

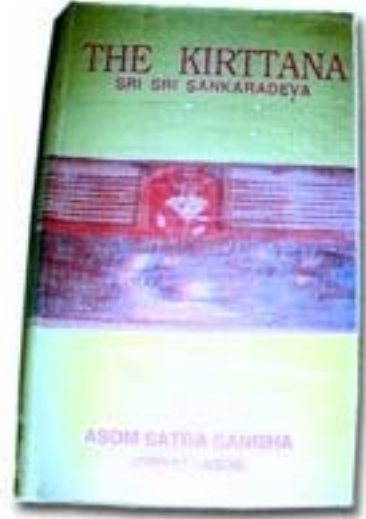
JAI GURU SANKARA

[For more information on the Kirttana of Sankaradeva, visit
<http://www.tributetosankaradeva.org/kirttana.htm>]

Sankaradeva's 'Veda Stuti' (The Prayer of the Vedas)

Tr. by Sri Chandrakanta Mahanta

Excerpted from '*The Kirttana*, Sri Sri Sankaradeva', Asom Satra Sangha, 1st Edition:1990;
The Kirttana, written by the Great Saint Sri Sri Sankaradeva in Assamese, translated into English Language with Introduction, by Sri Chandrakanta Mahanta, and published by the General Secretary, Asom Satra Sangha, Jorhat, Assam.



Veda Stuti, 'The Prayer of the Vedas to the Supreme **Lord Narayana**', forms one of the chapters of the *Kirttana Ghosā* - the 'Bhagavata in miniature' - of Sankaradeva. Here in this chapter we find the philosophical ideal of Sri Sankaradeva explained briefly in a lucid manner so that the idea about Brahman and His creation may be comprehended. The Great Master describes how the Vedas, coming out in the first exhalation of Lord Narayana, awakened Him Who was in a state of deep sleep after the great deluge, and prayed to Him. They reveal that Narayana is the only Supreme Conscious Reality. It is His māyā that creates the universe, preserves it and ultimately withdraws it. By His Grace only, men, taking **Sarana** (shelter) in Him, become free from the bondage of the world, the cycle of rebirths, through only the **Sravana** and **Kirttana** of His Divine Activities and Attributes. The lines,

*jiva amse Tumi pravesilā gāve gāve /
āve āmi tomāka bhajoho sarbabhāve // [1655]
Tomārese amsa āmi yata jivajāka /
Tomāra māyāye Prabhu bāndhile āmāka //
diyo upadesa bhajo Tomāra Carane /
māyāra bandhana cindo sravana kirttane // [1656]*

are highly significant and they very pithily summarize almost the entire philosophy of Sankaradeva's system. Maya or nescience in Sankaradeva is seen as a barrier to the Lord's bhakti (Devotion). And therefore, to break the fetters of maya, is prescribed the path of adoration (**bhajana**) of the Lord solely through the listening to (**Sravana**) and recitation (**Kirttana**) of His Glories, taking sole-refuge (**sarana**) in Him, in the company of His (single-minded) devotees (**bhaktas**).

The Veda Stuti portion of the *Bhagavata* has also been rendered into Assamese by Ananta Kandali, one of the disciple-associates of Sankaradeva. It forms part of the Dasama Skandha (10th Canto) of the venerable Text.

[Editing Notes: - The translation has been slightly edited partly to account for the variant readings found in different recensions of the *Kirttana*.]

‘Veda Stuti’ (The Prayer of the Vedas)

1st Kirttana

Refrain (Ghosā): -

*Oh Hari, Rama, Hari, Ananta Murari
Oh Lord, affectionate to the devotees,
Rescue Thy servant. (138)*

Verses: -

After withdrawing the creation Narayana was lying asleep and in the first exhalation came out the Vedas. They with Supreme Devotion awakened Visnu by prayers as the court minstrels awaken the sovereign Lord Chakravarty. [1649]

Glory unto Thee, let Thy Supreme Bliss be revealed and thereby destroy the maya of all the creatures. Thou dost alone bestow all the conscious force; we the vedas are the proofs at present in this respect. [1650]

The entire world including the ten Digpalas (the presiding deities of the ten directions) emanate from Thee and in the end all merge in Thee again. All the verses of the vedas affirm only this, as the feet, wherever they tread on, fall on the earth. [1651]

Thou art the Supreme Reality; knowing this the wise free themselves from sins through **Sravana** and **Kirttana** of Thy Activities. Oh Lord, how shall we be able to describe the greatness of one who adores Brahman, the Supreme Bliss? [1652]

If the men blessed with the human lives do not devote themselves to Sravana and Kirttana of Thee, their lives are completely undone, and fruitless. They are dead while living, like the breath of the smith’s belows. [1653]

