to all the *bhaktas*:  
“Give away this holy name of mine from house to house.  
All the people, young and old, who live in Navadvīpa,  
Caṇḍālas, unfortunates, honest folk, and villains, too,  
Teach them all the holy name along with knotting.  
Then easily all people will cross beyond worldly existence.”<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>ibid., Antya 9.121:

প্রভু বলে জান লক্ষ্মেশ্বরে বলি কারে? |  
প্রতিদিন লক্ষ্যনাম যে গ্রহণ করে | |

<sup>6</sup>ibid., Antya 11.24, 26:

প্রভু কহে বৃদ্ধ হৈলা সংখ্যা অল্প কর |  
সিদ্ধদেহ তুমি, সাধনে আগ্রহ কেনে কর? | | ...  
এবে অল্প সংখা করি কর সঙ্কীর্তন | |

<sup>7</sup>Locanadāsa, *Caitanya-maṅgala*, Madhya, p. 118:

হাসিয়া কহিলা প্রভু ভক্ত সভাকারে |  
এই মোর হরিনাম দেহ ঘরে ঘরে | |

## Gaurahari's Practice Regarding the Holy Name

Before all else, let us determine what teaching Śrī Gaurasundara, the initiator of musical presentation (*saṅkīrtana*) of the holy name himself, gave to living beings through his own practice. Rūpa Gosvāmin Prabhu in his *Stavamālā* has praised Śrī Kṛṣṇacaitanyadeva:

Tongue vibrating with “Hare Kṛṣṇa” loudly,  
Glowing hand on a thread around his waist  
Which is beautified by a row of knots  
Made for counting the holy names,  
Eyes enlarged, arms trembling like two long bolts,  
O will he come, that Caitanya,  
Before my eyes again?<sup>8</sup>

The Gauḍīya Vedāntācārya, Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa, has written the following in his commentary on the this verse:

The words “Hare Kṛṣṇa” are to be taken as standing for the whole *mantra*. His tongue was made to vibrate or to dance by the loud vocalization of the sixteen name, thirty-two syllable *mantra*. A line of knots created to count the vocalized names made fortunate or beautiful the thread around his waist, the border of which illumined his left hand.<sup>9</sup>

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নবদ্বীপে বালবৃদ্ধ বৈসে যত জন।  
চণ্ডাল, দুর্গতি আর সজ্জন দুর্জন।।  
সভারে শিখাও হরিনাম প্রস্তুি করি।  
অনাস্রাসে সব লোক যাউ ভব তরি।।

<sup>8</sup>Rūpa Gosvāmin, First *Caitanyāṣṭaka*, 5:

হরে কৃষ্ণোত্থুচ্যবৈ: স্ফুরিতরসনো নামগণনা-  
কৃতগ্রন্থিশ্রেণিসুভগকটিসূত্রোজ্জ্বলকরঃ।  
বিশালাক্ষো দীর্ঘার্গলযুগলখেলাস্ক্রিতভুজঃ  
স চৈতন্য: কিং মে পুনরপি দৃশ্যোয়াস্যতি পদম্।।

<sup>9</sup>Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa, comm. on the *Stavamālā* of Rūpa Gosvāmin: হরে কৃষ্ণোতি মন্ত্রপ্রতীকগ্রহণম্। ষোড়শনামাत्मনা দ্বাত্রিশদক্সরেণ মন্ত্রেণোচ্চৈরুচ্চারিতেন স্ফুরিতা কৃতনৃত্যা র-

In repeating the *mahāmantra*, “Hare Kṛṣṇa,” loudly his tongue danced; his left hand was brightened by the thread around his waist which was adorned with a line of knots created to count the vocalized holy names; his eyes were large and wide and his arms were decorated with two, long, undulating covers, or, were as long as door bolts; will that Caitanya again pass before my eyes?

From the verse just cited of Prabhu Rūpa Gosvāmin it is evident in clear language that the world teacher Kṛṣṇacaitanya Mahāprabhu presented the model for loud repetition (*kīrtana*) of the sixteen name, thirty-two syllable *mahāmantra* that was both loudly performed and counted. What better evidence can there be than Mahāprabhu’s own practice and Rūpa Gosvamin’s written instruction?

Rūpa Gosvāmin in a benedictory verse of his *Brief Nectar of the Bhāgavata* (*Samkṣepa-bhāgavatāmṛta*) has also proclaimed the teaching of Kṛṣṇacaitanya Mahāprabhu concerning repeating loudly the sixteen name, thirty-two syllable *mahāmantra*:

The syllables “Hare Kṛṣṇa,”  
From the mouth of Śrī Caitanya  
Is submerging the world in divine love.  
May his calls be victorious!<sup>10</sup>

In his commentary Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa says:

By that, the thirty-two syllable *mantra* of the holy name  
is understood. His calls means his names.<sup>11</sup>

May the thirty-two syllable *mantra* of the holy name, “Hare Kṛṣṇa,” calling to Śrī Hari, that issues from the mouth of Śrī Kṛṣṇacaitanyadeva,

सना जिह्वा यस्य सः | नाम्नामुच्चारितानां गणनायै कृता या ग्रन्थिश्रेणी, तया सुभगं सुन्दरं कटिसूत्रम्,  
तेन तदञ्चलेनोज्ज्वलः करो वामहस्तो यस्य सः |

<sup>10</sup>Rūpa Gosvāmin, *Samkṣepa-bhāgavatāmṛta*, 1.4:

श्रीचैतन्यमुखोद्गीर्णा हरे कृष्णेतिवर्णकाः |  
मज्जयन्तो जगत् प्रेम्णि विजयन्तां तदाह्वयाः ||

<sup>11</sup>Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa, comm. on the *Samkṣepa-bhāgavatāmṛta*, 1.4: तेन द्वाकिं-  
शदक्षरो नाममन्त्रो बोध्यते | तदाह्वयाः—कृष्णनामानि

while submerging the people of the world in a flood of divine love, reign supreme above all!

By this statement of Rūpa Gosvāmin it is also proven that Śrīman Mahāprabhu used to repeat loudly the world-benefitting *mahāmantra*. “Calls” are done at top volume; moreover, if they were not done loudly they would not be heard by the livings of the world. Therefore, Rūpa’s foremost follower, Raghunātha Dāsa, too, sings, in the clearest terms, of Śrīman Mahāprabhu’s instruction to the people of Bengal concerning the repetition of the *mahāmantra*:

The Master, having accepted  
In all the world these people of Gauḍa  
As his own, teaches them like a father:  
“O repeat the names ‘Hare Kṛṣṇa’  
Through the practice of counting them.”  
Will that son of Śacī ever again  
Cross the path of my eyes?<sup>12</sup>

Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī has raised Śrī Gaurahari’s name as a loud singer of the *mahāmantra* along with counting when he extends his blessings to the people of the world:

His hand trembling with divine love  
He ties knots with the strings around his waist  
To keep count and repeats the names  
“Hare Kṛṣṇa,” his own world-blessing names.  
Face bathed with tears, he wants to see  
Jagannātha, who is himself;  
And so he goes to and from the temple,  
Pleasing everyone who sees him.  
May golden-bodied Hari protect you.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>12</sup>Raghunātha Dāsa, *Caitanyāṣṭaka*, 5:

निजस्वे गौडीयान् जगति परिगृह्य प्रभुरिमान्  
हरे कृष्णेत्येवं गणनविधिना कीर्तयत भोः।  
इतिप्रायां शिक्षां जनक इव तेभ्यः परिदिशन्  
शचीसूनुः किं मे नयनशरणीं यास्यति पुनः॥

<sup>13</sup>Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī, *Caitanya-candrāmṛta*, 3.16:



Repeating his own names “Hare Kṛṣṇa,” which are auspicious for all the worlds, and tying knots in the threads about his waist to keep count of the names, his hands trembled from deep love. Out of desire to see his own other form, Jagannātha, with tears washing his face, he went back and forth to the temple, increasing the joy of the people who saw him. May that Śrī Gaurāṅga-Śrī Hari protect you all.

Ṭhākura Vṛndāvana Dāsa in his *Caitanya-bhāgavata* praises Śrī Caitanyacandra as a repeater of the *mahāmantra* with counting:

Victory to the might  
Of Navadvīpa’s new lamplight!  
A lion for those elephants  
Who are impious ignorants!  
Holder of a thread for counting  
Repetitions of his own name!  
To Caitanyacandra who is  
Lord Murāri let there be victory!<sup>14</sup>

He who is like a new light in Navadvīpa, like a matchless lion in controlling the elephants in the form of heretics, and who holds a string with knots for keeping track of the number of repetitions of his own names: “Hare Kṛṣṇa ... ,” may he, Lord Murāri (Kṛṣṇa) under the name Caitanyacandra, be victorious!

That Mahāprabhu used to repeat the holy name with counting all the time Ṭhākura Vṛndāvana Dāsa has revealed in particular in describing his sport in Nīlācala:

बध्नन् प्रेमभरप्रकम्पितकरो ग्रन्थीन् कटीडोरकैः|  
सङ्ख्यातुं निजलोकमङ्गलहरेकृष्णेति नाम्नां जपन्|  
अश्रुस्नातमुखः स्वमेव हि जगन्नाथं दिक्क्षुर्गता-  
यातैर्गौरतनुर्विलोचनमुदं तन्वन् हरिः पातु वः||

<sup>14</sup> Vṛndāvana Dāsa, *Caitanya-bhāgavata*, 2.5.1:

जय नवद्वीपनवप्रदीप-  
प्रभावः पाषण्डजैकसिंहः|  
स्वनामसंख्याजपसूत्रधारी  
चैतन्यचन्द्रो भगवान्मुरारिः||

When he moved about  
 Repeating the holy name with counting,  
 Someone went before him  
 Carrying a Tulasī plant.  
 The Master followed after  
 Looking at the Tulasī.  
 Showers of joy fell, flowing  
 Over his holy body.  
 Wherever the Master sat down,  
 Repeating the name with counting,  
 There they kept a Tulasī plant  
 By the Master's side. He looked at Tulasī  
 And repeated the name with counting.  
 This principle of *bhakti-yoga*  
 Who else would know?  
 Then, when the number of names was complete,  
 The Lord left taking Tulasī with him.  
 What the teacher Nārāyaṇa teaches,  
 One who accepts it finds protection.<sup>15</sup>

If he does not accept the instruction of the teaching guru, Gaura-Nārāyaṇa (Śrī Caitanya), who manifested his sport to provide the model for repeating the *mahāmantra* every moment in a counted way, the living being is not protected. This the Vyāsa of Caitanya's

<sup>15</sup> *ibid.*, 3.8.57-62:

যবে চলে সংখ্যা-নাম করিয়া গ্রহণ |  
 তুলসী লৈয়া অগ্রে চলে একজন | |  
 পশ্চাতে চলেন প্রভু তুলসী দেখিয়া |  
 পড়য়ে আনন্দধারা শ্রীঅঙ্গ বহিয়া | |  
 সংখ্যা-নাম লৈতে যে স্থানে প্রভু বৈসে |  
 তথাই রাখেন তুলসীরে প্রভু পাশে | |  
 তুলসীরে দেখেন জপেন সংখ্যা-নাম |  
 এ ভক্তিয়োগের তত্ত্ব কে বুঝিবে আন | |  
 পুনঃ সেই সংখ্যা-নাম সম্পূর্ণ করিয়া |  
 চলেন ঈশ্বর সঙ্গে তুলসী লৈয়া | |  
 শিক্ষাগুরু নারায়ণ যে করায়েন শিক্ষা |  
 তাহা যে মানয়ে সেই জন পায় রক্ষা | |

divine sport (Śrī Vṛndāvana Dāsa) proclaims with the thunder of a lightning-clap.

When Mahāprabhu was present, he used to repeat the holy name with the help of counting. When Mahāprabhu was ready to travel to the South India alone Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu while making several efforts to send Kṛṣṇadāsa Vipra along with him made the following argument:

Your two hands are bound up  
In counting the holy names.  
How will you carry your  
Water pot and outer cloth?<sup>16</sup>

When Vallabha Bhaṭṭa came to Śrī Kṛṣṇacaitanyadeva to read to him his own commentary on the *Bhāgavata*, Kṛṣṇacaitanya told Vallabha Bhaṭṭa:

I'm not able to understand  
The meaning of the *Bhāgavata*;  
I am not qualified to listen to  
The meaning of the *Bhāgavata*.  
I only sit and repeat Kṛṣṇa's names;  
My number of holy names  
Is not complete during the day or night.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>16</sup>Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja, *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, Madhya 7.37:

তোমার দুই হস্ত বদ্ধ নাম-গগনে |  
জলপাত্র বহির্বাস বহিবে কেমনে | |

<sup>17</sup>ibid., Antya 7.78-9:

... ভাগবতার্থ বুঝিতে না পারি |  
ভাগবতার্থ শুনিতে আমি নহি অধিকারী | |  
বসি কৃষ্ণনাম মাত্র করিয়ে গ্রহণে |  
সংখ্যা-নাম পূর্ণ মোর নহে রাত্রি-দিনে | |

## Mother Viṣṇupriyā's Practice

Thus we have completed Mahāprabhu's example and instructions on the counted repetition (*japa*) and singing (*kīrtana*) of the *mahāmantra*. What has Gaura's power (*śakti*), Śrī Viṣṇupriyā Devī, taught the world? That we can discover in books such as *The Ocean of Bhakti* (*Bhakti-ratnākara*) and the *Play of Divine Love* (*Prema-vilāsa*):

She completed her number of  
 Holy names using grains of rice.  
 Then she cooked those grains of rice and  
 Offered them to her lord.<sup>18</sup>

Hear, all you brothers, of the way  
 The lady repeated the holy name,  
 Hearing which you will understand  
 The nature of the divine sport.  
 Bringing a new pot made of clay  
 And then placing on her two sides,  
 An empty pot and a pot filled with rice.  
 As she chants once the sixteen-name,  
 Thirty-two syllable [*mahāmantra*]  
 She places one grain of rice in the pot  
 With a heart filled with joy.  
 Until the third *prahara*<sup>19</sup> of the day  
 She ceaselessly repeats the holy name.  
 Then she takes the rice accumulated  
 In that pot and cooks only that amount.  
 That she feeds her lord with tears in her eyes.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>18</sup>Narahari Cakravartin, *Bhakti-ratnākara*, 4.50:

হরিনাম-সংখ্যা-পূর্ণ তপ্তুলে করয় |  
 সে তপ্তুল পাক করি প্রভুরে অর্পয় | |

<sup>19</sup>A *prahara* is a period of time measuring three hours.

