

EKA-SARANA (এক-শৰণ) IN THE LIGHT OF THE *BHAKTI-RATNĀKARA*

Sonaram Chutiya

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ATributeToSankaradeva.org presents the English Translation of Vaisnavite scholar Sonaram Chutiya's 'BHAKTI-RATNĀKARAR ĀDHĀRAT EKA-SARANA TATTVA' (ভক্তি-ৰত্নাকৰৰ আধাৰত এক-শৰণ তত্ত্ব). For the original paper in Assamese, click [here](#).

Eka-Sarana, or Sole-Refuge to Krishna (God) - the path of Transcendental Devotion, is the main plank of Sankaradeva's creed, the pith and marrow of His religion, and we, at 'ATributeToSankaradeva.org' feel extremely proud and happy to present the English translation of three remarkable papers on this topic by the venerable Vaisnava scholar of Assam, Shri Sonaram Chutiya, former president of the Srimanta Sankaradeva Sangha and also a recipient of the Srimanta Sankaradeva Award. For the other two papers, click below: -

- http://www.tributetosankaradeva.org/eka_sarana_sarva_dharma_tyag_trans.pdf
- http://www.tributetosankaradeva.org/Sarana_trans.pdf

The *Bhakti-Ratnākara*, compiled in Sanskrit, is the only Sanskrit Book of Srimanta Sankaradeva. Unlike in Sri Sri Madhavadeva's *Bhakti-Ratnāvali* where **Sarana-tattva** (meaning and essence of **Eka-Sarana** or sole-refuge) has been mentioned clearly in its 13th and last *viracana* (chapter) entitled '**Sarana Viracana**', there is no mention [i.e, as an independent chapter] of it (Sarana-tattva) in the *Bhakti-Ratnakara* and in Sri Ramacarana Thakura Deva's translated Assamese *Bhakti-Ratnakara* also, the Eka-Sarana tattva is not clear. In the '*Bhakti-Ratnākarah*' included in the "*Sri Sankara Vākyāmrita*" also, the beginning and end [of its chapters] have been indicated only as '*prathama mähātmyam*' (first chapter), '*dvitiya mähātmyam*' (second chapter) and so on.

On the other hand, '*The Bhakti Ratnākara of Sankaradeva and History of the Concept of Bhakti*' in English, compiled and edited by Dr. Maheswar Neog and published by Punjabi University, Patiala in 1982 and the '*Kathā Bhakti Ratnākara*' published by the Asam Sahitya Sabha and authored by **Gopalacarana Dvija** of Sri Sri Damodaradeva's Vaikunthapur Dhām [Sattrā] in Koch Behar – in both of these invaluable Books, sufficient reference to Eka-Sarana tattva is found.

On merely quoting only three slokas of its 13th Māhātmya (chapter) dealing with ‘Nirguna Bhakti’ (Transcendental Devotion), the essence of Sarana-tattva is realized: -

(1)

tasmattvamuddhavotsrjya codanam praticodanam /
pravrttinca nivrttinca srotavyam srutameva ca //

[Bhagavata, 11 /12/12]

Kathā Bhakti Ratnākara: -

একাদশৰ দ্বাদশ অধ্যায়ত উদ্ধৱৰ প্ৰতি ভগৱন্তে বোলন্ত । হে উদ্ধৱ যাতো মোৰ ভজনৰ এমন প্ৰভাৱ এতকে
বিধি-নিশেধ প্ৰবৃতি-নিবৃতি যিবা শূনিবাক আছে যিবা শূনিচা সৰে এৰি সৰ্বান্তৰ্যামী মোত মাত্ৰ কায় বাক্য মনে
এক-শৰণ লৱা, কিছু ভয় নকৰিবা সমস্ত ভয়ত হন্তে মই ৰাখিম ।০।

“Ekādasara dvādasa adhyāyata Uddhavaṛa prati Bhagavante bolanta / he Uddhava yāto mora bhajanara
emana prabhāva etake bidhi-nisedha prabritti-nibritti yibā sunibāka āche yibā sunichā save eri
sarbāntaryāmi Mota mātra kāya bākya mane Eka-Sarana lavā, kichu bhaya nakaribā samasta bhayat
hante mai rākhim //”

“In the 12th Adhyāya (Chapter) of the 11th Skandha (Canto) [of the Bhagavata], Bhagavanta utters to
Uddhava, “O Uddhava! Since My Bhajana (single-minded devotion) has such a [supreme] effect,
therefore all vidhi nisedhas (injunctions) and all [means of] pravritti and nivritti that you will hear of or
have heard about, forsaking them all, take **Eka-Sarana** (sole-refuge) in Me, the in-dweller (antaryami)
of all, in kaya (body), mana (mind) and vakya (word); do not have any fear; I shall keep (protect) you
from all fear.”