Oh Narayana, Thou dost free [even] the person who breaks through the fetters of the six mystic circles (or junctures in the body), from the fear of death. Oh Lord Hari, meditating on Thee within our hearts, we the Vedas now adore Thee¹. [1654]

Thou hadst created all the creatures sentient as well as insentient and Thou art present in all of them with all Thy Greatness. Thou hadst entered individually in all the embodied creatures as Individual Souls. Hence now we adore² Thee by all means as Undivided Reality. [1655]

We, all creatures, constitute a part of Thine. Thy maya, Oh Lord, keeps us in bondage; give us instruction so that we may adore Thy Feet and remove the fetters of maya through **Sravana** and **Kirttana**. [1656]

¹ The translation of a variant reading of the same line would be: -

Oh Narayana, Thou dost free even that person who thinks of the six mystic circles (or junctures in the body), from the fear of death.

² The word used by Sankaradeva is **bhajoho** (we adore)

Some persons do not lay stress on the practice of knowledge (jnāna patha) for one can make himself free from the miseries of the world through **Sravana** and **Kirttana**. Having obtained the company of the unparalleled Devotees of Thine, one considers dharma, artha, kama and moksa like a straw. [1657]

Oh Lord Narayana, Thou alone art the most Beloved Soul; let my mind be attached to Thy Lotus Feet. The human life in Bharata is not easily available; as such, not adoring Thee, one steps towards self-destruction. [1658]

To keep Thee in mind through love is very rare; hence let us practise **Sravana** and **Kirttana** in any way possible. Let my mind remain stead-fast to Thy Feet. Let all sing Hari and Hari so long as this life lasts. [1659]

2nd Kirttana

Refrain (Ghosā): -

*Oh Lord Hari, withdraw my miseries;
Oh Lord Hrsikesa, the Ocean of Grace;
I am deeply immersed in the ocean of maya,
Save me, Oh Lord Madhava. (139)*

Verses: -

Being steeped in egoism and intellect, Oh Lord, we have become completely bewildered; as such how would we be able to realise Thy Indivisible Form of Perfect Bliss. Oh Most Gracious to the distressed, I bow at Thy Feet, instruct me so that I may ever practise devotion to Thee through Sravana and Kirttana and Smarana. [1660]

Through false arguments and discussions, we the evil-minded have been shrouded in darkness and grope about therein. We do not find out path of Real Knowledge, Oh Lord, do save me. Let us not leave Thy **Nāma** and **Guna** from our mouths; do this much of favour, Oh Lord Cakrapani, [instruct us on] how we may attain emancipation by reciting [only] Thy Holy Names - Madhava, Vamana, Govinda? [1661]

Thou art the Supreme [Truth and] Reality and this phenomenal world manifests itself in Thee; Thou too ever manifest Thyself as the In-dwelling Spirit in the endless world³. It is for this reason only that the wise men ultimately regard the whole world as Divine. Therefore, Oh the Life of the World, we adore Thee holding fast to Thy Feet in our hearts. [1662]

One may practise all the penances as many as there may be; one may climb up a mountain and fall down from it, also one may take bath in all the sacred places and study all the vedas to one's heart's content, also one may perform all the sacrifices and also practise all kinds of yogas, *but without practising the Nāma-Kirttana of Lord Hari, none can be free from the fear of death.* [1663]

³ Tumi Satya Brahma | Tomāta prakāse
jagata ito asanta /
jagatate sadā | Tumio prakāsā
Antaryāmi Bhagavanta //

Thou alone constitute (catch hold of) the Supreme Force of all the causes, though devoid of a body and senses. Thou art alone Omniscient and Omnipotent and the only object of devotion of all; as the sovereign king Cakravartin is waited upon with tributes by the entire people of the empire, [so also] Thou art the Lord of the devas including the creator Brahma. We bow down at Thy Feet. [1664]

Bound up by the karma and Thy maya [only], we become subject to the cycle of birth and death. Oh Lord Hari! Save us from the ocean of sorrow, we hold fast to Thy Feet. Thou art the Indwelling Spirit of the entire universe and Supreme Lord [Mahesvara]. Thou alone art Omniscient, Thou art Lord Nrisinha; we adore Thee with utmost concentration [in mind]. [1665]

The cycle of the world (birth and death), like the teeth of a saw, afflicts us; delusion, sorrow and fear do not leave us; **hence we have taken shelter (sarana) at Thy Feet**⁴. Oh Gracious Lord! Save us! Thou art the Supreme Preceptor; if the mind ever remains steadfast at Thy Feet then only through Thy Grace, everything would be achieved, even without practice of knowledge. [1666]