<sup>20</sup>*Prema-vilāsa*, 4th Vilāsa:

ঈশ্বরীর নামগ্রহণ শুন ভাই সব |  
 যে কথা-শ্রবণে লীলার হয় অনুভব | |

## The Nāmācārya Haridāsa's Practice

Such were the practices of Śrī Viṣṇupriyā Ṭhākuraṇī. Now, what do we find in the practices of Śrī Haridāsa Ṭhākura, who Mahāprabhu manifested in the world through his power to teach the greatness of the names of Hari in the world and to instruct the world the method of praise through the names of Hari:

The character of the branch of  
Haridās Ṭhākura is wonderful.  
Three hundred thousand names  
He repeated without fail.

...

In a deserted forest he  
Built a hut and honored tulsi.  
Day and night he performed  
Repetitions of holy name  
Numbering three hundred thousand.<sup>21</sup>

Śrī Haridās Ṭhākura said to the prostitute sent by Rāmacandra Khān:

### Performing the sacrifice

নবীন মৃত্যুজান আনি দুই পাশে ধরি।  
এক শূন্যপাত্র আর পাড়ে তণ্ডুল ভরি।।  
একবার জপে ষোলনাম বত্রিশ-অক্ষর।  
এক তণ্ডুল রাখেন পাড়ে আনন্দ-অন্তর।।  
তৃতীয় প্রহর পর্যন্ত লয়েন হরিনাম।  
তাতে যে তণ্ডুল হয় লৈয়া পাকে যান।।  
সেই সে তণ্ডুল মাত্র রন্ধন করিয়া।  
ভক্ষণ করান প্রভুকে অশ্রুযুক্ত হৈয়া।।

<sup>21</sup> Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja, *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, 1.10.43, 3.3.99:

হরিদাসঠাকুরশাখার অদ্বুত চরিত।  
তিন লক্ষ নাম তেঁহো লয়েন অপতিত।।  
...  
নির্জনবনে কুটীর করি তুলসীসেবন।  
রাত্রিদিনে তিন লক্ষ নামসঙ্কীৰ্তন।।

Of repeating ten million  
 Holy names in a single month,  
 Into this I am solemnly initiated.  
 When it is complete,  
 I will come to you at end.<sup>22</sup>

The exemplary teacher of the holy name, Haridās Ṭhākura, used to perform counted *saṅkīrtana* of the holy name. In the way that this can be understood through the statements of Kavirāja Gosvāmin from one angle, again from another angle that he *loudly* used to do counted *kīrtana* of the holy name can be understood, too:

One day Haridāsa  
 Sitting in his cave,  
 louding did *saṅkīrtana*.<sup>23</sup>

When, while Ṭhākura Haridās was doing this loud *saṅkīrtana* of the holy name, Māyā, the deluder of living beings, came to him, that teacher of the holy name said to Māyā:

Numbered *saṅkīrtana* of the holy names  
 I consider to be the great sacrifice.  
 I am consecrated into it each day.  
 As long as the *kīrtana* is not complete,  
 I can pursue no other desire.  
 When the *kīrtana* is finished,  
 The consecration comes to an end.  
 Sit at the door and listen  
 To *saṅkīrtana* of the holy names.

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<sup>22</sup>Ibid. 3.3.123:

কোটিনামগ্রহণযজ্ঞ করি একমাসে।  
 এই দীক্ষা করিয়াছি, হৈল আসিহ শেষে।।

<sup>23</sup>Ibid. 3.3.227:

একদিন হরিদাস গোফাতে বসিয়া।  
 নাম-সঙ্কীর্তন করেন উচ্চ করিয়া।।

When the holy names are complete,  
 I will do what pleases you.  
 Saying this, he did *saṅkīrtana*  
 Of the holy names.  
 That woman sat there  
 Listening to the holy names.<sup>24</sup>

In the *Caitanya-bhāgavata* there is a roguish *brāhmaṇa* from the village of Harinadi who, hearing Haridāsa's loud *kīrtana* of the holy names, became unhappy and told that Name-Master (*nāmācārya*): "The instruction of scripture is to recite the name of Hari in one's mind. There is no mention in any scripture about reciting the name of Hari loudly. On this matter a gathering of scholars will be calling together and Haridāsa Ṭhākura's view will be refuted." In response the Name-Master recited statements of scripture and established that *kīrtana* of the name of Hari is better than *japa* of Hari's name. This topic is described in the final portion of the sixteenth chapter of the first division of the *Caitanya-bhāgavata*.

Elsewhere, in the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* Mahāprabhu said:

Haridāsa Ṭhākura—foremost of great Bhāgavatas.  
 Every day he recites three hundred thousand names.<sup>25</sup>

What can we learn from the example the Name-Master gave us just before the sport of his departure?

<sup>24</sup>Ibid. 3.3.238-41:

সংখ্যা-নাম-সঙ্কীৰ্তন এই মহাযজ্ঞ মন্যে |  
 তাহাতে দীক্ষিত আমি হই প্রতিদিন | |  
 যাবত্ কীর্তন সমাপ্ত, নহে, না করি অন্য কাম |  
 কীর্তন সমাপ্ত হৈলে, হয় দীক্ষার বিশ্রাম | |  
 দ্বারে বসিহ শুন তুমি নাম-সঙ্কীৰ্তন |  
 নাম সমাপ্ত হৈলে করিমু তব প্রীতি-আচরণ | |  
 এত বলিহ করেন তেহো নাম-সঙ্কীৰ্তন |  
 সেই নারী বসিহ করে শ্রীনাম শ্রবণ | |

<sup>25</sup>Cc., 3.7.46:

হরিদাস ঠাকুর—মহাভাগবত-প্রধান |  
 প্রতিদিন লয় তেঁহো তিনলক্ষ নাম | |

He saw—Haridāsa Ṭhākura has laid down  
 Slowly he doing counted *saṅkīrtana*.  
 Govinde said, “Get up! Come and eat,”  
 Haridāsa said, “Today I will fast.  
 I have not completed my count; how will I eat?  
 You have brought grace food; how will I reject it?”<sup>26</sup>  
 The Lord said,—What disease? Tell me the details.  
 He replied,—I have not finished the count.<sup>27</sup>

All these examples and statements of the Name-Master prove very clearly that he used to repeat the Mahāmantra while counting them. He never used to recite holy names, softly or loudly, without counting them.

## Śrī Gopīnātha’s Practice When Imprisoned

Śrī Rāya Rāmānanda’s brother Śrī Gopīnātha was imprisoned for capital punishment by the oldest son (Bārajenā) of Paṭṭanāyaka Śrī Pratāparudra. Even when he was being led to the scaffold he was repeating the holy names while counting them:

Gopīnātha fearlessly  
 repeated the names of Kṛṣṇa.  
 “Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Kṛṣṇa,”

<sup>26</sup>Cc., 3.11.17-19:

দেখে,—হরিদাস ঠাকুর করিয়াছেন শয়ন |  
 মন্দ মন্দ করিতেছেন সংখ্যা-সঙ্কীৰ্তন | |  
 গোবিন্দে কহে,—উঠ, আসিহ করহ ভোজন |  
 হরিদাস কহে,—আজি করিমু লঙ্ঘন | |  
 সংখ্যা-সঙ্কীৰ্তন পুরে নাহি, কেমনে খাইমু?  
 মহাপ্রসাদ আনিয়াছ, কেমনে উপেক্ষিমু?

<sup>27</sup>Cc., 3.11.23:

প্রভু কহে,—কোন ব্যাধি? কহ ত নির্ণয় |  
 তঁহো কহে,—সংখ্যা-সঙ্কীৰ্তন ন পুরয় | |



he said without cessation.  
 To keep count, he marked the fingers  
 of both hands. When a thousand was reached,  
 he made cuts on his body.  
 Hearing this, Mahāprabhu  
 felt the highest joy. Who can  
 understand Gaura's mercy  
 when it's in disguise?<sup>28</sup>

Even when brought to the door of the king, Śrī Gopīnātha did not give up his counting while repeating the holy names. Then, since it was not convenient to keep a string of tulasī beads, he kept count on his hands and on his body. From all of these examples it is clearly proven that for one who chants the Mahāmantra, it is necessary at all times and in all circumstances to keep a count. Though there is no consideration of place or time for chanting the Mahāmantra, still the one unavoidable rule is that one must count while chanting the holy names—that must be observed.

## Śrī Raghunāth's Practice

The daily manner of worship of the companion of the Śrī Gaura, Śrīla Raghunāthadāsa Gosvāmī Prabhu, has been described by Śrīla Kavirāja Gosvāmī. In that one can see that Śrīla Raghunātha counted while chanting a hundred thousand holy names:

He did one thousand prostrations,  
 a hundred thousand holy names

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<sup>28</sup>C.c., 3.9.56-58.

গোপীনাথ নির্ভয়েতে লয় কৃষ্ণনাম |  
 হরে কৃষ্ণ হরে কৃষ্ণ কহে অবিশ্রাম | |  
 সংখ্যা লাগিহ দুই-হাতে অঙ্গুলিতে লেখা |  
 সহস্রাদি পূর্ণ হৈলে, অঙ্গে কাটে রেখা | |  
 শূনিহ মহাপ্রভু হৈল পরম আনন্দ |  
 কে বুঝিতে পারে গৌরের কৃপা-ছদ্ম-বন্ধ | |

and to Vaiṣṇavas two thousand bows.<sup>29</sup>

## The Six Gosvāmins' Practice

In Śrīnivāsācārya's *Eight-versed Hymn on the Six Gosvāmins* (Ṣaḍ-gosvāmy-aṣṭaka), the examples of Śrī Rūpa, Sanātana, the two Raghunāthas, Jīva, Gopālabhaṭṭa and other teachers counting while repeating the holy names is clearly recorded:

I praise Rūpa and Sanātana,  
with the two Raghunāthas,  
and Śrī Jīva and Gopāla,  
all of whom filled their time with  
prostrations and with singing  
the holy names while counting them.  
They conquered sleep, eating, and  
idle pleasures and were  
extremely humble. They were  
enchanted by the joy of  
the sweetness of recalling  
the traits of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa.<sup>30</sup>

In this passage, by the words *saṁkhyā-pūrvaka-nāmā-gāna* the idea that the Mahāmantra is only to be counted during *japa* (private repetition) is refuted. While “singing” (*gāna*) or at times of loud praise (aka., *saṅkīrtana*), too, the Six Gosvāmins used to count while pronouncing the holy names. This is proven.

<sup>29</sup> C.c., 1.10.99:

সহস্র দণ্ডবত করে, লয় লক্ষ নাম |  
দুই সহস্র বৈষ্ণবের নিত্য পরগাম |

<sup>30</sup> Śrīnivāsācārya, *Ṣaḍ-gosvāmy-aṣṭaka*, 6:

संख्यापूर्वकनामगाननतिभिः कालावसानिकृतौ  
निद्राहारविहारकादिविजितौ चात्यन्तदीनौ च यौ |  
राधाकृष्णगुणस्मृतेर्मधुरिमानन्देन संमोहितौ  
वन्दे रूपसनातनौ रघुयुगौ श्रीजीवगोपालकौ ||

## The Practices of the Śikṣā Students of Śrī Jīva

The middle period teachers who were immediate followers of the Gosvāmins—like Śrīnivāsācārya, Narottama Ṭhākura Mahāśaya, and Śyāmānanda Prabhu—all counted the Mahāmantra as they chanted. For instance, with respect to Śrīnivāsācārya Prabhu Śrī Hemalata Ṭhākuraṇī's disciple Śrī Yadunandanadāsa has written in his work *Pleasure for the Ears* (*Karṇānanda*):

While counting he repeated  
the names of Hari for a *prahara*.<sup>31</sup>  
Another *prahara* went to  
studying the sacred texts.<sup>32</sup>

In the *Play of Divine Love* (*Prema-vilāsa*), the way Narottama Ṭhākura Mahāśaya honored the holy name is described in this way:

One year passed for Narottama  
in repeating the holy name.  
For that time he practiced day and night.  
Two hundred thousand names he did,  
sitting in a solitary place.  
While counting he repeated  
the holy names, sitting awake at night.  
...  
Narottama repeated  
one hundred thousand names.  
When he repeated the names  
he took on all of Gaurāṅga's powers.<sup>33</sup>

<sup>31</sup> A period of three hours.

<sup>32</sup> *Pleasure for the Ears*, Berampur edition, First Chapter, page 4:

সংখ্যা করি হরিনাম লয় প্রহরেক |  
গ্রন্থ-দরশনে যায় আর প্রহরেক |

<sup>33</sup> *Play of Divine Love*, Berampur edition, Eleventh Chapter, pages 118, 128:

হরিনামে নরোত্তমের এক বৎসর গেল |  
তদবধি সে সাধন রাত্রিদিন কৈল |

When there was opportunity  
he repeated the holy names.  
In this way a count of  
a hundred thousand was measured.<sup>34</sup>

In the *Reveal of Śyāmānanda* (*Śyāmānanda-prakāśa*), it has been said of Śrī Śyāmānanda:

He practiced day and night  
a hundred thousand holy names,  
visiting Govinda and holy men.<sup>35</sup>

## The Practices of the Lineages of Disciples

The kind of *mantra* and Mahāmantra instruction Śrīnivāsācārya gave to King Vīrahāmīra Narahari Cakravartin has described:

Introducing what he said before,  
with great joy he gave initiation  
into the Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa mantras.  
He taught the meaning of the  
Desire-gāyatrī with great care.  
He made the repetition of the  
holy names fixed [by number].<sup>36</sup>

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দুই লক্ষ নাম-সাধন নিভূতে বসিয়া |  
সংখ্যা-নাম লয় বসি রাত্রিতে জাগিয়া | |

...  
নরোত্তম লক্ষ-নাম লয় সংখ্যা করি |  
নাম লৈলে গৌরঙ্গের সর্বশক্তি ধরি | |

<sup>34</sup>ibid., Chapter 17.