(2)

mamekameva saranamatmanam sarva dehinam /
yahi sarvatmabhavena maya syah hyakutobhayah //

[Bhagavata, 11 /12/13]

Vyākhyā (interpretation): -

“sarva dehinamatmanamiti ekamiti ca sarvasya Mamedam satvam kathitam / Mayi prite ke itare no
prasannah sarvatmabhavena sarvatmakabhavanaya / Maya Isvarena raksakenabhayah syah bhava //”

Meaning, “Take Sarana (sole-refuge), in body, mind and speech, in Me alone (māmekameva); because [I Who am] the satisfaction of all; when I, Isvara (God), am there as protector (raksak), do not fear, be fearless (abhaya).”

(3)

sarva-dharman parityajya
mam ekam saranam vraja
aham tvam sarva-papebhyo
moksayisyami ma sucah
[Gita, 18.66]

Kathā Bhāgavata: -

এইমতে সমস্ত গীতাৰ সাৰ উদ্ধাৰি ভগৱন্তে গুহ্যতো কৰি পৰম গুহ্যক কহন্ত, নিজদাস অৰ্জুনৰ আগত । জানা বান্ধৱ সখি মোৰ ভক্তিতে সমস্তে হুইব এনয় সুদৃঢ় বিশ্বাস কৰি বিধিৰ কিংকৰ যত ধৰ্ম আছে সৱাকে পৰিত্যাগ কৰি মোত এক-শৰণ হৱা । যদি বোলা এমনে প্ৰৱৰ্তিলে কৰ্ম-ত্যাগ নিমিত্ত পাপ হুইব ইমত শোক নকৰিবা যাতো তুমি মোত এক-শৰণ হুয়া আছা, এতেকে সমস্ত পাপত হন্তে মঞি মুকুত কৰিম ।০৥

“eimate samasta Gitāra sāra uddhāri Bhagavante guhyato kari parama guhyaka kahanta, nijadāsa Arjjunara āgata / jānā bāndhava sakhi Mora bhaktite samaste huiba enaya sudridha bisvāsa kari bidhira kinkara yata dharma āche savāke parityāga kari Mota Eka-Sarana havā / yadi bolā emane pravarttile karma-tyāga nimitta pāpa huiba imata soka nakaribā yāto tumi mota Eka-Sarana huyā āchā eteke samasta pāpata hante main mukuta karim //”

“In this manner, retrieving the essence of the entire Gita, Bhagavanta reveals the Supreme Secret, the most confidential of them all, before His own servant Arjuna. Know, O most beloved friend, with this most firm belief that, through My devotion, *everything* will be realized, you take Eka-Sarana (sole-refuge) in Me, forsaking all other dharmas subservient to vidhi (injunctions; rites; writ-dictates) that there be. If you raise the doubt that by doing so, pāpa (religious demerit) will accrue on account of karma-tyāga (forsaking of karma), then do not in this manner grieve; since you are taking Eka-Sarana (sole-refuge) in Me, therefore I shall liberate [you] from all pāpa.”

The Srimad-Bhagavad Gita’s ‘māmekamsaranam’ (‘Eka-Sarana in Me’) and Srimad-Bhagavata’s ‘māmekameva saranam’ (‘Eka-Sarana in only Me’) - although both these uktis (utterances)

are ‘Bhagavan Svayam’ (God Himself) Krishna’s, not to speak of Eka-Sarana, even the ceremony called ‘sarana’ is not in vogue outside Assam; no institution called ‘Sattra’, a guru-sisya parampara which had developed centering on the ‘sarana’ institution, is found outside Assam.

The recension of the Bhakti-Ratnakara referred to above, brought out by the Punjabi University, ‘*The Bhakti Ratnākara of Sankaradeva and History of the Concept of Bhakti*’ and the ‘*Kathā Bhakti Ratnākara*’ of Gopalacarana Dvija – both of these are identical in content. Therefore, we begin our discussion centering on the *Kathā Bhakti Ratnākara*.

