

Secrets of the Soul

Tridandi Svami Sripad Bhaktivedanta Vana Gosvami Maharaj

All glories to Sri Sri Guru Gauranga!

Secrets of the Soul

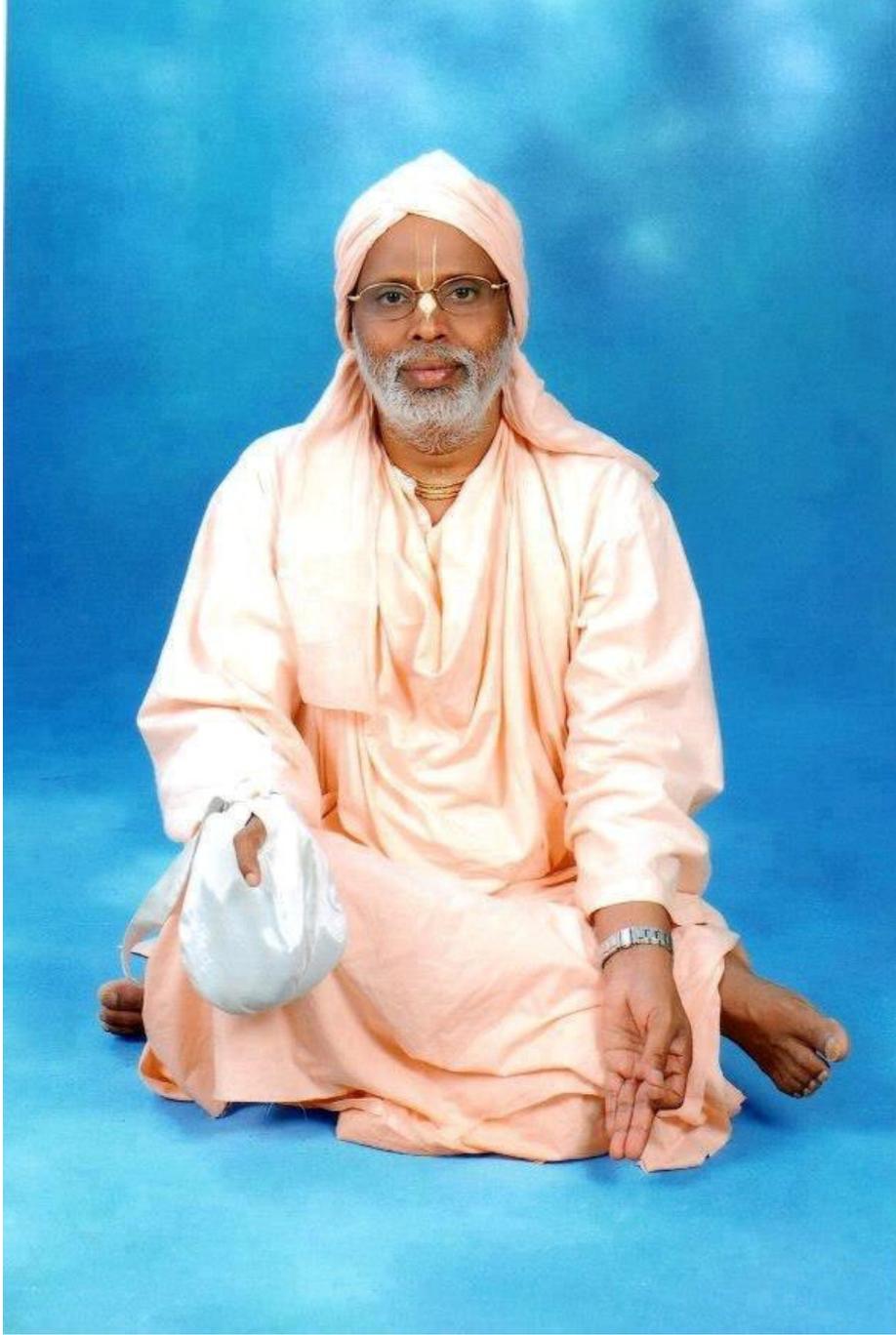
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Tridandi Svami Sripad Bhaktivedanta Vana Gosvami Maharaj