<sup>35</sup>The *Reveal of Śyāmānanda*, Second Chapter:

লক্ষ-নাম রাত্রি-দিনে করয়ে সাধন |  
গোবিন্দ-দর্শনে আর সাধু দর্শন | |

<sup>36</sup>The *Mine of Bhakti*, 9.262-3:

পূর্বে কহিলেন যাহা, তাহা সূচাইয়া |

Śrī Yadunandanadāsa described the way Śrīnivāsācārya's other disciples used to celebrate the Mahāmantra in the following ways in his *Pleasure for the Ears*:

Rāmakṛṣṇa Caṭṭarāja  
was one of the master's branches.  
How will I write of his glory  
and merits? Always engaged  
in the holy names, he ever  
repeated the names counting them  
in *japa* without cessation.<sup>37</sup>

Then that one named Kalānidhi Caṭṭarāja  
was always engaged in repeating Hari's names.  
This was his fondest desire.  
Master said, "To Caitanya you are most dear.  
You make it a rule to chant  
a hundred thousand names."<sup>38</sup>

In the village of Kāñcanagariyā,  
each one of the master's followers  
keeps a rule to chant a hundred  
thousand names of Hari.

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রাধাকৃষ্ণ-মন্দুদীক্ষা দিলা হর্ষ হঞা | |  
শ্রীকাম-গায়ত্রী-অর্থ যত্নে শুনাইলা |  
হরিনাম-জপের নির্বন্ধ করাইলা | |

<sup>37</sup> Śrī Yadunandanadāsa, *Pleasure for the Ears*:

রামকৃষ্ণ চট্টরাজ প্রভুর এক শাখা |  
তাহার মহিমা-গুণ কি করিব লেখা | |  
হরিনামে রত সদা লয় হরিনাম |  
সংখ্যা করি জপে নাম সদা অবিশ্রম | |

<sup>38</sup> Śrī Yadunandanadāsa, *Pleasure for the Ears*:

তবে সেই কলানিধি চন্ডরাজ নাম |  
সদা হরিনাম জপে, এই তার কাম | |  
প্রভু কহে—তুমি চৈতন্যের প্রিয়তম |  
লক্ষনাম জপ তুমি করিয়া নিয়ম | |

By day they do not chant the names,  
at night they sit tying their hair with rope  
to the roofs of their huts and smiling they chant.<sup>39</sup>

His<sup>40</sup> wife Sucaritā was very smart.  
She was recipient of Rādhā's grace  
and had a very fine character.  
She repeated Hari's names  
a hundred thousand times  
and spoke moment to moment  
of Mahāprabhu's deeds.<sup>41</sup>

Master gave his grace to  
Kavirāja Karṇapūra.

...

who repeated Hari's names  
a hundred thousand times.<sup>42</sup>

Śrī Vaṁśīdāsa Ṭhākura Mahāśaya,  
whose branch is dear to Master  
and a reservoir of sweetness,

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<sup>39</sup> Śrī Yadunandanadāsa, *Pleasure for the Ears*:

কাঞ্চনগড়িয়া গ্রামে প্রভুর ভক্তগণ |  
একেক লক্ষ হরিনাম করেন নিয়ম | |  
দিবসে না লয় নাম রাত্রিকালে বসি |  
কেশে ভেরে চালে বান্ধি লয় নামা হাসি | |

<sup>40</sup> Govinda Cakravartin's.

<sup>41</sup> Śrī Yadunandanadāsa, *Pleasure for the Ears*:

ভাঁহার ঘরগী সুচরিতা বুদ্ধিমত্তা |  
শ্রী ঈশ্বরীর কৃপাপাত্রী অতি সুচরিতা | |  
লক্ষ হরিনাম যিঁহো করেন গ্রহণ |  
ক্ষণে ক্ষণে মহাপ্রভুর চরিত্র কথন | |

<sup>42</sup> Śrī Yadunandanadāsa, *Pleasure for the Ears*:

কর্ণপুর কবিরাজে প্রভু দয়া কৈলা |  
...  
লক্ষ হরিনাম যিঁহো করেন গ্রহণ | |

was ever engaged in Hari's names.  
He repeated Hari's names always,  
counting the names in *japa*,  
always without cessation.<sup>43</sup>

Rāmacaraṇa Cakravartī  
was a servant of Master.  
I will describe some  
of his many disciples.  
A hundred thousand names of Hari  
they counted in their *japa*.  
They talked of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa sports  
and relished them immensely.<sup>44</sup>

An object of Master's grace  
was one Caṭṭa Kṛṣṇadāsa.  
A hundred thousand names of Hari  
he recited in his *japa*;  
his faith was in the holy names.<sup>45</sup>

Most dear to Master was  
Śrī Mathurādāsa.

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<sup>43</sup> Śrī Yadunandanadāsa, *Pleasure for the Ears*:

শ্রীবংশীদাস ঠাকুর যেই মহাশয় |  
প্রভুর প্রিয় শাখা হয় মধুর আশয় | |  
হরিনামে রত সদা লয় হরিনাম |  
সংখ্য করি জপে নাম সদা অবিশ্রাম | |

<sup>44</sup> Śrī Yadunandanadāsa, *Pleasure for the Ears*:

রামচরণ চক্রবর্তী প্রভুর সেবক |  
তার যত শিষ্যগণ কহিব কতেক | |  
লক্ষ হরিনাম জপে সংখ্যা করিয়া |  
রাধাকৃষ্ণ-লীলা-কথা কহে আস্থাদিয়া | |

<sup>45</sup> Śrī Yadunandanadāsa, *Pleasure for the Ears*:

প্রভুর কৃপাপাত্র এক চট্ট কৃষ্ণদাস |  
লক্ষ হরিনাম জপে নামেই বিশ্বাস | |

He was thoroughly pleased  
always repeatingd Hari's names.<sup>46</sup>

There was Śrī Ātmārāma,  
Master's dear servant.  
Always repeating Hari's name,  
indifferent to worldly life.<sup>47</sup>

One named Śrī Durgādāsa  
was Master's own servant.  
He always repeated Hari's names,  
feeling ecstasy inside.<sup>48</sup>

And there was another servant,  
Śrī Gokulānandadāsa.  
He always repeated Hari's names,  
his faith was in the lord's names.<sup>49</sup>

There, he bestowed his grace  
on Vallavī Kavipati.  
Who, gaining shelter at his feet,  
became a man of virtuous deeds.  
He always repeated Hari's names,

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<sup>46</sup> Śrī Yadunandanadāsa, *Pleasure for the Ears*:

প্রভুর পরম প্রিয় শ্রীমথুরাদাস |  
হরিনাম জপে সদা পরম উল্লাস | |

<sup>47</sup> Śrī Yadunandanadāsa, *Pleasure for the Ears*:

তথায় শ্রীআত্মারাম প্রভুর প্রিয়দাস |  
সদা হরিনাম জপে সংসারে উদাস | |

<sup>48</sup> Śrī Yadunandanadāsa, *Pleasure for the Ears*:

শ্রীদুর্গাদাস নাম প্রভুর নিজ দাস |  
সদা হরিনাম জপে অন্তরে উল্লাস | |

<sup>49</sup> Śrī Yadunandanadāsa, *Pleasure for the Ears*:

আর এক সেবক শ্রীগোকুলানন্দদাস |  
সদা হরিনাম জপে নামেতে বিশ্বাস | |



in a regulated manner.  
Without finishing one hundred thousand  
Names of Hari, he would not eat.<sup>50</sup>

Then the Master bestowed his grace  
on Nimāi Kavirāja,  
Rūpa Kavirāja's brother,  
famous throughout the world.

He repeated Hari's names  
counting a hundred thousand names.  
In group singing of Hari's names  
he danced, being absorbed in bliss.<sup>51</sup>

After that, he gave his grace  
to Śrīmanta Cakravartī,  
who, finding shelter at his feet,  
became someone whose fame was made.

He repeated a hundred thousand  
names of Hari; he believed  
in the holy names. He was  
a huge enjoyer of rasa.  
Towards worldly life he was indifferent.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> Śrī Yadunandanadāsa, *Pleasure for the Ears*:

তথাতে করিলা দয়া বল্লবী কবিপতি  
পদাশ্রয় পাইয়া যিহো হইলা সুকৃতি ।  
হরিনাম জপে সদা করিয়া নিয়ম ।  
লক্ষ হরিনাম বিনা না করে ভোজন ।

<sup>51</sup> Śrī Yadunandanadāsa, *Pleasure for the Ears*:

ভবে প্রভু কুপা কৈলা নিমাই কবিরাজে ।  
রূপ কবিরাজের ভ্রাতা খ্যাত জগ-মাঝে ।  
লক্ষ হরিনাম জপে সংখ্যা যে করিয়া ।  
সংকীর্তনে নৃত্য করে সুখাবিষ্ট হইয়া

<sup>52</sup> Śrī Yadunandanadāsa, *Pleasure for the Ears*:

তার পর কুপা কৈল শ্রীমন্ত চক্রবর্তী ।  
পদাশ্রয় পাইয়া যিহো হৈলা কৃতকীর্তি ।  
লক্ষ হরিনাম লয়, নামেতে বিশ্বাস ।

Śrī Śyāmasundaradāsa  
was a simple *brāhmaṇa*.  
He chanted the names of Hari  
a hundred thousand times.

Premī Harirāma and  
Muktārāma Dāsa always  
had firm faith in the Master  
and inside they rejoiced.

All of them, meeting together,  
had their meals in the same place.  
All repeated Hari's names  
a hundred thousand times.<sup>53</sup>

## The Practices of Śrī Śrī Jagāi and Mādhāi

After attaining the grace of Nitāi and Gaura, Jagāi and Mādhāi used to chant the Mahāmantra along with counting. That Ṭhākura Vṛndāvana described in his *Lordship of Caitanya (Caitanya-bhāgavata)* in the following way:

The two, Jagāi and Mādhāi,  
by the grace of Caitanya,  
reside in the town of Nadiyā  
in the most virtuous way.

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বড়ই রসিক তিঁহো, সংসারে উদাস | |

<sup>53</sup> All these quotes from Śrī Yadunandanadāsa come from the Baharampura edition of the text (*Pleasure for the Ears*), First Chapter, pp 10-24:

শ্রীশ্যামসুন্দরদাস সরল ব্রাহ্মণ |  
লক্ষ হরিনাম যিঁহো করেন গ্রহণ | |  
প্রেমী হরিরাম আর মুক্তারাম দাস |  
প্রভুপদে নিষ্ঠা সদা, অন্তর উল্লাস | |  
সবে মিলি একত্রেতে করেন ভোজন |  
লক্ষ হরিনাম সবে করেন গ্রহণ | |

Bathing in the Ganges at daybreak,  
they, in a lonely place, repeat  
two hundred thousand names of Kṛṣṇa  
each and every day.<sup>54</sup>

When a ring-leader of thieves wanted to steal the jewelry on Nityānanda Prabhu's body and, by Nityānanda's grace, he surrendered to him, then in allegiance to Nityānanda's instructions he, along with his followers, gave up the profession of stealing. He became intent on pursuing virtuous behavior and while counting chanted the names of Hari.

Giving up the misbehavior  
of crime, thievery, and violence,  
they all took on the practices  
of extremely good people.  
They all repeated Hari's names  
by the hundreds of thousands.  
They all became expert  
in the yoga of bhakti to Viṣṇu.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>54</sup>Vṛndāvanadāsa, *Cai-bhāg.*, 2.15.4-5:

জগাই-মাধাই দুই চৈতন্য-কুপায় |  
পরম ধামিকরূপে বসে নদীয়ায় | |  
উষ্যকালে গঙ্গাস্নান করিয়া নির্জনে |  
দুই লক্ষ কৃষ্ণনাম লয় প্রতিদিনে | |

<sup>55</sup>ibid., 3.5.697-98:

ডাকা চুরি পরহিংসা ছাড়ি অনাচার |  
সবে লইলেন অতি সাধু-ব্যবহার | |  
সবেই লয়েন হরিনাম লক্ষ লক্ষ |  
সবে হইলেন বিষ্ণুভক্তি-যোগে দক্ষ | |

## The Practice of the Disciple of the Teacher of the Holy Name

After the prostitute sent by Śrī Rāmācandra Khān took shelter at the feet of the Teacher of the Holy Name, Haridāsa Ṭhākura, she used to repeat the Holy Name while counting by his instruction.

Covering her head with one garment  
she remained in her house.  
Night and day she repeated  
three hundred thousand Holy Names.<sup>56</sup>

## The Master's Instruction to Tapanamiśra

When Śrī Tapanamiśra asked Mahāprabhu about means and goal, Mahāprabhu gave Miśra this kind of instruction:

Night and day repeat the Names  
while eating and while lying down  
In the Veda its glory  
cannot be given.

Whatever little there is  
about the truth of means and goal,  
one will achieve everything  
through group singing<sup>57</sup> of Hari's names.  
Hari's names, Hari's names  
nothing but Hari's names;  
in the age of Kali there is not,  
there is not, there is not another way.  
*Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Kṛṣṇa*

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<sup>56</sup>Cc., 3.3.139:

মাথ মুড়ি একবস্ত্রে রহিল সেই ঘরে।  
রাত্রি-দিনে তিন লক্ষ নাম গ্রহণ করে।।

<sup>57</sup>Saṅkīrtana.

*Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Hare Hare,  
Hare Rāma Hare Rāma  
Rāma Rāma Hare Hare.*  
Reciting this holy name verse,  
repeat the *mahāmantra*,  
sixteen names, thirty-two syllables;  
this is indeed the science.  
As one continues to practice  
when the bud of love appears,  
then one will know the truth  
of means and goal.<sup>58</sup>

## An Objection to this Argument

In this passage, repeating the Holy Names night and day “while eating and while lying down” can never be done while counting. When one is eating the right hand is engaged. Therefore, it is not possible to keep count with that hand at that time. In Śrī Mahāprabhu’s statement “Hari is always to be praised,”<sup>59</sup> the times for going for a bath and so forth are included in that word “always.” If so then, how is it possible to keep count of the names chanted? Moreover,

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<sup>58</sup>Cai. bhā., 1.14.140, 143-47:

রাত্রি-দিন নাম লয় খাইতে শুইতে।  
তাহার মহিমা বেদে নাহি পারে দিতে।।  
...  
সাধ্য-সাধন-তত্ত্ব যে কিছু সকল।  
হরিনাম-সঙ্কীৰ্তন মিলিবে সকল।।  
হরেনাম হরেনাম হরেনামিবে কেবলম্।  
কলৌ নাস্ত্যেব নাস্ত্যেব নাস্ত্যেব গতিস্ন্যথা॥  
হরে কৃষ্ণ হরে কৃষ্ণ কৃষ্ণ কৃষ্ণ হরে হরে।  
হরে রাম হরে রাম রাম রাম হরে হরে।।  
এই শ্লোক নাম বলি লয় মহামন্ত্র।  
ষোল-নাম বত্রিশ-অক্ষর এই তন্ত্র।।  
সাধিতে সাধিতে যবে প্রেমাঙ্কুর হবে।  
সাধ্য-সাধন-তত্ত্ব জানিবা সে তবে।।

<sup>59</sup>কীর্তনীয: সদা हरि:

in the *Bhakti-sandarbha* (para. 263) Śrī Jīva Gosvāmin has cited statements from the *Bhagavan-nāma-kaumudī* and a commentary on the *Viṣṇu-sahasra-nāma-stotra* in which a *brāhmaṇa* instructs a friend of a *kṣatriya* that in all actions such as standing, sleeping, walking, future travel, and so forth and in all conditions such as hunger, thirst, stumbling, and so forth one should repeat Govinda's name. For instance:

One who is standing, sleeping,  
walking, preparing to travel  
should always say "Govinda,"  
in conditions of hunger,  
thirst, stumbling, and so forth.<sup>60</sup>

If we take these scriptural statements from the *Bhakti-sandarbha* with Mahāprabhu's statements: "repeat the Holy Names night and day while eating, while sleeping,"<sup>61</sup> and "while eating, while sleeping, whatever the case maybe, repeat the Holy Names. There is no wrong time, place, nor any restrictions; all success will happen,"<sup>62</sup> and reconcile them, we find that the instruction of scripture and the instruction of the Master is to repeat the names of the Lord at all times and at all places. But at this place in the text immediately after Mahāprabhu's teaching on the singing of the names of Hari (*hari-nāma-saṅkīrtana*) the verse from the *Brhan-nāradya Purāṇa* is cited: "Hari's names, Hari's names, nothing but Hari's names," and immediately after that the sixteen-name, thirty-two syllable Mahāmantra is presented. Therefore, by the implication of Mahāprabhu's statement, the Mahāmantra is to be repeated "while eating, while

<sup>60</sup>*Bhakti-sandarbha*, para. 263, quoting the *Viṣṇu-dharma*:

उत्तिष्ठता प्रस्वपता प्रस्थितेन गमिष्यता  
गोविन्देति सदा वाच्यं क्षुत्तृप्प्रस्त्रलनादिषु॥

<sup>61</sup>Cai. bhāg., 1.14.140: রাত্রিদিন নাম লয় খাইতে শুইতে .

<sup>62</sup>Cc., 3.20.18:

খাইতে শুইতে যথাতথা নাম লয় |  
কাল, দেশ, নিয়ম নাহি, সর্বসিদ্ধি হয় | |

lying down,” counted or uncounted, in any condition whatsoever. This is being proven.

## Resolution of this Objection

The conclusion of those who make this argument is invented inside their own heads. Therefore, is it not extremely important that it be reconciled with the instructions of Mahāprabhu and his companions as well as of scripture? The subject of singing of Śrī Hari’s Names Mahāprabhu has taught as part of a general teaching about names of the Lord. If one imagines that as specifically about the Mahāmantra of Kṛṣṇa’s names, then it does not agree with the Master’s other instructions and practices. Though Śrī Gopīnātha was being led out for punishment, he was counting while repeating the Holy Names. The statement of the Viṣṇudharma that was cited in the *Bhakti-sandarbha* was about singing the name Govinda. Therefore, saying that since one should repeat the Holy Name “while eating, while lying down,” one should repeat the Mahāmantra without counting—Mahāprabhu never gave such an instruction. He always made a distinction for the mantra nature of the Mahāmantra.

## The Distinction between the Mahāmantra and singing the Holy Names

There is a distinction between the methods of the Mahāmantra and the singing of the Holy Names. In the *Caitanya-bhāgavata*<sup>63</sup> the instructions for the Mahāmantra and singing the Holy Names were given together: “Hear with joy the Mahāmantra of Kṛṣṇa’s names,”<sup>64</sup> saying this, Mahāprabhu spoke the sixteen-name, thirty-two syllable Mahāmantra. Finishing that topic, he gave another instruction immediately following that:

<sup>63</sup> 2.23.76-92.

<sup>64</sup> Cai. bhā. 2.23.76: শ্রীকৃষ্ণনাম-মহামন্ত্র শুনহ হরিশে

“Five or ten people gathering  
and sitting at their own doorways,  
may you all do songful praise (*kīrtana*)  
to the clapping of your hands:|  
'*haraye namaḥ kṛṣṇa yādavāya namaḥ|*  
*gopāla govinda rāma śrīmadhusūdana*||”<sup>65</sup>  
Thus praise in song has been described  
to all of you. Wives, sons, fathers,  
gathering together, do this at home.<sup>66</sup>

...  
In this way from town to town  
Śacī's son encouraged singing praise.  
Lifting up all, Master embraced them,  
gave them garlands from his neck.  
Taking grass in his teeth, he begged:  
“Brothers all, worship Kṛṣṇa night and day!”<sup>67</sup>  
Seeing Master's pain, everyone cried.

65

A bow to Hari, O Kṛṣṇa,  
A bow to Yadu's descendant,  
O Gopāla, O Govinda  
O Rāma, Śrī Madhusūdana!

Six names of Kṛṣṇa featuring different qualities and connections. Hari is the remover of sins or stealer of hearts; Kṛṣṇa the attractive one; Yādava refers to Kṛṣṇa's appearance among the descendants of Yadu; Gopāla is Kṛṣṇa the cowherd; Govinda is Kṛṣṇa the cow-pleaser; Rāma means Balarāma, Kṛṣṇa's brother, Rāmacandra, a previous avatāra of Kṛṣṇa, or Kṛṣṇa as enjoyer of the cowherd girls, and Madhusūdana is Kṛṣṇa as the crusher of a demon named Madhu.

<sup>66</sup>Cai. bhā., 2.23.79-81:

দশ-পাঁচ মিলি নিজ দ্বারেতে বসিয়া |  
কীর্তন করহ সবে হাতে তালি দিয়া | |  
হরয়ে নমঃ কৃষ্ণ যাদবয় নমঃ |  
গোপাল গোবিন্দ রাম শ্রীমধুসূদন | |  
সংকীর্তন কহিল এ তোমা-সবাকারে |  
স্ত্রী-পুত্রে-বাপে মিলি কর গিয়া ঘরে | |

<sup>67</sup>Cai. bhā., 2.23.86: অহর্নিশ ভাই সব, ভজহ কৃষ্ণেরে . Radhagovinda Nath's edition has বোলহ কৃষ্ণেরে for ভজহ কৃষ্ণেরে , or, “say ‘Kṛṣṇa.’” There are two other attested readings in his notes as well, both emphasizing saying rather than worshipping.



In body, mind, and word,  
 they accepted singing praise,  
 with the highest joy, the citizens.  
 Clapping hands they sang: “Rāma Nārāyaṇa.”  
 In every house there were  
 drums, cymbals, and conch shells  
 to play at Durgā’s festival.  
 Those same instruments were now  
 used for singing praise. Everyone  
 sang and played with satisfied hearts:  
 “Hari” and “Rāma Rāma,”  
 “Hari” and “Rāma Rāma.”  
 Thus arose in town Brahman’s name.<sup>68</sup>

Some interpreters connect the later verses containing Mahāprabhu’s instructions on performing singing praise (*saṅkīrtana*) of the Holy Name with the verses containing his instructions on the Mahāmantra and conclude that the Mahāmantra, too, can be sung and used in singing praise with being counted. Actually, Mahāprabhu, after speaking the words “*haraye namaḥ ...*,” said, “this singing praise has been described to all of you.” Which this kind of clear language

<sup>68</sup>Cai. bhā., 2.23.85-92:

এই মত নগরে নগরে সংকীর্তন |  
 করাইতে লাগিলেন শচীর নন্দন | |  
 সবারে উঠিয়া প্রভু আলিঙ্গন করে |  
 আপন গলার মালা দেয় সবাকারে | |  
 দস্তে তুণ করি প্রভু পরিহার করে |  
 অহর্নিশ ভাই সব, ভজহ কৃষ্ণেরে | |  
 প্রভুর দেখিয়া আতি কান্দে সর্বজন |  
 কায়-মনো-বাক্যে লইলেন সংকীর্তন | |  
 পরম আনন্দে সব নগরিয়োগণ |  
 হাতে তালি দিয়া বলে ‘রামা নারায়ণ’ | |  
 মৃদঙ্গ-মন্দিরা-শঙ্খ আছে সর্ব ঘরে |  
 দুর্গোৎসব-কালে বাদ্য বাজাবার তরে | |  
 সেই সব বাদ্য এবে কীর্তন-সময়ে |  
 গায়েন বায়েন সবে সন্তোষ-হৃদয়ে | |  
 ‘হরি ও রাম রাম, হরি ও রাম রাম’ |  
 এই মত নগরে উঠিল ব্রহ্ম-নাম | |

he has described what singing praise is. That singing praise he has instructed women, sons, and fathers to get together and do and he has shown by his own example to do it from town to town. With the playing of drums, cymbals, and conch shells one sings “Hari and Rāma Rāma, Hari and Rāma Rāma.”<sup>69</sup> This “Name of Brahman” has been sung in the form of singing praise in the towns. There is no mention of the Mahāmantra being sung. The Name of Brahman is not the “Saving Name of Brahman” (*tāraka-brahma-nāma*) or the Mahāmantra. Though between the Name of Brahman that is sung in the town and the essence of the Saving Name of Brahman there is no concrete difference, there is a variety and a distinction within the sport (*līlā*).

If one considers the teaching Mahāprabhu has given in other places on the singing praise of the names of Kṛṣṇa and that he himself has revealed in various places in his sport, this conclusion will be supported.

## Singing Praise of Kṛṣṇa’s names as Instructed by Master

When his students asked Śrī Nimāi Paṇḍita about nature of praise-singing, Nimāi instructed them in the songs and method of praise-singing in the following way:

His students asked: “What sort of praise-singing?”

Master Son of Śacī taught them:

“(Hare) Haraye namaḥ

Kṛṣṇa Yādavāya namaḥ|

Gopāla Govinda Rāma

Śrī Madhusūdana||”

Showing them the way, Master

clapped his hands and did praise-singing

Along with his students.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>69</sup>Cai. bhā. 2.23.92.

<sup>70</sup>Cai. bhā., 2.1.406-8:

In the courtyard of Śrīvāsa every night and on Śrī Harivāsara (Ekādaśī) from dawn throughout the night and day Mahāprabhu used to perform Kṛṣṇa praise-song with a gathering of *bhaktas*. What was that praise-singing like? The son of Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita's niece, Nārāyaṇī, Ṭhākura Vṛndāvana Das has written:

On Śrī Harivāsara  
 Hari's praise-singing is prescribed.  
 The Master, life-force of the world,  
 began to dance. The auspicious rite  
 started at pious Śrīvāsa's house.  
 The sounds of praise-song arose there:  
 "Gopāla Govinda."

...

Hear the forty songs of Master's praise  
 to which the Master, life of the world,  
 danced in ecstasy. In all directions  
 the sound "Govinda" spread, and  
 the son of Śacī danced in joy.  
 He became overwhelmed  
 with all of his companions.<sup>71</sup>

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শিষ্যগণ বলেন—কেমন সংকীৰ্তন |  
 আপনে শিখায়েন প্রভু শ্রীশচীনন্দন | |  
 (হরে) হরয়ে নমঃ কৃষ্ণ যাদায় নমঃ |  
 গোপাল গোবিন্দ রাম শ্রীমধুসূদন | |  
 দিশা দেখাইয়া প্রভু হাতে তালি দিয়া |  
 আপনে কীর্তন করে শিষ্যগণ লৈয়া

<sup>71</sup> Cai. bhā., 2.8.138-39, 145-46:

শ্রীহরিবাসরে হরি-কীর্তন-বিধান |  
 নৃত্য আরম্ভিলা প্রভু জগতের প্রাণ | |  
 পুণ্যবস্ত্র শ্রীবাস-অঙ্গনে শুভারম্ভ |  
 উঠিল কীর্তন-ধ্বনি গোপাল গোবিন্দ | |

...  
 শুনহ চল্লিশ পদ প্রভুর কীর্তন |  
 যে বিকারে নাচে প্রভু জগত-জীবন | |  
 চৌদিকে গোবিন্দধ্বনি, শচীর নন্দন নাচে রঙ্গে |  
 বিহ্বল হইলা সব পারিষদ-সঙ্গে | |

What kind of praise-singing took place in Śrīvāsa's courtyard, the place of the Circle Dance of praise-singing? That Śrīla Ṭhākura Vṛndāvana has further described:

“Glory to Kṛṣṇa Murāri  
Mukunda Vanamālī,”  
day and night everyone sang,  
becoming filled with delight.  
Day and night Viśvambhara danced  
along with his followers.  
No one felt tired;  
all had pure bodies.<sup>72</sup>  
One year of only the Name;  
how many ages had passed?  
In the bliss of consciousness,  
no one really knew about it.  
Like in the Great Circle Dance,  
how many ages passed away?  
All of the cowherd girls  
thought them less than a sesame seed.<sup>73</sup>

More descriptions of the nighttime praise-singing sessions of Śrī Gaura, Nityānanda, and Advaitācārya in the courtyard of Śrī Śrīvāsa are found:

Saying “Haribol” Master rose up.  
Surrounding him, all his followers sang.

<sup>72</sup> *sattva-kalevara*—a body of pure being

<sup>73</sup> Cai. bhā., 2.8.76-79:

জয় কৃষ্ণ মুরারি মুকুন্দ বনমালী |  
অহর্নিশ গায় সবে হই কুতূহলী | | অহর্নিশ ভক্ত-সঙ্গে নাচে বিশ্বম্ভর |  
শ্রান্তি নাহি কারো, সবে সঙ্ক-কলেবর | |  
বৎসরেক নাম-মাত্র, কত যুগ গেল |  
চৈতন্য-আনন্দে কেহ কিছু না জানিল | |  
যেন মহা-রাস-ক্রীড়া কত যুগ গেল |  
তিলান্ধক-হেন সব গোপিকা মানিল | |

Advaitācārya was  
beside himself with joy.  
becoming greatly intoxicated,  
he danced forgetting everything.

...