The 1st Mahatmya (Chapter) is Guru-sevā Mahatmya, ‘The Glory of Serving the Feet of the Guru’. Here, the verdict is given: -

কৃষ্ণত একান্ত-শৰণ হৈয়া গুৰু-সেৱাত সংসাৰ নিস্তৰি । গুৰু-সেৱা ছাৰি যাগযোগাদি অন্য কৰ্মে সংসাৰ তৰণ নাই
এইসৰ অৰ্থ নিৰ্ণিত হৈল ভক্তি-ৰত্নাকৰত ।

“Krishnata ekānta sarana hoiyā Guru-sevāta samsāra nistari / Guru-sevā chāri yāgayogādi anya karme
samsāra tarana nāi eisava artha nirnita hoila Bhakti-Ratnākarat /”

“Taking sole-refuge (**Ekānta Sarana**) in **Krishna** and doing service to the **Guru** (Guru Sevā), one is released from samsāra. Except through **Guru Sevā**, there is no obtaining release from samsāra through yagnas, yogas and other karmas. This [alone] is [thus] determined in the Bhakti-Ratnākara.”

Along with it, what is ‘Guru Sevā’; in this connexion, the author Gopalacarana Dvija says: -

গুৰুৰ উত্তম সেৱা শ্ৰৱণ কীৰ্তন ।

“Gurura uttama sevā sravana kirtana”

“The best service (sevā) of the Guru is Sravana and Kirtana.”

In the 2nd Māhātmya entitled ‘Nara Dehā Māhātmya’, ‘The Greatness of the Human Body’, the verdict is given: -

ইমত নৰ দেহ পায়৷ যাৰাসৰে এক-শৰণ হৈয়া কৃষ্ণৰ পাদ-পদমক নভজে তাৰা অতি নিন্দিত ।

“imata nara deha pāyā yārāsave Eka-Sarana hoiyā Krishnara pāda-padma nabhaje tārā ati nindita /”

“Obtaining such a human body, those who do not do worship at Krishna’s Lotus-Feet taking **Eka-Sarana** in Him, they are the ones extremely censured.”

The 5th Māhātmya is ‘Bhajaniya Purusottama Sri-Krishnara Māhātmya’, ‘The Greatness of the Supreme Worshipful Sri Krishna, the Supreme Person’. Here ‘**Eka-Sarana**’ has been mentioned two times: -

(1) যাতো কাৰণৰো কাৰণ কৃষ্ণ । এতেকে তান্ত ব্যতিৰেকে বস্তু কৰি নাই । এইসৰ বিচাৰে শ্ৰীকৃষ্ণ মাত্ৰ সত্য, আক জানি তান্তে এক-শৰণ হৈল যাৰা তাৰা অনায়াসে মোক্ষ পাৰে ।

“yāto kāranaro kārana Krishna / eteke tānta byatireke bastu kari nāi / eisava bicāre Sri-Krishna mātra satya, āka jāni tānte Eka-Sarana hoila yārā tārā anāyāse moksa pāve /”

“Since **Krishna** is the cause of all causes, therefore apart from Him, there exists not a thing. Judged thus, only Sri Krishna is satya (Truth); knowing this fact, those who take **Eka-Sarana** in Him, they effortlessly obtain moksa (salvation).”

(2) তান চৰনত এক-শৰণ হৈয়া সেৱা কৰিল মাত্ৰকে পৰম গতিক পায়, আনমতে নাপায় ।

“Tāna Caranata Eka-Sarana hoiyā sevā karila mātrake parama gatika pāy, ānamate nāpāy /”

“Immediately on taking **Eka-Sarana** at His Feet and [then] serving Him, one obtains the Supreme State (parama gati), not by any other means.”

In the 6th Māhātmya entitled “ Sri-Krishnara Guna-Nāmādi Sravana Mahimā”, “The Power of the Hearing of the Attributes and Names (Glories) of Sri Krishna”, the verdict given is: -

সৰ্বজনে দেখা এইসৰ নিদৰ্শন দ্বাৰাৰে এক-শৰণ হৈয়া পৰম সুখে কৃষ্ণ কথা শ্ৰৱণ কৰি সংসাৰত হন্তে মুকুত হয় আক ভক্তি ৰত্নাকৰত নিৰ্ণয় কৰিলো ।

“sarbajane dekhā eisava nidarsana dvāre Eka-Sarana hoiyā parama sukhe Krishna kathā sravana kari
samsārata hante mukuta haya āka Bhakti Ratnākarata nirnaya karilo/”

“O all people! Look! In accordance with these directives, taking **Eka-Sarana** and, in great happiness listening to the **Krishna Kathā**, one is liberated from samsāra; this I (Sankaradeva) have determined in the Bhakti Ratnākara.”