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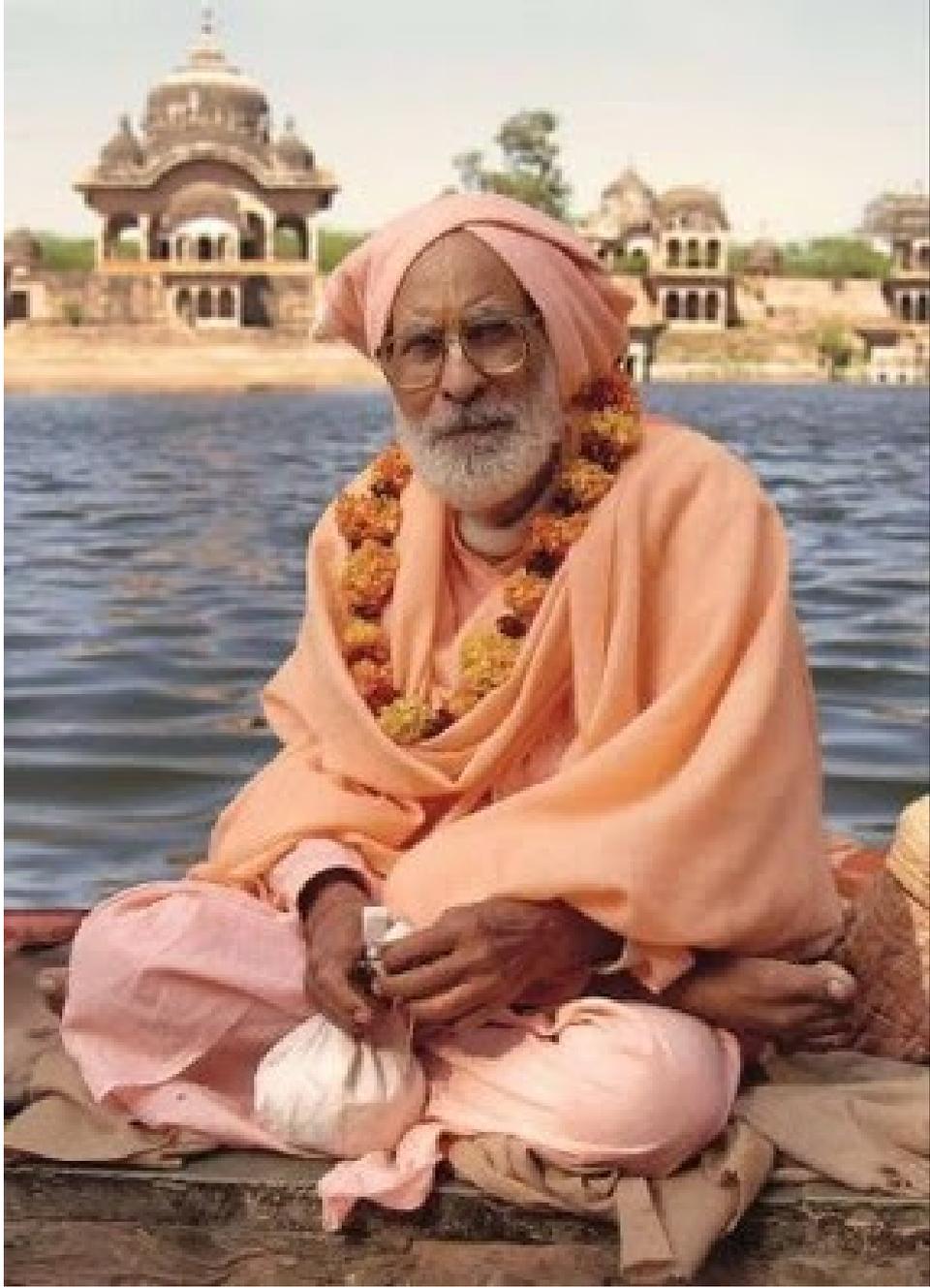
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om visnupad astotara sata