“Glory to Kṛṣṇa Gopāla  
Govinda Vanamālī,”  
day and night everyone sang,  
becoming filled with delight.  
Nityānanda and the great Master  
were completely overwhelmed.  
Still in Caitanya’s dance  
they were supremely skilled.<sup>74</sup>

## Singing Kṛṣṇa’s names in Public Praise-singing Gatherings

In the spreading of public praise-singing gatherings (*nagara-saṅkīrtana*), we also see:

“*haraye namaḥ kṛṣṇa yādavāya namaḥ  
gopāla govinda rāma śrīmadhusūdana,*”  
this is praise singing and has been  
described to all of you.  
Wives, sons, fathers gather together,

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<sup>74</sup>Cai. bhā., 2.16.97-8, 100-1:

হরিবোল বলি উঠে প্রভু বিশ্বম্ভর।  
চতুর্দিকে বেড়ি সব গায় অনুচর।।  
অদ্বৈত-আচার্য মহা-আনন্দে বিহ্বল।  
মহা-মন্ত হই নাচে পাসরি সকল।।

...

“জয় কৃষ্ণ গোপাল গোবিন্দ বনমালী”।  
অহর্নিশ গায় সবে হই কুতূহলী।।  
নিত্যানন্দ-মহাপ্রভু পরম বিহ্বল।  
তথাপি চৈতন্য-মুখ্যে পরম কুশল।।

go to your homes, and perform it.

...

In this way, the son of Śacī  
encouraged from town to town  
gatherings for praise singing.<sup>75</sup>

and

In the greatest pleasure,  
all the citizens of the town  
clapped their hands and sang “Rāma Nārāyaṇa.”  
Drums, cymbals, and conch shells  
are found in every house  
to be played during Durgā Pūjā.  
All those instruments now are used  
at the time of praise singing.  
Everyone sings and plays with joyful hearts.  
“Hari and Rāma Rāma, Hari and Rāma Rāma.”  
In this way Brahman’s name rose in town.<sup>76</sup>

When the Kazi who was of another religion (Islam) banned the  
praise singing of the citizens of Navadvīpa, some heretical Hindus,

<sup>75</sup>Cai. bhā., 2.23.80-1, 85:

হরয়ে নমঃ কৃষ্ণ যাদবায় নমঃ |  
গোপাল গোবিন্দ রাম শ্রীমধুসূদন | |  
সংকীর্তন কহিল এ তোমা সবাকারে |  
স্ত্রী-পুত্রে বাপে মিলি কর গিয়া ঘরে | |

...

এই মত নগরে নগরে সংকীর্তন |  
করাইতে লগিলেন শচীর নন্দন | |

<sup>76</sup>Cai. bhā., 2.23.89-92:

পরম-আত্মাদে সব নগরিয়া-গণ |  
হাতে তালি দিয়া বলে রাম নারায়ণ | |  
মৃদঙ্গ-মন্দিরা-শঙ্খ আছে সর্বধরে |  
দুর্গোৎসব-কালে বাদ্য বাজাবার তরে | |  
সেই সব বাদ্য এবে কীর্তন-সময়ে |  
গায়ন বায়েন সবে সন্তোষ-হৃদয়ে | |  
হরি ও রাম রাম, হরি ও রাম রাম |  
এই মত নগরে উঠিল ব্রহ্ম-নাম | |

supporting the side of the Kazi, said: “Scripture says that the name of Hari is to be repeated in the mind.”<sup>77</sup>

Hearing of this impediment to the praise singing, Mahāprabhu undertook to punish the Kazi and gathered together different communities for public praise-singing gatherings. All the different songs that were sung in the praise singing of the Hari’s name at that time Ṭhākura Vṛndāvana has elaborately described in the following manner:

In the town arose a great  
Kṛṣṇa tumult. From place to place  
saying “Hari” everyone danced.

“Hari and Rāma Rāma,  
Hari and Rāma Rāma.”  
say “Hari” everyone danced,  
they were the fortunate ones.<sup>78</sup>

and

Hundreds of thousands, tens of millions,  
all of the communities  
dancing in bliss they went  
all over Navadvīpa. [Singing]  
“haraye namaḥ kṛṣṇa yādavāya namaḥ  
gopāla govinda rāma śrīmadhusūdana,”  
some danced gathering together.  
Somewhere ten, somewhere five, they danced,  
clapping their hands together.<sup>79</sup>

<sup>77</sup> Cai. bhā., 2.23.110-14.

<sup>78</sup> Cai. bhā., 2.23.218-9:

নগরে উঠিল মহা-কৃষ্ণ-কোলাহল |  
হরি বলি ঠানি ঠানি নাচয়ে সকল | |  
হরি ও রামা রামা, হরি ও রামা রাম |  
হরি বলি নাচয়ে সকল ভাগ্যবান | |

<sup>79</sup> Cai. bhā., 2.23.221-3:

লক্ষ লক্ষ কোটি কোটি হৈল সম্প্রদায় |  
আনন্দে নাচিয়া সর্ব নবদ্বীপে যায় | |  
হরয়ে নমঃ কৃষ্ণ যাদবায় নমঃ |

In this connection Śrīla Ṭhākura Vṛndāvana has promoted one song and Śrī Caitanyadeva's "original" praise-song:

Master Gaurāṅga, the beautiful,  
 went about dancing, surrounded  
 all around by his followers:  
 "O I place my mind on your feet.  
 O Holder of the Sāraṅga!  
 I place my mind on your feet."<sup>80</sup>  
 This was Caitanyacandra's  
 first praise-song. His followers sang  
 and the Son of Śacī danced.<sup>81</sup>

The other songs of the followers in the public praise-singing Śrīla Ṭhākura Vṛndāvana has made known:

The Lord of Vaikuṇṭha danced  
 all over Nadiyā. Around him  
 his followers sang of Puṇya-kīrti.<sup>82</sup>  
 "Say Hari, o ignorant folks,  
 Say Hari, Hari. There is no  
 danger of punishment

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গোপাল গোবিন্দ রাম শ্রীমধুসূদন | |  
 কেহ কেহ নাচয়ে হইয়া মেলি |  
 দশে-পাঁচে নাচে কাঁহা দিয়া করতালি | |

80

*tuyā caraṇe mana lāgahu re/*  
*sāraṅga-dhara, tuyā caraṇe mana lāgahu rel/*

<sup>81</sup> Cai. bhā., 2.23.240-2:

নাচিয়া যায়েন প্রভু গৌরাঙ্গ-সুন্দর |  
 বেড়িয়া গায়েন চতুর্দিকে অনুচর | |  
 তুয়া চরণে মন লাগইঁ রে |  
 সারঙ্গ-ধর, তুয়া চরণে মন লাগইঁ রে | |  
 চৈতন্যচন্দ্রের এই আদি-সংকীর্তন |  
 ভক্তগণ গায়, নাচে শ্রীশচীনন্দন | |

<sup>82</sup> He whose fame is holy.



in saying the holy name.”  
 To all these praise-songs danced Gauracandra.  
 whose two lotus-like feet  
 Brahmā and the other gods served.<sup>83</sup>

After Mahāprabhu had performed the auspicious procession of public praise singing and chastised the Kazi he returned home. Then, too, the type of praise singing of the holy name he performed Ṭhākura Vṛndāvana has described:

After punishing the Kazi,  
 the king of all peoples<sup>84</sup>  
 in the rapture of praise-singing  
 went dancing with all the people.  
 Playing drums, cymbals, and conch shells and clapping  
 their hands, [they sang:]  
 “Rāma-Kṛṣṇa Jaya-dvani  
 Govinda Gopāla.”  
 ...  
 “Jaya Kṛṣṇa Mukunda  
 Murāri Vanamālī.”  
 All the citizens sang  
 with a clapping of hands.  
 Tumultuous “Jayas” spread  
 to every town and village.  
 Everyone floated in  
 an ocean of delight.<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> Cai. bhā., 2.23.268-70:

বৈকুণ্ঠ-ঈশ্বরে নাচে সর্ব নদীয়ায় |  
 চতুর্দিকে ভক্তগণ পুণ্য-কীর্তি গায় | |  
 হরি বল মুগ্ধ লোক, হরি হরি বল রে |  
 নামাভাসে নাহি রয় শমন-ভয় রে | |  
 এই সব কীর্তনে নাচয়ে গৌরচন্দ্র |  
 ব্রহ্মাদি সেবয়ে যাঁর পাদপদ্মদ্বন্দ্ব | |

<sup>84</sup> Here meaning Śrī Caitanya.

<sup>85</sup> Cai. bhā., 2.23.418-9, 422-3:

## Praise-singing of the Names at Other Times

How Mahāprabhu launched praise-singing of the holy names in the weaver neighborhood of Navadvīpa is described like this:

An auspicious sound arose,  
the tumultuous sounds Jaya!  
The weavers were overcome with joy.  
All the residents danced,  
clapping their hands [and singing:]  
“Hari Bol Mukunda Gopāla Vanamālī!”<sup>86</sup>

Mahāprabhu, when he danced in the emotion of Lakṣmī at Candrasekhara’s house, performed praise-singing of the holy names in this way:

Mukunda performed  
the auspicious opening song:  
“Rāma-Kṛṣṇa bolo Hari  
Gopāla Govinda.”<sup>87</sup>

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কাজিরে করিয়া দণ্ড সর্ব-লোক-রায় |  
সংকীৰ্তন-রসে সর্ব-গণে নাচি যায় | |  
মুদঙ্গ-মন্দিরা বাজে, শঙ্খ-করতাল |  
রাম-কৃষ্ণ-জয়ধ্বনি গোবিন্দ গোপাল | |

...

জয় কৃষ্ণ মুকুন্দ মুরারি বনমালী |  
গায় সব নগরিয়া দিয়া হাতে তালি | |  
জয়-কোলাহল প্রতি-নগরে-নগরে |  
ভাসয়ে সকল লোক আনন্দ-সাগরে | |

<sup>86</sup>Cai. bhā., 2.23.434-5:

উঠিল মঙ্গল-ধ্বনি জয়-কোলাহল |  
তন্তুবায়-সব হৈলা আনন্দে বিহ্বল | |  
নাচে সব-নগরিয়া দিয়া কর-তালি |  
হরি বল মুকুন্দ গোপাল বনমালী | |

<sup>87</sup>Cai. bhā., 2.18.38:

কীর্তন শুভারম্ভ করিলা মুকুন্দ |  
রাম-কৃষ্ণ বল হরি গোপাল গোবিন্দ | |

The kind of praise-singing Mahāprabhu performed when he revealed his sport of renunciation is written about in Murārigupta's notes:

Having bowed to the feet of his teacher,<sup>88</sup>  
 Hari, ocean of compassion, stayed there,  
 singing the beneficial names  
 “Śrī Rāma and Śrī Nārāyaṇa”  
 and of their [divine] qualities,  
 his composure shattered by love.<sup>89</sup>

The kind of praise-singing of the holy names that Gaurasundara engaged in when he was wandering about in Rāḍha-deśa is described in the notes in this way:

Sometimes like an maddened elephant,  
 sometimes he increases in splendor,  
 sometimes he sings, “Govinda,  
 Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa” with esteem.<sup>90</sup>

The way that Mahāprabhu performed praise-singing of the holy names when he went to Śāntipura is described by Vṛndāvana Dāsa Ṭhākura and Kavirāja Gosvāmī respectively in the following ways:

The Lord of Vaikuṇṭha danced

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<sup>88</sup>Keśava Bhāratī.

<sup>89</sup>Murārigupta, *Kṛṣṇa-caitanya-caritāmṛta*, 3.2.5:

नत्वा गुरोः पादयुगं निवासं  
 तस्मिन् स चक्रे करुणाम्बुधिर्हरिः।  
 श्रीरामनारायणनाममङ्गलं  
 गायन् गुणान् प्रेमविभिन्नधैर्यः॥

<sup>90</sup>ibid., 3.3.5:

मत्तकरीन्द्रवत्क्वापि  
 तेजसा ववृधे क्वचित्।  
 क्वचिद्गायति गोविन्द  
 कृष्ण कृष्णेति सादरम्॥

with his companions. This was  
unprecedented on earth.

“Hari bol! Hari bol!

Hari bol! Brother!”

Other than this nothing else could be heard.<sup>91</sup>

and:

“What can I say, friend?

Today he had his pleasure.

Every day at my Mādhava’s house.”

Having this song sung he danced in joy:

perspiring, trembling, covered

with goosebumps, with tears, shouts, and howls.<sup>92</sup>

Mahāprabhu at the time of his going to Nīlācala performed praise-singing of the holy names in the following way:

“Rāma Rāghava Rāma Rāghava

Rāma Rāghava Protect me!

Kṛṣṇa Keśava Kṛṣṇa Keśava

Kṛṣṇa Keśava Deliver me!”

Thus singing this melodious song

and smiling, the best knower of the Truth,

taught these worlds, he who is

the imperishable

protector of the worlds.<sup>93</sup>

<sup>91</sup>Cai. bhā., 3.1.239-40:

সপার্ষদে নৃত্য করে বৈকুণ্ঠ-ঈশ্বর |  
এমত অপূর্ব হয় পৃথিবী-ভিতর | |  
হরি বোল হরি বোল হরি বোল ভাই |  
ইহা বই আর কিছু শুনিতে না পাই | |

<sup>92</sup>C.c., 2.3.114-5:

কি কহিব রে সখি! আজুক আনন্দ ওর |  
চিরদিন মাধব মন্দিরে মোর | |  
এই পদ গাওয়াইয়া হর্ষে নর্তন |  
স্বৈদ-কম্প-পুলকান্দ-হৃদ্ধার-গর্জন | |

<sup>93</sup>Murāri Gupta, *ibid.*, 3.5.5-6:

and:

“Rāma Rāghava Rāma Rāghava  
Rāma Rāghava Keep me!  
Kṛṣṇa Keśava Kṛṣṇa Keśava  
Kṛṣṇa Keśava Protect me!”  
The Lord, sings this verse  
with a very sweet voice.  
In the bliss of divine love  
with stuttering speech I repeat it.<sup>94</sup>

Mahāprabhu performed praise-singing of the holy names in this way in Bhuvaneśvara:

Singing “Śiva Rāma Govinda,”  
Gaura-rāya clapped and danced always.  
Going to Bhuvaneśvara himself  
Gauracandra worshipped Śiva  
along with his followers.  
Those who do not accept  
the teaching of the Lord,  
who is the teaching guru,  
by their own fault come to misery.  
This much everyone knows.<sup>95</sup>

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রাম রাঘব রাম রাঘব রাম রাঘব পাহি মাম্।  
কৃষ্ণ কেশব কৃষ্ণ কেশব কৃষ্ণ কেশব ত্রাহি মাম্।।  
এবং কলপদং গায়ন্ হসন্তত্ববিদাং বরঃ।  
ইমান্ নু শিষ্যয়ন্ লোকান্ লোকানাং পালকো ঽব্যয়ঃ।।

<sup>94</sup>Locana Dāsa, *Śrī Caitanya-maṅgala*, 2.93-4:

রাম রাঘব রাম রাঘব রাম রাঘব রক্ষ মাম্।  
কৃষ্ণ কেশব কৃষ্ণ কেশব কৃষ্ণ কেশব পাহি মাম্।।  
এই শ্লোক সুমধুর স্বরে গায় পইঁ।  
প্রেমার আনন্দে গদগদ ভাষে লইঁ।।

<sup>95</sup>Cai. bhā., 3.398-400:

শিব রাম গোবিন্দ বলিয়া গৌর-রায়।  
হাতে তালি দিয়া নৃত্য করেন সদায়।।

and:

“Śrī Rāma Govinda Mukunda Śaure  
 Śrī Kṛṣṇa Nārāyaṇa Vāsudeva,”  
 to the king of bees intoxicated  
 by drinking the nectar of these names,  
 to the destroyer of all miseries  
 to [Śiva, do I bow.]<sup>96</sup>

Mahāprabhu when at Ālānātha performed praising singing of the holy names in the following way:

Some danced, some sang “Śrī Kṛṣṇa Gopāla.”  
 People floated in love,  
 women, old folks, children.<sup>97</sup>

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আপনে ভুবনেশ্বর গিয়া গৌরচন্দ্র |  
 শিবপূজা করিলেন লই ভক্তবৃন্দ | |  
 শিক্ষাগুরু ঈশ্বরের শিক্ষা যে না মানে |  
 নিজ-দোষে দুঃখ পায় সেই সব জনে | |

<sup>96</sup>Murāri Gupta, *ibid.*, 3.8.18:

শ্রীরাম গোবিন্দ মুকুন্দ শৌরে  
 শ্রীকৃষ্ণ নারায়ণ বাসুদেব |  
 ইত্যাदि-নামাস্মতপানমত-  
 भृङ्गाधिपायाखिलदुःखहन्त्रे ||

This is an interesting example in that the verse cited here is part of an eight-verse praise poem directed to Śiva called an *aṣṭaka*. This is verse six of that poem. It describes Śiva as one who is intoxicated by the names of Kṛṣṇa. So it is not actually an example of Caitanya doing praise-singing, but of Śiva doing it. Of course, Caitanya and his followers are reciting the eight verse praise poem before the image of Śiva known as Bhuvaneśvara during their worship of Śiva referred to in the previous example. The final or ninth verse of the poem, called the *phala-śruti* or the hearing of the result of reciting the poem, says that one who hears this poem gains divine love for Kṛṣṇa, knowledge, understanding, unprecedented magnificence, becomes filled with feeling for Kṛṣṇa and respectful. Check the appendices for this *aṣṭaka* of Śiva recited by Caitanya for Bhuvaneśvara.

Of great interest here is the fact that Caitanya is described by his earliest biographer as worshiping Śiva. This should perhaps be a lesson to those of his followers who perceive Śiva and Śaivites as enemies of Caitanya’s movement.

<sup>97</sup>Cai. bhā., 2.7.81:

and:

“Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa!” “Kṛṣṇa!” he said  
loudly again and again.  
One moment he rolled on the ground;  
the next moment he fainted and  
babbled; the next moment  
he sang the names, “Govinda,  
Kṛṣṇa, Rāma.” His body flowed with  
great love when he saw Ālānātha.<sup>98</sup>

At the time when Mahāprabhu was wandering in South India he  
did praise-singing of the holy names in this way:

Like a drunken lion Master  
went traveling. Absorbed in love,  
he traveled along doing  
praise-singing of the holy names.

Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa  
Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Hey!  
Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa,  
Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Hey!  
Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa  
Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa preserve me!  
Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa  
Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa protect me!  
Rāma Rāghava Rāma Rāghava  
Rāma Rāghava preserve me!

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কেহ নাচে, কেহ গায় শ্রীকৃষ্ণ গোপাল |  
প্রেমেতে ভাসিল লোক,—শ্রী-বৃদ্ধ-আবাল | |

<sup>98</sup>Murāri Gupta, *ibid.*, 3.14.3-4:

কৃষ্ণা কৃষ্ণোতি কৃষ্ণোতি উবাচোচ্চৈর্মুহুর্মুহুঃ |  
ক্షণং বিলুপতে ভুমৌ ক্షণং মূৰ্চ্ছতি জল্যতি ||  
ক্షণং গায়তি গোবিন্দ-কৃষ্ণ-রামেতি নামभिः |  
महाप्रेमप्लुतं गात्रमालालनाथदर्शने ||

Kṛṣṇa Keśava Kṛṣṇa Keśava  
 Kṛṣṇa Keśava protect me!  
 Rāma Rāghava Rāma Rāghava  
 Rāma Rāghava protect me!  
 Kṛṣṇa Keśava Kṛṣṇa Keśava  
 Kṛṣṇa Keśava preserve me!

Reciting this verse, he traveled on.  
 Going to the Gautamī  
 Ganges he took his bath.<sup>99</sup>

and:

The Lord said: “Everyone say  
 ‘Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Hari.’  
 Now shout in your gurus’ ears  
 Kṛṣṇa’s name quite loudly.  
 Then all your ‘gurus’ will awaken.  
 All the ‘awakened’ will gather  
 and sing praises of Kṛṣṇa.”  
 Then, in their gurus’ ears everyone shouted  
 “Kṛṣṇa Rāma Hari.” Awakening,  
 the teachers said “Hari Hari,”<sup>100</sup>

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<sup>99</sup>Cc., 2.9.13-4:

মন্তসিংহপ্রায় প্রভু করিলা গমন।  
 প্রেমাবেশে যায় করি নাম-সংকীর্তন।  
 কৃষ্ণ কৃষ্ণ কৃষ্ণ কৃষ্ণ কৃষ্ণ কৃষ্ণ কৃষ্ণ হে।  
 কৃষ্ণ কৃষ্ণ কৃষ্ণ কৃষ্ণ কৃষ্ণ কৃষ্ণ কৃষ্ণ হে॥  
 কৃষ্ণ কৃষ্ণ কৃষ্ণ কৃষ্ণ কৃষ্ণ কৃষ্ণ রক্ষ মাম্।  
 কৃষ্ণ কৃষ্ণ কৃষ্ণ কৃষ্ণ কৃষ্ণ কৃষ্ণ পাহি মাম্॥  
 রাম রাঘব রাম রাঘব রাম রাঘব রক্ষ মাম্।  
 কৃষ্ণ কেশব কৃষ্ণ কেশব কৃষ্ণ কেশব পাহি মাম্॥  
 রাম রাঘব রাম রাঘব রাম রাঘব পাহি মাম্।  
 কৃষ্ণ কেশব কৃষ্ণ কেশব কৃষ্ণ কেশব রক্ষ মাম্॥  
 এই শ্লোক পথে পড়ি করিলা প্রয়াগ।  
 গৌতমী-গঙ্গায় যাই কৈলা গঙ্গাস্নান।।

<sup>100</sup>Cc., 2.9.59-61:



and:

Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Victory Kṛṣṇa Hey!  
 Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Victory Kṛṣṇa Hey!  
 Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Victory Kṛṣṇa Hey!  
 Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Victory Kṛṣṇa protect us!<sup>101</sup>

and:

“Rāma Rāghava Rāma Rāghava  
 Rāma Rāghava protect me!  
 Kṛṣṇa Keśava Kṛṣṇa Keśava  
 Kṛṣṇa Keśava preserve me!”  
 performing praise-singing like this,  
 vigorously and loudly,  
 on the road, his body excessively  
 covered with goose-flesh, his voice  
 distressed, and, seeing the frightful  
 forest in some places,  
 the highest lord looked [apprehensively ?] about him.<sup>102</sup>

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প্রভু কহে,—সবে কহ কৃষ্ণ কৃষ্ণ হরি।  
 গুরুকর্ণে কহ কৃষ্ণনাম উচ্চ করি।।  
 তোমা-সবার গুরু তবে পাইবে চেনন।  
 সব বৌদ্ধ মিলি করে কৃষ্ণ-সংকীর্তন।।  
 গুরুকর্ণে কহে সবে কৃষ্ণ রাম হরি।  
 চেনন পাঞা আচার্য বলে হরি হরি।।

<sup>101</sup> Kavikarṇapūra, *Caitanyacandrodaya-nāṭaka*, 7.11:

কৃষ্ণা কৃষ্ণা জয় কৃষ্ণা হে  
 কৃষ্ণা কৃষ্ণা জয় কৃষ্ণা হে।  
 কৃষ্ণা কৃষ্ণা জয় কৃষ্ণা হে  
 কৃষ্ণা কৃষ্ণা জয় কৃষ্ণা পাহি নঃ॥

<sup>102</sup> Kavikarṇapūra, *Śrī Kṛṣṇacaitanyacaritāmṛta-mahākāvya*, no citation given.

রাম রাঘব রাম রাঘব  
 রাম রাঘব পাহি মাম্।  
 কৃষ্ণ কেশব কৃষ্ণ কেশব  
 কৃষ্ণ কেশব রক্ষ মাম্॥  
 সংকীর্তয়ন্তি ত্বমমন্দমুচ্চৈঃ  
 পথি প্রকামং পুলকাচিতাঙ্গঃ।

and:

Traveling through the southern lands,  
he danced and said [sang ? chanted ?] this:

“Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa  
Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Hey!  
Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa,  
Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Hey!”  
Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa  
Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa preserve me!  
Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa  
Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa protect me!<sup>103</sup>

and:

Singing “Śrī Rāma Govinda Kṛṣṇa”  
and crossing the Godāvarī river,  
Kṛṣṇa entered the great Pañcavaṭī  
forest overwhelmed with feelings  
remembering Śrī Rāma and Sītā.<sup>104</sup>

At the temple of Bindumādhava in Kāśī when Mahāprabhu danced

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आर्तस्वरः कुत्र च वीक्ष्य भीष्मं  
वनं परेशः परिबोदिति स्म॥

I have not been able to find this verse in the text cited so far. The search continues.

<sup>103</sup>Murāri Gupta, *ibid.*, 3.14.9:

प्रचलन् दक्षिणदेशमुवाच इति नृत्यति|  
कृष्ण कृष्ण कृष्ण कृष्ण कृष्ण कृष्ण कृष्ण हे|  
कृष्ण कृष्ण कृष्ण कृष्ण कृष्ण कृष्ण कृष्ण हे||  
कृष्ण कृष्ण कृष्ण कृष्ण कृष्ण कृष्ण रक्ष माम्|  
कृष्ण कृष्ण कृष्ण कृष्ण कृष्ण कृष्ण पाहि माम्||  
राम राघव राम राघव राम राघव रक्ष माम्|

<sup>104</sup>*ibid.*, 3.15.6:

श्रीराम गोविन्द कृष्णेति गाय-  
न्नुत्तीर्य गोदावरीमेव कृष्णः|  
विवेश श्रीपञ्चवटीवनं महत्  
श्रीराम-सीता-स्मरणातिविह्वलः||

absorbed in divine love, Candraśekhara, Paramānanda Kīrtanīyī, Tapanamīśra, and Sanātana Gosvāmī performed praise-singing together. That, too, we find described in the words of Kavirāja Gosvāmī:

Śekhara, Paramānanda,  
Tapanā, Sanātana,  
these four joining together  
performed praise-singing of the names:  
“Hare Haraye namaḥ  
Kṛṣṇa Yādavāya namaḥ  
Gopāla Govinda Rāma  
Śrī Madhusūdana.”  
In all directions thousands  
of people said “Hari Hari.”  
An auspicious sound arose  
filling heaven and earth.<sup>105</sup>

How the followers of Mahāprabhu used to perform praise-singing of the holy names while doing some sort of service has been described by Vṛndāvana Dāsa in the following way:

After bathing, Śuklāmbara  
with great care heated fragrant water.  
Then, along with rice, he placed  
in it the shining inner petals<sup>106</sup>  
of plantain flowers without touching them  
and the brahmin joined his hands together.  
With delight Śuklāmbara  
began to sing: “Glory to Kṛṣṇa

<sup>105</sup> Cc., 2.25.62-4:

শেখর পরমানন্দ, তপন, সনাতন |  
চারিজন মিলি করে নাম-সংকীর্তন | |  
হরে হরয়ে নমঃ কৃষ্ণ যাদবায় নমঃ |  
গোপাল গোবিন্দ রাম শ্রীমধুসূদন | |  
চৌদিকেতে লক্ষ লোক বলে হরি হরি |  
উঠিল মঙ্গলধ্বনি স্বর্গ-মর্ত্য ভরি | |

<sup>106</sup> Bract or spathe in English.

Govinda Gopāla Vanamālī!”<sup>107</sup>

Sanātana Gosvāmin has described loud praise-singing of the holy name in sweet tones in his *Expanded Nectar of the Bhāgavata*:

[There is nothing] higher than  
worship of the lotus-like feet  
of Madanagopāla  
predominantly consisting of  
praise-singing of the holy names,  
which gives results beyond one’s wildest dreams.<sup>108</sup>

What is that praise-singing like? In his own commentary on that verse he says:

Nothing higher than what? Nothing higher than [worship] that is made whole by loudly pronounced praise in the form of sweetly melodic songs made of holy names such as “Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa, Govinda, Gopāla” and so forth.<sup>109</sup>

<sup>107</sup> Cai. bhā., 2.25.106-8:

মন করি শুক্লাশ্বর অতি সাবধানে |  
সুবাসিত জল তপ্ত করিলা আপনে | |  
তপ্তুল সহিত তবে দিব্য গর্ভ-খোড় |  
আলগোছে দিয়া দিয়া বিপ্র কৈলা করজোড় | |  
জয় কৃষ্ণ গোবিন্দ গোপাল বনমালী |  
বলিতে লাগিলা শুক্লাশ্বর কুতূহলী | |

<sup>108</sup> Sanātana Gosvāmin, *Expanded Nectar of the Bhāgavata* (Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta), 2.1.194:

শ্রীমন্মদনগোপালপাদাভ্যোপাসনাৎপরম্ |  
নামসংকীৰ্তনপ্রায়াদ্বাচ্ছাতীতফলপ্রদাৎ ||

<sup>109</sup> কীদৃশাত্ ? নাম্নাং শ্রীকৃষ্ণ-কৃষ্ণ-গোবিন্দ-গোপালেত্যাदीনাং যত্সম্যঙ্কধুরস্বরগাথয়া কীর্তনমু-  
চ্চৈরুচ্চারণং তত্প্রায়ো বুহলং যস্মিন্ তস্মাৎ

Sanātana makes an interesting distinction here: *kīrtana* means repeating something loudly whereas *saṁkīrtana* means singing something in sweet tones and, though not specifically mentioned here, probably with the accompaniment of musical instruments. The importance of this passage for Sundarananda Das is in the example Sanātana gives: different names of Kṛṣṇa, but not the Mahāmantra.