In the 7th Māhātmya entitled “Kirttana Māhātmya”, “The Greatness of Kirttana (Singing the Name of Hari)”, the following is the verdict: -

হে নৰনাৰী লোক দেখ, ইসৰ আদি ভগৱন্তৰ বচন অনুসাৰে এক-শৰণ হৈয়া হৰি গুণ নাম কীৰ্ত্তনত পৰে পৰম ধৰ্ম
মহাধৰ্ম মোক্ষ দায়ক আৰ আন নাই।

“he nara nāri loka dekha, isava ādi Bhagavantara bacana anusāre Eka-Sarana hoiyā Hari Guna Nāma
Kirttanata pare parama dharma mahādharma moksa dāyaka āra āna nāi”

“O men and women! Look! In the opinion of these statements of Bhagavanta, apart from taking **Eka-Sarana** and [then] singing the Attributes and Names of Hari, there is no other salvation-bestowing Supreme Religion, Great Religion.”

The 8th Māhātmya is “Smarana Māhātmya”, “The Greatness of Smarana (Contemplating the Form of Hari)”: -

এই বচন প্ৰমাণে এক-শৰণ হৈয়া কৃষ্ণক স্মৰিল মাত্ৰকে সমস্ত পাপ ক্ষয় হয়।

“ei bacana pramāne Eka-Sarana hoiyā Krishnaka smarila mātrake samasta pāpa ksaya haya”

“As per the proof furnished by these statements, immediately on taking **Eka-Sarana** and remembering Krishna, all pāpas (sins) are destroyed.”

This is the verdict of this Māhātmya.

The 9th Māhātmya is “Arcana Māhātmya”, “The Greatness of Arcana (Procedural Worship)”and

its declaration is this: -

ইত্যাদি বচন অনুসাৰে এক-শৰণ হৈয়া কৃষ্ণ পূজায়েসে সমস্তৰ পূজা হয়, পৃথকে নহে । আক ভক্তি বত্নাকৰত
নিৰ্ণয় কৰিলো ।

“ityādi bacana anusāre Eka-Sarana hoiyā Krishna pujāyese samastara puḡā haya, prithake nahe / āka
Bhakti Ratnākarata nirnaya karilo /”

“According to these and other statements, through Krishna’s *puḡā* (worship) only, taking **Eka-Sarana**
in Him, the worship of all is done, not separately; this I (Sankaradeva) have determined in the Bhakti
Ratnākara.”

The siddhānta (verdict) of the 10th Māhātmya, “Bhagavantara Bhakti-yoga”, “The Lord’s Bhakti
Yoga”, is: -

এৱমাদি বচন প্ৰমাণি এক-শৰণ হৈয়া কৃষ্ণ-ভক্তিয়েসে সংসাৰ তৰিবাক পাৰি যাগ-যোগাদিয়ে পুনু নপাৰি – আক
ভক্তি বত্নাকৰত নিৰ্ণয় কৰিলো ।

“evamādi bacana pramāni Eka-Sarana hoiyā Krishna-bhaktiyese samsāra taribāka pāri yāga-yogādiye
punu napāri – āka Bhakti Ratnākarata nirnaya karilo /”

“Considering these and other statements, only by taking **Eka-Sarana** and [then] doing Krishna-bhakti,
is one able to cross samsāra (ie the ocean of trans-migratory existence); again, one is unable to do so
through [other means like] sacrifices (rituals), yoga, etc. - this I have determined in the Bhakti
Ratnākara.”

The 11th Māhātmya is “Uttamā-Bhakti Māhātmya”, “The Glory of Uttamā (lit. Best) Bhakti”.
Here the verdict given is: -

এই বচন অনুসাৰে কৃষ্ণত এক-শৰণ হৈয়া উত্তম ভক্তিয়েসে ভগৱন্তক পায় । আনমতে নাপায় ।

“ei bacana anusāre Krishnata Eka-Sarana hoiyā uttama bhaktiyese Bhagavantaka pāy / ānamate nāpāy/”

“According to these statements, only by taking **Eka-Sarana** in Krishna and doing Uttama (Best) Bhakti to Him can Bhagavanta be obtained; through other means, He is *not* obtained.”

In the 12th Māhātmya entitled “Antarangā-Bhakti Māhātmya”, ‘The Glory of Indwelling Devotion’, the definition of ‘pandita’ (scholar) has been declared by Bhagavanta Krishna Himself: -

জানা উদ্ধৰ, ব্ৰাহ্মন, চাণাল জাতিত বিষম । চোৰ দাতা কৰ্মত বিষম । আদিত্য শ্ফুলিঙ্গ বণত বিষম, শান্ত উগ্র
স্বভাৱত বিষম । তথাপি চাৰিওবিধ বিষমত যাৰা মোক মাত্ৰ সমানে দেখে তাৰাক মোৰ মতে পণ্ডিত বুলি ॥