Sri Srimad Bhaktivedanta Srila Vana Gosvami Maharaj



nitya-lila pravista om visnupad astotara sata

Sri Srimad Bhaktivedanta Srila Narayana Gosvami Maharaj

First of all, I offer my humble, respectful obeisances unto the lotus feet of my Gurupada-padma, *nitya-lila pravista om visnupada astottara-sata* Sri Srimad Bhaktivedanta Srila Vamana Gosvami Maharaja, and *nitya-lila pravista om visnupada astottara-sata* Sri Srimad Bhaktivedanta Narayana Gosvami Maharaja. Simultaneously, I offer my humble, respectful *dandavat pranam* to the lotus feet of *nitya-lila pravista om visnupada astottara-sata* Sri Srimad Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaja, Srila Bhakti Raksaka Sridhara Gosvami Maharaja, all senior devotees, all Vaisnavas and Vaisnavis, and all my respectful guests.

Sadhu-sanga

Try to understand that without spiritual life, we have nothing more than animal life. The only things that animals such as cats, dogs, birds, and deer do are sleep, eat, defend themselves, and meet each other to reproduce. Human beings also do the same things; these are common between them and the animals. Our scriptures explain very clearly the extreme fortune a person has in coming to Krsna consciousness and practicing unalloyed devotional service.

In the *Srimad-Bhagavatam* (10.51.53) it is stated:

*bhavapavargo bhramato yada bhavej
janasya tarhy acyuta sat-samagamah
sat-sangamo yarhi tadaiva sad-gatau
paravarese tvayi jayate ratih*

“If, while wandering in the cycle of repeated birth and death, one attains extreme fortune and is about to be delivered from this material world, one will attain the company of a *sadhu*, *sadhu-sanga*.”

How can one get the association of a *sadhu* (saintly person)? In the scriptures it is explained that without the association of a saintly person, no method can help you in your spiritual life. So, in the book *Bhakti-rasamrta-sindhu*, Srila Rupa Gosvampada says: *adau sraddha* –“Have faith in the scriptures and in the

instruction of the *sadhu*.” However, without spiritual pious activities, or *sukrti*, you cannot get the association of *sadhus*, and firm faith in the instructions of the scriptures will not come. This *sukrti* comes in two ways: knowingly (*jnata*) or unknowingly (*ajnata*). If you understand the glories of the *sadhu*, *guru*, *sastra* (sacred scriptures), or *tulasi* (sacred plant) and you serve any of them, that is called *jnata-sukrti*. *Ajnata* means ‘accidentally’ - when something in your life happens by chance. An example is when, during watering many flowering plants in your garden, you sometimes unknowingly give water to a sacred *tulasi* plant that is hidden among the other plants. This creates *sukrti* in your heart.

After many lifetimes, when your *sukrti* becomes mature, your faith will bring you to the association of a *sadhu*. Srila Jiva Gosvami gives a nice example of this. Once, a *pujari* (a devotee who worships the Deity on the altar in a temple) was worshipping Thakurji (Sanskrit name for the Deity), offering ghee lamps. He left the temple room, but forgot the lamps, leaving them inside. In the meantime, a small rat entered the temple room and, looking for some food, came in contact with the flame of one ghee lamp. The rat caught on fire and, rolling on the floor in front of Thakurji, left its body. Thakurji considered that the rat had offered itself in *arati* like a ghee lamp. This resulted in an accumulation of enough *sukrti* such that in its subsequent life, the soul of the rat took birth as a human princess. As I have explained, the *atma* (soul) passes to another body after finishing with the current body.

Until you suffer your previous *karma* (reactions), you have to stay in your current body. When your *karma* finishes, the *atma* automatically gives up the body and goes to another baby body. Knowingly or unknowingly, if you practice spiritual life, you will get more advanced bodies and achieve higher levels of consciousness. In this way, Krsna says to Arjuna in the *Srimad Bhagavad-gita*: “I will give you *bhakti-yoga* so you can develop your spiritual life. I will arrange everything for you, including which body you get so that you will be able to perform *bhajana* and *sadhana*.”

Continuing the rat story, that soul entered into the body of a baby princess. Even as a baby, she would worship Thakurji with ghee lamps because the last

impression of her previous life automatically came. When her *sukrti* later matured, she associated with a high-class, exalted *sadhu* like Narada Rsi. Eventually, that princess attained perfection by going to Vaikuntha-dhama.