If one attends to all these examples of praise-singing of the holy names it is clear that there is a distinction between repeating the Mahāmantra (*mahāmantra-kīrtana*) and praise-singing of the holy names (*nāma-saṅkīrtana*). Praise-singing of the holy names is always sung or celebrated with musical instruments in an uncounted manner. But, while there are no rules concerning proper time or proper place in the practice of repeating the Mahāmantra, it should always be done with counting. For this reason there are no examples in any of the previously mentioned authoritative books of the singing of the Mahāmantra in public praise-singing, or in celebrations involving songs and musical instruments, in the observances of either Śrī Gaurasundara or of any of his contemporary companions.

The method of praise-singing the names of Gaura that Nityānanda Prabhu, Advaitācārya, Śrīvāsa and other contemporary followers spread and the method Ṭhākura Vṛndāvana, Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja and other prominent teachers (*ācāryas*) showed for the praise-singing of the names of Gaura, Nityānanda, Advaita or of the Five Principles do not require counting or any similar practice. All these practices demonstrate in an incidental way that the rule of counting applies only in the case of loud repetition of the Mahāmantra and not in the case of the loud repetition of other names of the Lord. This is so because all these names are known simply as names of Hari or names of Hari's power; they are not *mantras*. The Mahāmantra is not just a name of Hari; it is referred using the word "*mantra*." Therefore, that has to be counted when it is recited.

## Two Meanings of Mahāmantra

Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja has used the word *mahāmanta* in two senses in his *Immortal Acts of Caitanya*: as referring to eighteen syllable Emperor of mantras the Gopāla-manta (in this case Mahāmantra means the king of mantras) (1) and as referring to the sixteen name thirty-two syllable mantra (Hare Kṛṣṇa ...).

You are a fool, unqualified  
for the study of Vedānta.

Repeat (*japa*) Kṛṣṇa's mantra always—  
 it is the essence of mantras.  
 From Kṛṣṇa's mantra will come  
 freedom from cyclic birth and death.  
 From Kṛṣṇa's mantra you will gain  
 proximity to Kṛṣṇa's feet.  
 There is no other sacred rite  
 in the Age of Kali.  
 The Name is the essence  
 of all mantras. This is  
 scripture's essential truth.

...  
 What a mantra you gave,  
 Goswami, what power it has.  
 Repeating it over and over,  
 this mantra makes me crazy.  
 It causes laughter, causes dance;  
 it makes me weep loudly.  
 Hearing this, gurudev told me,  
 “this is the nature of Kṛṣṇa's  
 Mahāmantra of his names—  
 whoever repeats it  
 develops love for Kṛṣṇa.<sup>110</sup>

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<sup>110</sup>Cc., 1.7.72-4, 81-3:

মুখ তুমি, তোমার নাহি বেদান্তাধিকার।  
 কৃষ্ণমন্ত্র জপ সদা, এই মন্ত্র সার।।  
 কৃষ্ণমন্ত্র হৈতে হবে সংসার-মোচন।  
 কৃষ্ণমন্ত্র হৈতে পাবে কৃষ্ণের চরণ।।  
 নাম বিনা কলিকালে নাহি আর ধর্ম।  
 সর্বমন্ত্রসার নাম—এই শাস্ত্রমর্ম।।

...  
 কিবা মন্ত্র দিলা, গোসাইঞ, কিবা তার বল।  
 জপিতে জপিতে মন্ত্র করিল পাগল।।  
 হাসায়, নাচায়, মোরে করায় ক্রন্দন।  
 এত শুনি গুরু মোরে বলিল বচন।  
 কৃষ্ণনাম-মহামন্ত্রের এই ত স্বভাব।  
 যেই জপে, তার কৃষ্ণে উপজয়ে ভাব।।

Whether the eighteen-syllable or ten-syllable Gopālamantra or the sixteen name thirty-two syllable Mahāmantra is meant, the word Mahāmantra used in either sense is to be recited as *japa*. This is proven by the above citation.

## Three types of Repetition (Japa)

Without *japa* (private chanting, repetition) there is no Mahāmantra. *Japa* is of three kinds: vocal (*vācika*), softly whispered (*upāṃśu*, lit., in a low voice or whisper, secretly), and mental (*mānasa*). As the *Nṛsiṃha Purāṇa* says:

The sacred practice of *japa*  
is of three kinds and you should know  
their differences. Vocal,  
whispered, and mental are the three.  
Of these three *japa* practices  
the latter excell the former.  
The form of *japa* which may  
loudly pronounce a mantra  
with syllables, high, low, and mid-range,  
producing clear sounds is vocal.  
Whispered *japa*, tradition says,  
should pronounce a mantra softly;  
one's lips should move only slightly;  
some sound is present for oneself.  
Repetition with the mind,  
letter after letter, word after word,  
while thinking of the sounds' meanings  
is called the *japa* of the mind.<sup>111</sup>

<sup>111</sup>Gopāla Bhaṭṭa/Sanātana Gosvāmin, *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa*, 17.155-158:

त्रिविधो जपयज्ञः स्यात्तस्य भेदान्निबोधत|  
वाचिकश्च उपांशुश्च मानसश्च त्रिविधा मतः||  
त्रयाणां जपयज्ञानां श्रेयान् स्यादुत्तरोत्तरः|  
यदुच्चनीचस्वरितैः स्पष्टशब्दवदक्षरैः||

And the *Yajñavalkya-dharma-sūtra* says:

A hundred times more effective  
is whispered *japa* than vocal,  
Mental *japa* a thousandfold,  
since it equals meditation.<sup>112</sup>

Sanātana Gosvāmin in his commentary on this passage says: “The *japa* of someone whispering is one hundred times better than vocal *japa*.”<sup>113</sup>

Gaurasundara’s vocal *japa* sport is described where descriptions like: “Hare Kṛṣṇa appears loudly on his tongue, his hand is on a shining thread around his blessed waist, a thread containing a series of knots created for counting the holy names.”<sup>114</sup>

## The Practice of Praise-singing of the Mahāmantra without Counting is Recent

In Gaurasundara’s behavior and that of all of his elevated followers, in deliberation, in settled conclusion, in speech, in the practices of rule-initiated *bhakti*, and in passion-pursuant (*rāgānuga*) worship, there is nowhere any evidence for or conduct supporting *japa* of the Mahāmantra (whether it be vocal, whispered, or mental) that

मन्त्रमुच्चारयेद्व्यक्तं जपयज्ञः स वाचिकः।  
शनैरुच्चारयेन्मन्त्रमीषदोष्टौ प्रचालयेत्।  
किञ्चिच्छब्दं स्वयं विद्यादुपांशुः स जपः स्मृतः॥  
धिया यदक्षरश्रेण्या वर्णाद्वर्णं पदात्पदम्।  
शब्दार्थचिन्तनाभ्यासः स उक्तो मानसो जपः॥

<sup>112</sup>ibid., 17.159:

उपांशुजपयुक्तस्य तस्माच्छतगुणो भवेत्।  
सहस्रो मानसः प्रोक्तो यस्माद्ध्यानसमो हि सः॥

<sup>113</sup>Sanātana Gosvāmin on Hbv. 17.159: उपांशुजपयुक्तस्य जपः शतगुणः स्याद्वाचिकाज्जपा-  
च्छतगुणो भवेदित्यर्थः॥

<sup>114</sup>?: हरे कृष्णेत्युच्चैः स्फुरितरसनो नामगणनाकृतग्रन्थिसुभगकटिसूत्रोज्ज्वलकरः



is not counted. Nor do we hear any description of any old custom of performing praise-singing using the Mahāmantra with drums, cymbals, or other musical instruments. It has only been more or less 150 years since the practice of praise-singing the Mahāmantra with musical instruments developed—this can gathered from the testimony of old folks.

In the *Vyāsa-smṛti* it is said: “all [mantras] that are repeated (*japta*) without counting become fruitless.”<sup>115</sup>

In the text called *Śrī Śrī Rādhākṛṣṇārcanapaddhati* (*A Manual for the Ritual Worship of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa*) by Siddha Kṛṣṇadāsa Bābājī of Govardhana, it is stated unmistakably in relationship to the daily practices of Caitanya Vaiṣṇavas that:

Now, the afternoon duties: one should repeat the holy names as fixed by number and listen to *bhakti* texts such as the *Bhāgavata*.<sup>116</sup>

One of the great paṇḍitas of Vṛndāvana, Śrīla Vanamāli-lāla Gosvāmī says that in Vṛndāvana, beginning just a short time earlier, the practice of doing praise-singing of the Mahāmantra with musical instruments has appeared. Previously, that practice did not exist. In Bengal presesnt day aged scholars headed by Atulakṛṣṇa Gosvāmī and Rasikamohana Vidyābhūṣaṇa say they have not seen or heard of the practice of uncounted praise-singing of the Mahāmantra in Vaiṣṇava society previously.

## Praise-singing of the Names of Gaura and Nityānanda

We find all of the following examples of singing the names of Gaura and Nityānanda:

<sup>115</sup> Cited in the *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa*, 17.135: असंख्यातञ्च यज्जप्तं तत् सर्वं निष्फलं भवेत्

<sup>116</sup> This passage is actually from Siddha Kṛṣṇadāsa's *Sādhanaṁṛtacandrikā*, 5.1: अ-  
थापराद्धकृत्यम् तत्र सङ्ख्यानिर्बद्धनामग्रहणम् भागवतादिभक्तिशास्त्रश्रवणादिकर्तव्यम्

All the world now sings Gauracandra.  
 Still all who don't sing are ghosts.  
 One who is averse to singing  
 the name Kṛṣṇa-caitanya  
 know for certain he's a sinner ghost.<sup>117</sup>

and:

Now look, the one who utters  
 Caitanya's name is overcome  
 with goose bumps and tears  
 in his love for Kṛṣṇa.

As soon as one says Nityānanda  
 love for Kṛṣṇa arises.

Every limb is in disarray,  
 a Ganges-river of tears flows.

When one chants "Kṛṣṇa,"  
 there is concern for offense.

When an offender says "Kṛṣṇa,"  
 he feels no physical ecstasies.

...

With Caitanya and Nityānanda  
 there are none of these concerns.

As soon as one says his name  
 he gives love and streams of tears gush forth.

The independent Lord  
 is extremely magnanimous.

But if one does not worship him  
 one will never get salvation.<sup>118</sup>

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<sup>117</sup>Cai. bhā., 1.71-72:

সকল ভুবন এবে গায় গৌরচন্দ্র |  
 তথাপিহ সবে নাহি গায় ভূতবৃন্দ | |  
 শ্রীকৃষ্ণচৈতন্য-নামে বিমুখ যে জন |  
 নিশ্চয় জানিহ সেই পাপী ভূতগণ | |

<sup>118</sup>Cc., 1.8.22-4, 31-2:

আদ্যাপিহ দেখ চৈতন্য-নাম যেই লয় |  
 কৃষ্ণপ্রেমএ পুলকাক্ষ-বিহ্বল সে হয় | |

Nityānanda Prabhu spread the praise-singing of Caitanya's name:

By Nityānanda's grace all the world  
sings of Śrī Caitanya's descent.<sup>119</sup>

and:

Serve Caitanya; sing Caitanya;  
repeat Caitanya's name!  
One who performs *bhakti* to Caitanya,  
that one is my life-breath.  
In this way he spread in the world  
*bhakti* for Caitanya.  
The poor and lowly, the abusers,  
all of them he delivered.<sup>120</sup>

The Bengalis who went on pilgrimage to Nīlācala (Purī) performed praise-singing of Caitanya. On this subject the *Caitanya-carita-mahākāvya* (The Full Poem on the Acts of Caitanya) had this to say:

Thus they, overwhelmed by love

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নিত্যানন্দ বলিতে হয় কৃষ্ণপ্রেমোদয় |  
আউলায় সকল অঙ্গ অশ্রু-গঙ্গা বয় | |  
কৃষ্ণনাম করে অপরাধের বিচার |  
কৃষ্ণ বলিলে অপরাধীর না হয় বিকার | |

...  
চৈতন্য-নিত্যানন্দ নাহি এ-সব বিচার |  
নাম লৈতে প্রেম দেন, বহে অশ্রুধার | |  
স্বতন্ত্র ঈশ্বর প্রভু অত্যন্ত উদার |  
তারে না ভজিলে কভু না হয় নিস্তার | |

<sup>119</sup>Cai. bhā., 3.5.220:

নিত্যানন্দ-প্রসাদে সে সকল সংসার |  
অদ্যাপিহ গায় শ্রীচৈতন্য অবতার | |

<sup>120</sup>Cc. 2.1.29-30:

চৈতন্য সেব চৈতন্য গাও লও চৈতন্য নাম |  
চৈতন্যে যে ভক্তি করে, সেই মোর প্রাণ | |  
এইমত লোকে চৈতন্য-ভক্তি লওয়াইল |  
দীনহীন নিন্দক সবারে নির্ভারিল | |

for Gaurāṅga, while singing  
 his names and qualities,  
 traveled along happily.  
 Beginning the singing in the morning,  
 in the evening or the night  
 they rested and performed  
 their other travel duties.<sup>121</sup>

In Nīlācala (Purī) in the courtyard of Ṭoṭāgopīnātha Nityānanda  
 Prabhu and Gadādhara Paṇḍita together performed praise-singing  
 of the names, beauty, qualities, and sports of Gaura:

Knowing of Nityānanda's going,  
 Gadādhara gave up reading  
 the *Bhāgavata* and came quickly.

...