“jānā Uddhava, brāhmana, cāndāla jātita bisama / cora dātā karmata bisama / āditya sphulinga ranata
bisama, sānta ugra svabhāvata bisama / tathāpi cāriobidha bisamata yārā moka mātra samāne dekhe
tārāka mora mate pandita buli //”

“Know, O Uddhava! The ‘brāhmana’ and the ‘cāndāla’ are the extremities (opposite poles) in jāti (caste), the ‘cora’ (thief) and the ‘dātā’ (donor) are extremities in karma (action), ‘āditya’ (the sun) and the ‘sphulinga’ (spark) are extremities in rana (valor) and the ‘sānta’ (calm) and the ‘ugra’ (aggressive) are extremities in point of svabhāva (nature). Still, in these four kinds of bisama (extremity), those who perceive only Me – equally – they are the ones whom I regard as panditas (scholars).”

Again, it is declared: -

এইমতে ভগৱন্তৰ বচন প্ৰমাণে এক-শৰণ হৈয়া অন্তৰঙ্গতা ভক্তিৰে ভগৱন্তক পাই আক ভক্তি ৰত্নাকৰত নিৰ্ণিত
কৰিলো ।

“eimate Bhagavantara bacana pramāne Eka-Sarana hoiyā antarangatā bhaktiye Bhagavantaka pāi āka
Bhakti Ratnākarata nirmita karilo //”

“In this manner, as per the proof offered by the words of Bhagavanta, only by doing Antarangā Bhakti [to Krishna] taking **Eka-Sarana** [in Him], Bhagavanta is obtained – this I have determined in the Bhakti Ratnākara.”

About the 13th Māhātmya entitled “Nirguna Bhakti”, ‘Transcendental Devotion’, we have already mentioned at the start. The verdict of this Māhātmya: -

হে সভাসদ লোক, ভগৱন্তৰ বচনে প্ৰমাণ দেখা, ই সমস্ত বেদৰ সাৰ । আক জানি তান চৰণত এক-শৰণ হৈয়া
নিৰ্গুণ ভক্তিযেসে ভগৱন্তক পায়, আন তল্প-মল্প- তীৰ্থস্থানাদিত নাপায় ।

“he sabhāsada loka, Bhagavantara bacane pramāna dekhā, i samasta vedara sāra / āka jāni tāna
Caranata Eka-Sarana hoiyā nirguna bhaktiyese Bhagavantaka pāy, āna tantra-mantra- tirthasnānādita
nāpāy /”

“O all ye assembled people! Look at the proof furnished by the words of Bhagavanta! It is the essence of all the Vedas. Knowing this, [it is the verdict that] only by taking **Eka-Sarana** at His Feet and [then] doing Nirguna (Transcendental) Bhakti [to Him] is Bhagavanta obtained; through other tantras (ritual techniques) and mantras (incantations) and bathing at tirthas (pilgrimage-spots) etc., He is not obtained.”

In the 15th Māhātmya entitled “Saguna-Nirguna Bheda”, “The Distinction between Saguna and Nirguna”, ‘**Eka-Sarana**’ has been referred to two times: -

(১) মোত এক-শৰণ হৈয়া যিজন কৰ্ম কৰে সিজন নিৰ্গুণ বুলি, যাতো সি অহংকাৰ ৰহিত ।

(1) “mota Eka-Sarana hoiyā yijane karma kare sijana nirguna buli, yāto si ahamkāra rahita /”

“The one who does work becoming of **Eka-Sarana** (sole refuge) in Me, that one is termed nirguna; *since he is bereft of ahamkāra (I-feeling).*”

(২) এইমানে ভগৱন্তৰ বচন প্ৰমাণে এক-শৰণ হৈয়া গুণময় ভাৱক এৰি নিৰ্গুণ শ্ৰৱণ কীৰ্ত্তনাদি কৰিলে সংসাৰ ক্লেশ
গুছে ।

(2) “eimāne Bhagavantara bacana pramāne Eka-Sarana hoiyā gunamaya bhāvaka eri nirguna
sraavana kirttanādi karile samsāra klesa guche /”

“In this manner, according to the proof offered by the words of Bhagavanta, doing Sravana,

Kirttana, etc., taking **Eka-Sarana** in Krishna and [hence] forsaking all guna-affected feelings, one is rid of the klesas (afflictions) of samsāra.”