*sadhu-sanga sadhu-sanga sarva-sastre kaya
lava-matra sadhu-sange sarva-siddhi haya
(Caitanya Caritamrta, Madhya-lila, 22.054)*

All Vedic revealed scriptures, including the *Puranas* and *Upanisads*, glorify association with a *sadhu*. Even if you get this association for a moment or half of a moment, you will achieve perfection. *Sadhu-sanga* means faithfully listening to *hari-katha* (topics about Krsna, or God), performing *bhajana* and *sadhana*, and chanting the holy names. You should not just listen to it by letting it go in one ear and out the other. Those who do this are foolish. An intelligent person listens to *hari-katha* with his ears, keeps it in his heart, and then puts it into practice. Such a person eventually achieves the goal of perfection.

It is true that you listen to many things, but if you do not practice what you hear, it is not perfect listening. For example, I may ask you for a glass of water. You may hear my request, but if you do not actually bring me the water, you are not really listening. When you properly offer me the water, your listening becomes perfect. Similarly, I may tell you to chant the holy names, and you may hear my words and say that you are listening. However, you are not truly listening; only when you execute or practice this is your listening perfect. At first, listening gives knowledge, or *jñana*, like when I ask you to chant the holy names. The word *vijñana* means ‘realization’. When you perfectly chant the holy names, it is called *vijñana*. So, *jñana* and *vijñana* are, respectively, ‘knowledge’ and ‘realization’.

In *sastra* it is said:

*jnane prayasam udapasya namanta eva
jivanti san-mukharitam bhavadiya-vartam*

*sthane sthitah sruti-gatam tanu-van-manobhir
ye prayaso 'jita jito 'py asi tais tri-lokyam*

“Those who, even while remaining situated in their established social positions, throw away the process of speculative knowledge and with their body, words, and mind offer all respects to descriptions of Your personality and activities, dedicating their lives to these narrations, which are vibrated by You personally and by Your pure devotees, certainly conquer Your Lordship, although You are otherwise unconquerable by anyone within the three worlds.” (*Srimad-Bhagavatam* 10.14.3).

To give up speculative knowledge means only paying attention to *hari-katha* from a *sadhu* and practicing your *sadhana* and *bhajana*. Don't be a foolish person; listen and practice.

The wise and the foolish

Once, a tantric practitioner, one who drinks alcohol, goes to cemeteries to get skulls, chants many types of mantras, hypnotizes people, and does other such things, entered the assembly of a great king called Vikramaditya. Many intelligent people were in this assembly. Holding up a skull, the tantric practitioner asked, “Can you tell me if this skull is from an intelligent person or a foolish person?” No one in the assembly replied, as all were thinking, “What kind of crazy person would bring a skull from the cemetery into our assembly and ask such a question?” When no one took the tantric practitioner seriously, he became very angry and cursed everyone.

At that time, King Vikramaditya pacified the tantric practitioner, saying, “Please wait for five minutes. A very intelligent person is coming and he will give you the proper answer to your question.” Then a great scholar called Kalidasa arrived, and the tantric practitioner asked him the same question. Kalidasa replied, “The answer is very simple.” The tantric practitioner became very angry, challenging, “So many intelligent people in this assembly could not give a response; how can you say the answer is very simple?”

Kalidasa continued: “Someone please bring me a piece of straw from a broom.” Then Kalidasa put one end of the straw into one of the ear holes of the skull, passed it through, and pulled it out through the other side. He said, “Now do you understand?” The tantric practitioner replied, “No, I do not understand.” Kalidasa then explained: “This skull was from a foolish person, and if you do not understand, it means that you are as foolish as the skull! Foolish people let what they hear go in one ear and out the other, but intelligent people reflect on what they hear, and keep those reflections in their heart.”

It is like how the great scientist Isaac Newton discovered the law of gravitation. When he was a very small boy, maybe five or six years old, he was sitting by himself under an apple tree in the evening, and he noticed a ripe apple falling down. He thought, “That ripe apple dropped straight to the ground. Why did it fall straight down to the ground, and not to the left or right?” He thought about this for many years. You also observe everything, and every day you see similar things happening, like mangos and other things dropping or falling straight to the ground. However, you do not carefully think about it as Newton did. Even as a small boy, he pondered this and after many years of research he discovered the law of gravitation. Those who carefully look at and hear everything remember what they see and hear, and do research about it. If you are really intelligent, you can try to understand how everything works, who you are, and why you have come to this material world. This kind of thinking automatically comes to an intelligent person.