Then the two Lords becoming resolute  
 sat in one place, singing  
 auspicious songs of Caitanya.<sup>122</sup>

In Nīlācala (Purī) the bhaktas did praise-singing of Gaura's name  
 following the wishes of Advaitācārya:

One day Advaita, becoming  
 delighted in the highest bliss,

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<sup>121</sup>Kavikarṇapūra, 14.29-30:

অথ তে শ্রীলগৌরাঙ্গচরণপ্রেমবিহ্বলাঃ।  
 তস্যৈব গুণনামাদি কীর্তয়ন্তো মুদং যযুঃ॥  
 কীর্তনং প্রাতরারম্ভ্য সন্ধ্যায়ামথবা নিশি।  
 কুর্বন্তি তেঽথ বিশ্রামং পথিকৃত্যং তথা ততঃ॥

<sup>122</sup>Cai. bhā., 3.1.117, 126:

নিত্যানন্দ-বিজয় জানিঞা গদাধর।  
 ভাগবত-পাঠ ছাড়ি আইলা সঙ্গর।।  
 ...  
 তবে দুই প্রভু স্থির হই একস্থানে।  
 বসিলেন চৈতন্যমঙ্গল-সংকীর্তনে।।

said to all the bhaktas:  
 “Listen all my brothers,  
 make one assembly today  
 and sing full-throatedly  
 of Śrī Caitanya Rāya.  
 Today do not sing of  
 any other descent.  
 Caitanya Goswami  
 is all descents rolled into one.”<sup>123</sup>

and:

Someone says: “Glory glory Son of Śacī!”  
 Someone says: “Glory Gauracandra-Nārāyaṇa!  
 Glory Lover of Praise-song, Gaura Gopāla!  
 Glory Lover of Bhaktas, Ruin of the Wicked!”  
 Advaita the lion dances—indomitable.  
 All sing Caitanya’s merits, acts, and names.

...

Glory beautiful Gaura, Ocean of compassion!  
 Glory glory Prince of Vṛndāvana!  
 Glory glory glory Now King of Navadvīpa!  
 Give me the shade of your lotus feet.

The bhaktas perform all these songs.  
Advaita dances thinking of Gaura's feet.<sup>124</sup>

<sup>123</sup>Cai. bhā. 3.9.157-9:

একদিন অদ্বৈত সকল ভক্ত-প্রতি।  
বলিলা পরমানন্দে মত্ত হই অতি।।  
শুন ভাই সব, এক কর সমবায়।  
মুখ ভরি আজি শ্রীচৈতন্যরায়।।  
আজি আর কোন অবতার গাওয়া নাই  
সর্ব-অবতারময়—চৈতন্য-গোসাঞি।।

<sup>124</sup>Cai. bhā, 3.9.170-2, 175-6:

কেহ বলে জয় জয় শ্রীশচীনন্দন |  
 কেহ বলে জয় গৌরচন্দ্র-নারায়ণ |  
 জয় সংকীর্তনপ্রিয় শ্রীগৌরগোপাল |  
 জয় ভক্তজনপ্রিয় পাষণ্ডীর কাল |  
 নাচেন অদ্বৈতসিংহ পরম উদ্দাম |



Rādhāmohana Ṭhākura presented the praise-singing of Śrī Gaura's names in this way:

Glory glory to the excellent  
name of Śrī Kṛṣṇacaitanya,  
the unprecedented descent  
of the wish-fulfilling tree.  
Unasked, he distributed  
the rare fruit of divine love.  
All the most wicked are not left out.  
The wish-fulfilling gem is not  
the equal of that divine fruit.  
Making the lowest caste first,  
he gave that as his gift.  
If one does not serve such a Lord,  
nothing worth having will be gained.  
Rādhāmohana says:  
but if one worships that will be.<sup>127</sup>

He wrote in his commentary: With the intention, “Without the worship of Śrī Kṛṣṇacaitanya, the source of descents purifying the

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জয় জয় শ্রীকৃষ্ণচৈতন্য বনমালী |  
জয় জয় নিজ-ভক্তিরস-কুতুহলী | |  
জয় জয় পরমসম্যাসিরূপধারী |  
জয় জয় সংকীৰ্তন-লম্পট-মুরারী |  
জয় জয় দ্বিজরাজ বৈকুণ্ঠ বিহারী |  
জয় জয় সৰ্বজগতের উপকারী | |  
জয় জয় কৃষ্ণচৈতন্য শ্রীশচীর নন্দন |  
এইমত গাই নাচে শতসংখ্য জন | |

<sup>127</sup> Rādhāmohana Ṭhākura, *Padāmṛtasumudra* (Ocean of the Nectar of Song), p. 487:

জয় জয় শ্রীকৃষ্ণচৈতন্য-নাম সার |  
অপরূপ কলপ-বিরিখ অবতার |  
অযাচিত বিতরই দুর্লভ প্রেমফল |  
বঞ্চিত নহি ভেল পামর সকল |  
চিন্তামণি হহে শ্রি ফলের সমান |  
আচঞ্চল আদি করি তহ কৈলা দান | |  
হেন প্রভু মা সেবিলে কোন কাজ নয় |  
রাধামোহনে কয় ভজিলে সে হয় | |

Age of Kali, what is to be done will not be” he wrote: “Glory glory to the excellent name of Śrī Kṛṣṇacaitanya” ...<sup>128</sup>

## The Practice of All of the Śikṣā Gurus

The instruction of Śrīman Mahāprabhu who was enacting the role of the teaching guru as well as of the Master of the Holy Name, Ṭhākura Haridāsa; the Six Gosvāmins, the close companions of Gaura, Śrīnivāsācārya, Narottama Ṭhākura, and Śyāmānanda Prabhu as well as from the instructions and practices of their followers; the evidence of the *Caitanya-bhāgavata*, the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, the *Caitanya-candrodaya Nāṭaka*, the *Caitanya-carita-mahākāvya*, the *Caitanya-candrāmṛta* and other authoritative scriptures or in other words the evidence of the Lord himself and of the saints, scriptures, and gurus has specified a system of praise-singing and repetition of the Mahāmantra that requires counting. Nowhere is there the method, system or instruction for repeating the Mahāmantra without counting.

## A Fraudulent Argument and its Refutation

Even though this conclusion has been thoroughly established by the string of proofs just described, some appeal to a form of fallacious reasoning saying: “There is no statement anywhere saying ‘the Mahāmantra should not be repeated in an uncounted manner.’”

Actually, in no teaching of scripture or of great souls is a conclusion ever established by the inference that the absence of the prohibition of something means its endorsement (*niṣedhābhāve ādeśa*) or the absence of endorsement of some practice means its prohibition (*ādeśābhāve niṣedha*). This is nothing but a fraudulent or deceptive argument. Cannot those who make this false argument be asked in return: “Where in scripture or in the words of Mahāprabhu, the Master of the Holy Name, or the Gosvāmins is there a teaching that

<sup>128</sup> कलियुगपावनावतारि-श्रीकृष्णचैतन्यभजनं विना यत् कार्यं न भवतीत्याशयेनाह— जय जय श्रीकृष्णचैतन्य-नाम सार इत्यादि



the Mahāmantra should be repeated without counting?” Instead, there is clear teaching for repetition with counting. Therefore, just as the absense of their teaching in that matter (i.e., the uncounted repetition of the Mahāmantra) you do not accept as a prohibition, so too the absense of prohibition you cannot accept as an endorsement (of uncounted repetition of the Mahāmantra). In this case, all the clear instructions and practices that one receives only in an affirmative way should be followed. Śrīla [Narottama Dāsa] Ṭhākura Mahāśaya has said:

The path of the great-souls,      to that will I be loyal,  
recognizing what came earlier and later.<sup>129</sup>

Some folks, citing the *Caitanya-bhāgavata*’s statement “Everyone repeating this (*japa giyā*) with persistence ...”<sup>130</sup> and other statements like it, say that Mahāprabhu clearly taught repetition (*japa*) of the sixteen name, thirty-two syllable Mahāmantra with persistence, in other words, while keeping count. This is indeed true, but when he has not prohibited doing loud praise (*kīrtana*) of the holy name without counting, uncounted loud praise (*kīrtana*) of the holy name, which is Brahman the Savior (*tāraka-brahman*), cannot not be forbidden.

Hearing this argument, some scholar (grammarian) has presented a counter-argument: “If an ‘a’ follows it, an ‘i’ is replaced by a ‘y’. But since the fact that that does not happen to a ‘k’ is not stated, should that happen to a ‘k’, too? When one gives a rule in one case it should be understood that, other than in that one case, it does not apply to all other cases.”

Those who are on the side of doing *kīrtana* of the sixteen name thirty-two syllable Mahāmantra without counting say that Mahāprabhu instructed doing *kīrtana* with the rule of counting. Therefore, when

<sup>129</sup>Narottama Dāsa Ṭhākura, *Prema-bhakti-candrikā*, 2:

মহাজনের যেই পথ,      তাতে হব অনুরত,  
পূর্বাপর করিয়া বিচার।

<sup>130</sup>Cai. bhā., 2.23.77: ইহা জপ গিয়া সবে করিয়া নির্বন্ধ

we do eight-period (*aṣṭa-prahara*) kīrtana, we count the time of eight periods in that.<sup>131</sup>

To this argument a scholar has said in reply: “If someone told someone—‘Count these rupees please’ and he replied ‘These rupees have been in my house for eight periods. Therefore, they have been counted in time.’ You do this sort business?”

## A Difficult Opposing View (*Pūrvapakṣa*)

Again some members of our community are able to make the following objection: “I accept all of the previously mentioned evidence and arguments. But, our gurudevas, at least the ones whose views we know—Oṃ Viṣṇupāda Śrī Śrīla Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda, Oṃ Viṣṇupāda Śrī Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Prabhupāda—in front of these two gurudevas there are many examples in many places of *kīrtana* of the Mahāmantra without counting. There is no way of anyone’s denying or hiding that. Should the practice and teachings of these two great men be rejected instead of followed?

## A Response

The response to this we have to listen to with attention because:

Whom to reject,                      whom to honor—  
two weights on a scale.<sup>132</sup>

On the one hand we have Śrī Mahāprabhu, Nāmācārya Ṭhākura Haridāsa, the Six Gosvāmīns, the Lords companions during his manifest divine sports, Ṭhākura Vṛndāvana Dāsa, Kavirāja Gosvāmīn, the trio headed by Śrīnivāsācārya and on the other hand we have the lotus feet of our gurudevas who gave us their mercy directly and who

<sup>131</sup> A *prahara* is one eighth of a day or a period of roughly three hours.

<sup>132</sup> ?;

কাকো ত্যজি,                      কাকো বন্দি—  
দুহু পাল্লা ভারী

are dearer to us than a million lives. The scale is not lesser or greater on either side. Now what is the solution for a minuscule living being? “The order of the guru is not debatable.”<sup>133</sup> According to this rule one should follow the order of the guru without questioning it. But again a previous guru, Ṭhākura Narottama has written: “The path of the Great Ones, on that one should travel, considering [both] the earlier and later.”<sup>134</sup> He didn’t say to follow only the previous great ones nor to follow only the later great ones. He has said that reconciling the conclusions and opinions of both the previous and later great ones, one should travel on the path of the great ones, that is, one should become engaged in cultivating that path. Prabhupāda [Bhaktisiddhānta] himself has written about the practice of his gurudeva in an essay entitled “About My Master” published in the *Sajjana-toṣaṇī-patrikā* (19/5 page 181). What he has written there I quote here:

I saw on his [Śrī Gaurakiśora’s] neck was a tulasī mālā [rosary or circular string of beads made from the tulasī bush], in his hands was another tulasī mālā to count a persistent number of holy names, and a few books written in Bengali. Sometimes there was no tulasī mālā on his neck and in his hands in place of the tulasī mālā was a torn strip of cloth with knots tied in it to keep count. He would be naked with his loin open, without reason he would be apathetic and abusive in language. I witnessed numerous things like that.

Our grand-gurudeva [Gaurakiśora Dāsa Bābājī] used to keep a tulasī mālā in his hand all the time to count holy names with persistence, so much so that when on the neck of that crown jewel of *paramahamsas* there was no tulasī mālā, no counting mālā in his hands, nor even a loincloth on his body, even then he kept a torn strip of cloth with knots tied in it to keep count of the Mahāmantra.

<sup>133</sup>Cc. 2.10.145 citing a statement from the *Raghuvaṁśa*:

तदाज्ञा गुरुणां ह्यविचारणीया

<sup>134</sup>Narottama Dāsa Ṭhākura, *Prema-bhakti-candrikā*, 2.

This we heard from the statement of Prabhupāda (Bhaktisiddhānta). He who was detached in all matters, a purified soul who had given up everything, who did not even notice the tulasī mālā on his throat, but he was not indifferent to keeping count of the Mahāmantra. Is the practice of this master of ours evidence? If we accept our guru lineage as in the line of Narottama Dāsa Ṭhākura or in the line of the Six Gosvāmins of Vṛndāvana, or if we think of them as previous great souls (*mahājana*), then shouldn't we engage in worship after reconciling their practices with the conclusions and practices of later gurus? What offense will there be in this? Or, if we, without considering any of the views of earlier gurus, only follow the eminent gurus we know directly, will our *bhakti* for our guru become greater? This kind of suggestion is not found in the practices of any great souls or in the instructions of scripture. If we, in order to respect the instructions of scripture and the practices of previous great souls, repeat the Mahāmantra only while counting it, and do not repeat it without counting it, then the guidance of the previous great souls is followed and there is no cause for neglect or disrespect towards later great souls and our direct eminent gurus. This is so because our gurudeva is a follower of Mahāprabhu, the Teacher of the Holy Name (Haridāsa Ṭhākura), the Six Gosvāmins, Ṭhākura Narottama and the rest of our masters or his own gurudeva (Gaurakīśora Dāsa Bābā) and he has not prohibited doing praise-singing of the Mahāmantra in a counted way. Rather he has instructed it.

Therefore, by repeating the holy names in a persistent (counted) way we have also followed the instruction of our own gurudeva who has given us his grace; we have also followed the instruction of our grand gurudeva (*parama-gurudeva*); we have also followed the instruction of Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura; we are able to follow the advice and instructions of the source of all descents in this Age of Kali, Gaurasundara, of the supreme goddess Viṣṇupriyādevī, of the Master of the Holy Name Haridāsa Ṭhākura, the Six Gosvāmins, the three teachers headed by Śrīnivāsa, and of other companions of Gaura. But, even though we know about the teaching and practices of the gurudevas, if, dressing ourselves up in excessive *bhakti* for our guru, we play act repeating the Mahāmantra in an uncounted way on the

basis of opposition, then offense is inevitable by that kind of posturing. May we not commit any kind of offense at the feet of the great souls, the previous and later gurus who are the principle of nondual knowledge—making this heartfelt entreaty known at their feet, we will take to the path of the great souls by their grace and as their followers after considering the prior and the later. May our gurudevas give us good intelligence and always protect us!

The praise-singing of his names  
destroys all sin; a bow to him  
alleviates all suffering;  
to him, Hari, do I bow.<sup>135</sup>

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<sup>135</sup> ?;

नामसङ्कीर्तनं यस्य सर्वपापप्रणाशनं |  
प्रणामो दुःखशमनस्तं नमामि हरिं परम् ॥