The verdict of the 16th Māhātmya entitled ‘Uttama Bhaktira Laksana’, ‘The Characteristics of Uttama Bhakti’, is: -

ইসৰ বচন অনুসাৰে এক-শৰণ হৈয়া সাধাৰণ ভক্তিত মুক্তি সাধে, উত্তম ভক্তিয়ে পুনু কি কহিম আক ভক্তি
ৰত্নাকৰত নিৰ্ণয় কৰিলো ।

“isava bacana anusāre Eka-Sarana hoiyā sādharana bhaktita mukti sādhe, uttama bhaktiye punu ki
kahim āka Bhakti Ratnākarat nirnaya karilo /”

“In the opinion of these statements, taking **Eka-Sarana** and [then] doing even ordinary bhakti realizes salvation; of Best Bhakti, oh! What will I say! This I have determined in the Bhakti Ratnākara.”

The 17th Māhātmya is ‘Madhyama Bhakta Māhātmya’, “Chapter on the Middle Category of Devotees”. Its declaration: -

এই বচন প্ৰমাণে এক-শৰণ হৈয়া ভক্তি কৰিলেহে ভগৱন্তক পায়, অন্যথা ৰূপে নাপায়, আক ভক্তি ৰত্নাকৰত
নিৰ্ণয় কৰিলো ।

“ei bacana pramāne Eka-Sarana hoiyā bhakti karilese Bhagavantak pāy, anyathā rupe nāpāy, āka Bhakti
Ratnākarat nirnaya karilo”

“According to the proof furnished by these statements, it is only by doing bhakti taking **Eka-Sarana** that one obtains Bhagavanta, *not in any other way*; this I have determined in the Bhakti Ratnākara.”

In the 18th Māhātmya titled ‘Prākṛita Bhakta Māhātmya’, “Chapter on the Prākṛita (Ordinary) Devotee”, is quoted the statement of Narada addressed to Vyasa:-

আৰে নিত্য-নৈমিত্তিক স্বধৰ্মৰ নিষ্ঠাকে অনাদৰি হৰি ভক্তি মাত্ৰ উপদেশ দিয়া এই আশায়ে বোলন্ত ।

“āve nitya-naimittika svadharmara nisthāke anādari Hari Bhakti mātra upadesa diyā ei āsāye bolanta /”

“Disregarding faith in nitya-naimittika (daily and occasional observances) and sva-dharma (religious practices determined by one’s station in life; caste-duties) you now give the upadesa (prescription; advice) of only Hari-Bhakti; he (Narada) says (to Vyasa).”

Again the verdict has been given: -

এৱমাদি বচন অনুসাৰে এক-শৰণ হৈয়া বিষয়াসক্ত জনো ভক্ত হৈলে মুকুতি পায়, উত্তম ভক্তৰ মহিমা কি কহিম ।

“evamādi bacana anusāre Eka-Sarana hoiyā bisayāsakta jano bhakta hoile mukuti pāy, uttama bhaktara mahimā ki kahim /”

“From these statements, it is concluded that taking **Eka-Sarana**, if even the person attached to material sense objects becomes a devotee, he obtains liberation; [then] of the glory of the Uttama (Best) Bhakta, oh! what will I relate!”

In the 19th Māhātmya ‘Ācāra-bhrasta Bhaktara Māhātmya’, “Chapter on Bhaktas Fallen from the Path of Devotion”, is told: -

একাদশৰ পঞ্চম অধ্যায়ত নিমি ৰাজাক প্ৰতি কৰভাজনৰ বচন দেখাই ভক্ত সৰে যেমনে বিধিনিষেধত নিৰ্ভৰি কৃত্য কৃত্য হয় তাক কহন্ত । হে মহাৰাজা, যাৰা সৰে সমস্ত কৰ্ম এৰি সৰ্বভাৱে মুকুন্দত শৰণাগত হৈলে, য়েৰে অভক্ত্য মানে পিতৃদেৱাদিৰ ঋণ কিংকৰ হয়, তেমনে নহে । এহিমতে যাৰা দেৱান্তৰ ভক্তি এৰি হৰি পাদমূলত ভজিল তাৰাৰ বিকৰ্মত প্ৰৱৰ্ত্তন নসম্ভৱে ।

“Ekādasara pancama adhyāyata Nimi rājāka prati Karbhājanara bacana dekhāi bhakta save yemane bidhinisedhata nivartti kritya kritya hay tāka kahanta / he mahārājā, yārā save samasta karma eri sarvabhāve Mukundata saranāgata hoile, yeve abhakta māne pitridevādira rina kinkara hay, temane nahe/ ehimate yārā devāntara bhakti eri Hari pādamulata bhajila tārāra bikarmata pravarttana nasambhave /”

“Citing the words of (siddha) Karabhājana to King Nimi in the 5th Adhyaya of the 11th Skandha, how by freeing themselves from vidhi-nisedha (positive and negative injunctions of the Vedas), the bhaktas secure accomplishment, that he (Sankaradeva) explains. “ O King! The ones who have, forsaking completely all karmas, taken **Sarana** in all ways [whole-heartedly] in Mukunda, unlike the abhakta

ones (non-devotees) who become servants in debt of the pitris (ancestors; manes) and the devas (deities), in that manner they (the bhaktas) do not (become servants). Therefore, those who have, forsaking devotion (worship) to other deities, have engaged in bhajana (single-minded devotion by singing His Glories) at the Feet of Hari, the question of their committing vikarma (transgressions of the Vedas) does not arise.”