In reality, you are not this body. You are the soul that resides in this body and makes this body work. When the soul goes out of the body, the body becomes inert.

There are five material elements in the body: earth, water, fire, air, and ether or space. These elements slowly separate themselves from the body when the soul goes out of it. This is the truth; after a few months there is no body anymore.

Maybe you have seen something like this. When a dog dies on the street and its body stays there, if you pass by there every day, you will notice that these elements are gradually going out of the dead body. After some time, the body is completely finished, with nothing more than bones left. After about one year, there is no sign of the body.

While the *atma* resides in the body, the body is able to speak, eat, sleep, quarrel, defend itself, and many other things. So, try to understand what the *atma* is, and what the nature of the soul is. This is spiritual science – carefully researching things.

Secrets of the soul

You will realize the nature of the soul by chanting the holy names of the Lord. You cannot really know the secrets of the soul without doing this.

*bhajahu re mana sri nanda-nandana abhaya-caranaravinda re
durlabha manava-janama sat-sange taroho e bhava-sindhu re*

*sita atapa bata barisana e dina jamini jagi re
biphale sevinu krpana durajana capala sukha-laba lagi' re*

*e dina, yaubana, putra, parijana ithe ki ache paratiti re
kamala-dala-jala, jivana talamala bhajahu hari-pada niti re*

*sravana, kirtana, smarana, vandana pada-sevana, dasya re
pujana, sakhi-jana, atma-nivedana govinda-dasa-abhilasa re*

In this song, the author Govinda dasa says, “O my mind, always worship the lotus feet of Krsna, who is the son of Nanda Maharaja.” *Abhaya-caranaravinda re*: “If you take shelter of the lotus feet of Krsna, you will be free from all fears.” *Durlabha manava-janama sat-sange*: “This human life is very rare.”

Try to understand that it is not easy to get a human body. After passing through 8.4 million species, the Lord gave us this human body. You have forgotten all of this, but it is the truth. The illusory potency of the Lord, *maya*, is very powerful and makes you forget knowledge about the forms of the living entities. For many lifetimes you have been wandering in the cycle of birth and death, suffering

different kinds of distress. So, this human life is very rare. That is why you should not waste your time. From now on, using this human body, you should chant the holy names and be happy.

In your previous bodies of cats, dogs, and other animals, you could not chant the holy names and perform *bhajana* and *sadhana*. Only human beings can discriminate what is good from what is bad. The Lord grants us the power of discrimination in our brain. This human life is the best life, because by properly using this body, you can conquer your mind.

We are suffering from our previous *karma*. The lines on your hands are telling you this, because these lines exactly reveal the fruits of your previous actions. In this human life we can also create new *karma*. In this way, you suffer the previous *karma* and create new *karma*. This is called *karma-cakra*, the unstoppable cycle of birth and death.

However, if you chant the holy names, all of your *karma* will be destroyed:

HARE KRSNA HARE KRSNA KRSNA KRSNA HARE HARE
HARE RAMA HARE RAMA RAMA RAMA HARE HARE

In Sri Siksastakam, second verse, Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu states:

namnam akari bahudha nija-sarva-saktis
tatrapita niyamitah smarane na kalah
etadrsi tava krpa bhagavan mamapi
durdaivam idrsam ihajani nanuragah

There are no rules and regulations in the chanting of the holy names. You should chant the holy names at any time, because the Lord invested all of His potency in His names. You can chant the holy names while eating, lying down, or at any other time:

HARE KRSNA HARE KRSNA KRSNA KRSNA HARE HARE
HARE RAMA HARE RAMA RAMA RAMA HARE HARE

The four regulative principles including vegetarianism

Animals do not follow any rules, but in *sastra* it is said that human beings should follow four basic principles in order to become real, civilized human beings, and chant the holy names. According to these principles, one should not eat meat; one should not drink alcohol or take intoxicants; one should not gamble; and one should not engage in illicit sex. This is the process of living in a high state of consciousness.