Knowing Thee as the Supreme Soul, he who adores Thee in his heart has no need of the insignificant worldly enjoyments from sons, wives and all others. May we ever sing **Thy Nāma** with our mouths keeping Thy Form at heart. The sins flee away [at once] on hearing the sound of **Thy Nāma**. Let all the people utter Hari and Hari. [1667]

3rd Kirttana

Refrain (Ghosā): -

*Oh Gracious Lord, Rama Hari,
I adore at Thy Feet,
Oh Lord, let me not again get merged in samsāra (the world). (140)*

Verses: -

That place wherever Thy devotees meditating on Thy Feet happen to be, is the seat of virtues and a sacred place. That one who drinks the nectar-like words about Thee that keep on flowing, becomes free from worldly sufferings and does not desire the uncouth worldly enjoyments, and he who even for once only meditates on Thy Feet, finds no comfort in the household. [1668]

The unreal universe which arose from Thee always appears to be real; the man rendered impotent by karma (karmajada) has his mind engrossed in it, not realising the purport of the vedas⁵. May my mind be concentrated on Thy Non-dual Form (Advaita Rupa), the Highest Bliss. Knowing this, now Oh Narahari, we have become the slaves of the slaves of Thine; do not forsake us ever⁶.

⁴ Tomāra Carane pasilo sarane
raksā karā Kripāmaya //

⁵ asanta jagatkhān | Tomāta udbhava bhoila
santa hena prakāsoi sadāy /
karmajada manusyara | manamagna bhoila tâte
vedara nubujoi abhiprāy //

⁶ Tomāra Advaita Rupa | Parama Ānanda pada

As there is no distinction between the solid gold and the gold ornaments - crown and earrings - so also whatever the names (nāma) and forms (rupa) are, all are only unreal (michā, false)⁷. [So also] in the pursuit of Supreme Reality, Oh Lord, there is no distinction between Thee and the ego-sense and the five gross elements. Maya keeps on trampling down on my head with her feet simply on being favoured by Thy glance; being intensely afflicted, I have taken shelter at Thy Feet. Oh the Lord of the World! Dispel Thy maya. [1670]

Disguised as ascetics, we deceived the people on some pretext and became restless with thoughts of enjoyments. Delusions do not forsake me day and night, nor does the restlessness of mind leave the thoughts, pre-occupied with the various efforts. False pride (garba, self-conceit) kept on developing on the receipt of honour from the ignorant people, and I transgressed Thy Command. Poor and destitute as we are, Oh Thou Supreme Bliss! be gracious and save us. [1671]

Oh Lord Madhava! Bestow on me Thy Supreme Knowledge which is free from the fragmentary weal and woe or, Oh Narayana! Bestow the Devotion based upon **Sravana** and **Kirttana** so that I may not be subordinate to the authority of the vedas. The creator Brahma reaches not the end of Thy Greatness; the vedas also do not know Thee; Thyself even dost know very little. Hence, Oh Lord, we have [solely] adored at Thy Feet wishing all glory unto Thee. [1672]

The sages Sanaka, Sananda, studying and discussing the four Vedas, the eighteen Puranas and all other Sastras including the **Bhagavata**, the Supreme Vedanta, have recovered their Essential Truth. Knowing the purport of all the Agamas and Puranas and the Vedanta, hold firm to devotion only. Know it definitely that **without Sravana and Kirttana one can never be free from this world through [other] acts of piety**. [1673]

Listen, O Wise People! Those who have the desire to free themselves from the miseries of birth and death, practise **Sravana** and **Kirttana** of the Nāma-Guna (Name and Attributes) of Govinda. Death is ever seizing on by the hair. Such a rare human life is not easily available again; the four vedas assert it definitely. Sankara, the kinkara [servant] of the Feet of Krsna says, “Let all ever sing aloud Hari and Hari.” [1674]



About the Holy Kirttana in English: -

This was the first translation of the Holy Kirttana into English, rendered by Late Chandra Kanta Mahanta, Late Satradhikara of Sri Sri Chipaha Satra, Purana Titabar and published by Asom Sattra Mahasabha in 1990. Late Mahanta also translated the ‘*Bhakti Ratnavali*’ by Sri Sri Madhavadeva, considered to be one of the four main scriptures of the Vaisnavas, which was also published by Asom Sattra Mahasabha in 2001. He took up the work of translation of the Kirttana in order to facilitate propagation and publicity of the thoughts of the Two Great Savants of the cult of Vaisnavism, among people outside Assam. More at <http://www.srimanta.net/silverline2.htm>

[For more information on the Kirttana of Sankaradeva, visit
<http://www.tributetosankaradeva.org/kirttana.htm>]

tāte mora magna houka citta /
bhoiloho dāsara dāsa | jāni āve Narahari
āmāka neribā kadācita //

⁷ mukuta kundala yena suvarnare bhinna nuhi
michā mātra nāma rupa yata /