In the 20th Māhātmya, after discussing about ‘Bhagavad Bhakti Prārthanā, ‘The Prayer for the Lord’s Devotion’, at the end, the verdict is given: -

এই সৰ্ব নিদৰ্শন দ্বাৰে এক-শৰণ হৈয়া ভগৱন্তক ভক্তি প্ৰাৰ্থিলেহে ভক্তি পায়। যজ্ঞ, তন্ত্র, যাগ, যোগাদিয়ে পুনু
নপায় আক ভক্তি বত্ৰাকৰত নিৰ্ণয় কৰিলো।

“ei sava nidarsana dvāre Eka-Sarana hoiyā Bhagavantaka bhakti prārthilese bhakti pāy / yantra, tantra,
yāga, yogādiye punu napāy āka Bhakti Ratnākaraat nirnaya karilo /”

“From all these [cited] instances, only by praying to Bhagavanta for bhakti, taking **Eka-Sarana** [in Him] is bhakti obtained; further, by means of yantras, tantras, yāgas, yoga etc., it is *not* obtained, this I have determined in the Bhakti Ratnākara.”

In the 21st Māhātmya, he has determined the ‘Supreme Religion for the Kali Age’ (*Koleh Parama Dharma Nirupanam*). The following are the siddhantas (verdicts) of that Chapter: -

সত্যত ধ্যান, ত্ৰেতাতে যজ্ঞ, দ্বাপৰতে পূজায়ে যি ফল পাবে কলি-যুগে কীৰ্তন মাত্ৰকে তাক লভে। এতেকে
সংসাৰী জীৱৰ কীৰ্তনৰ পৰে আন পৰম ফল নাই।

“satyata dhyāne, tretāta yagne, dvāparata pujāye yi phala pāve kali-yuge Kirttana mātrake tāka labhe /o/
eteke samsāri jivara kirttanara pare āna parama phala nāi /”

“In Satya, through dhyāna (meditation), in Tretā through yajna and in Dvāpara through pujā, whatever fruit (result) is obtained, one obtains that through only **Kirttana** in the Kali Age [...] Therefore, for the worldly individuals, there is no other Supreme Fruit other than **Kirttana**.”

Again he has said,

বৈষ্ণৱানন্দলহৰীতো কৃষ্ণদেৱে বোলন্ত । হে সখে, কলিত নাম বিনে অনপকাৰে গতি নাই আক নিশ্চয়ে কহিলো ।
জানা বান্ধৱ, আৰো বৈষ্ণৱত হন্তেসে ভক্তি পায়, ভক্তিহৈলেসে মোক লভে, এতেকে বিশেষ কৰি কহিলো ।
কলিয়ুগত বৈষ্ণৱেসে বিষ্ণু ।০।

“Vaisnavānandalaharito Krishnadeve bolanta / he sakhe, kalita nāma bine anaprakāre gati nāi āka
niscaye kahilo / jānā bāndhava, āro Vaisnavata hantese Bhakti pāy, bhaktihoilese Moka labhe, eteke
bisesa kari kahilo / kaliyugata Vaisnavese Visnu /o/”

“In the *Vaisnava Ananda Lahari* also, Lord Krishna has said, “O beloved friend (Arjuna)! In Kali, other
than through the **Name (Nāma)**, there is no gati (emancipation) by other means, this I tell you
certainly. Know further, O friend, that it is only from the **Vaisnava** that Bhakti is obtained; only when
Bhakti is generated one obtains Me; therefore I tell you this chiefly. In the Kali Yuga, *the Vaisnava only
is Visnu.*” ”

Again,

শুকদেৱে মহামনে দুখে বোলন্ত । হে ৰাজা, যাৰ নামক মনুষ্যমাত্ৰ পৰন্ত্ৰে, পিছলন্ত্ৰে, বিৱশ হৈয়াও কীৰ্ত্তন কৰিল-
মাত্ৰকে সন্দে কৰ্মবন্ধ এৰাই পৰম গতিক পাৱে । হা হা হেন প্ৰাণনাথক কলিয়ুগত মনুষ্যসৰে নভজিব ।০। আৰু
দেখা, হে বাপ, ব্ৰহ্মাদি যাৰ চৰণক পূজা কৰে, সমস্ত জগতৰ পৰম গুৰু হেন ভগৱন্তক কলিয়ুগত পাষণ্ডৰ বাকে
ভিন্ন বুদ্ধি হুয়া লোকে সেৱা নকৰিব ।০।