Becoming a vegetarian means having compassion for all other living entities. One should not think that everything in the creation is made for one's own pleasure.

God created the grass as well as the cows that eat the grass. God created the deer as well as the lion that eats the deer. God created both the cows and the human beings, but that does not mean that the human beings should eat the cows.

Human beings can drink the milk of the cows, but some people think that they can also eat the cows' meat. Such people do not realize that the cows are like our mother, who gives us her breast milk to nourish us. Nowadays, people are drinking the cows' milk and eating the cows' flesh. You should show compassion to your mother and not kill her; in the same way, you should show compassion to the cows.

The Lord created many varieties of fruits, grains, and nuts, so it is not necessary for you to eat meat. Just chant the holy names and show compassion for all living entities; then, your life will be successful.

Try to have love and affection for everybody, including husband, wife, and children, as well as all animals such as cats, dogs, and cows. You should love them all, because it is the lack of love and affection that makes people kill and

eat animals - it is what butchers do. The same kind of soul who resides in your heart, in your mother's heart, and in your children's hearts, is within the heart of the cows and dogs. Knowing this, how can anyone possibly kill them? If somebody killed your son, would you not feel pain? So, how is it possible for you to tolerate the killing of a small calf in order to make 'baby beef'? No one has the right to kill anybody else, whether human or animal. This type of love is essential in our lives. All living entities want love. Who does not want love? Those who have pets give them nourishment, food, and love. Now it is time to give some love and affection to cows too. They are feeding us milk from their udders, giving love to us.

Lord Krsna explains that there are three kinds of food: *sattvic*, *rajasic*, and *tamasic*. *Sattvic* food is the food of goodness, like fruits and milk. You can offer these things to the Lord, and then they become *mahaprasada* (sacred food). *Tamasic* refers to the food of ignorance, such as meat and alcohol. You cannot offer these things to the Lord because He does not accept them. In the *Srimad Bhagavad-gita*, Krsna says, "You should not offer the Lord *tamasic* food, the food of ignorance." That means that the Lord only accepts *sattvic* food like rice, *dahl*, and *capati*.

In this birth we should inquire and research about human life. It does not matter whether you are a doctor, lawyer, student, or householder - you can do *bhajana* and chant the holy names:

HARE KRSNA HARE KRSNA KRSNA KRSNA HARE HARE
HARE RAMA HARE RAMA RAMA RAMA HARE HARE

You belong to Krsna

The Vaisnavas (Krsna's devotees) always wear a *tulasi* necklace that means that we belong to Krsna.

There are two types of dogs: the street or stray dog, and the house pet. If a person has a pet dog, that person gives it love and affection, food, and many

other things. One puts a leash on the dog when taking it on a walk. That dog belongs to the owner. On the other hand, no one actually cares about a street dog. If a street dog goes to your house, maybe you will give it some food, but then you will send it away. No one kisses a street dog, because if you try to do that, it may bite you.

In the same way, the *sastras* explain that those who wear a *tulasi* necklace belong to the Lord, and He takes care of them. Those who do not wear one belong to *maya* (illusion), and Maya-devi eternally bites them. So, do not wear just gold necklaces, but wear a *tulasi-mala* too! This means that you are trying to belong to G-O-D, not to D-O-G. Do not become like a street dog, because you are meant to belong to God. I can give you a *tulasi* necklace if you want. You are an intelligent person, and in this way your life will be successful.

Developing compassion

Once, on New Year's Eve, some people were cooking meat and their house seemed like a cemetery with so many dead animal bodies. I was in a house next to that one, and I saw many people entering a garden, drinking alcohol, and putting a dead chicken on the fire just to feed themselves. The garden was full of smoke and a foul smell was in the air.

This is a sick life because such people have no compassion. You should try to be a perfect human being with compassion for all of society. That is why we chant the holy names, follow the four regulative principles, and wear a *tulasi-mala*. Listen to these teachings with your ears, keep them in your heart, and practice them!

HARE KRSNA HARE KRSNA KRSNA KRSNA HARE HARE

HARE RAMA HARE RAMA RAMA RAMA HARE HARE

For more:

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*Any faults are the translators responsibility.

All glories, to Srila Gurudev.*

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