“Sukadeve mahāmane duhkhe bolanta / he rājā, yārā nāmaka manusyamātra parante, pichalante, bivasa
hoiyāo Kirttana karila-mātrake sadye karmabandha erāi parama gatika pāve/ hā hā hena Prānanāthaka
kaliyugata manusyasave nabhajiba /o/ āru dekhā, he bāpa, brahmādi yāra Caranaka pujā kare, samasta
jagatara Parama Guru hena Bhagavantaka kaliyugata pāsandara bākye bhinna buddhi huyā loke sevā
nakariba /o/”

“Sukadeva says this with great sadness in mind, ‘O King (Parikṣita)! He Whose Name, on being merely
sung (uttered) even in falling down, slipping or even in utter helplessness by any creature even faintly
resembling a human being, freeing one from karma-bandha (knot of karma), immediately enables one
to obtain the Highest Goal (Parama Gati), oh! oh! such a Lord of My Life (Prānanātha) Krishna, the
people of Kali-Yuga will not worship. And look! O Bāpa (Father)! He Whose Feet are worshipped even
by Brahmā and the other gods, He Who is the Supreme Preceptor (Parama Guru) of the entire world,
such a Bhagavanta the people of Kali-Yuga, on account of their intellect being misdirected by the
words of the atheists (pāsandas), will not come to worship’.”

The final siddhānta of this Māhātmya: -

এইসৰ বচন অনুসাৰে এক-শৰণ হৈয়া কলিকালত হৰি গুণ-নাম কীৰ্তনেসে ভগৱন্তক পায়, কৰ্ম-ধৰ্মাদিয়ে পুনু
নাপায় আক ভক্তি ৰত্নাকৰত নিৰ্ণয় কৰিলো ।

“eisava bacana anusāre Eka-Sarana hoiyā kalikālata Hari Guna-Nāma Kirttanese Bhagavantaka pāy,
karma-dharmādiye punu nāpāy āka Bhakti Ratnākarata nirnay karilo /”

“From all these statements [given above], in Kali Age, only by taking **Eka-Sarana**, and engaging in the
singing (Kirttana) of the Attributes (Guna) and Names (Nama) of Hari, Bhagavanta is obtained; by
means of karma, dharmas, etc. again, He is *not* obtained, this I have determined in the Bhakti
Ratnākara.”

In the 23rd Māhātmya, the ignorant ones (ajnāni) devoid of Hari-Bhakti (*Hari-Bhakti hina*) have
been censured. A few of the siddhantas are particularly deserving of attention: -

(১) যাতো বেদবাদে মোহিত হৈয়া আপোনাক পণ্ডিত কৰি মানে, বিচাৰত পুনু মূৰ্খ, তথাপি বেদৰ মধুৰবাদে উৎসুক
হৈয়া অজ্ঞানীৰ আগে চতুৰ বচন বোলে ।০।

(1) “yāto bedabāde mohita hoiyā āponāka pandita kari māne, bicārata punu murkha, tathāpi bedara
madhurabāde utsuka hoiyā ajnānira āge catura bacana bole /o/”

“Captivated by Vedavāda, they [the ignorant ones devoid of devotion to Hari] call themselves
panditas (scholars); while in reality they are only fools, still, enthused by the sweet and tempting
words of the Vedas, they will go and speak before the ignorant, their clever, guileful words.”

(২) বৃহৎনাৰদীৰো বচন দেখা । হে মহীপাল, বিষ্ণুভক্তিবহীন হৈলে দ্বিজ হৈতেও চাণ্ডালত কৰি অধম, ভক্তচাণ্ডাল
দ্বিজতো কৰি উত্তম ।

(2) “Brihatnāradīro bacana dekhā / he mahipāla, Viṣṇubhaktibihina hoile dvija hoiteo cāndālata
kari adhama, bhaktacāndāla dvijato kari uttama /”

“See also the statements of the *Brihat Naradi [Purana]*, ‘O Mahipala! The one who is bereft of

devotion to Visnu, that one, be he a dvija, is inferior even to a Candala (outcast) while the Bhakta Candala is superior even to the dvija’.”

(৩) পদ্মপুরাণতো হৰদেৱে পাৰ্বতীক কহিছা । হে প্ৰিয়ে, অভক্ত ব্ৰাহ্মণ চাণ্ডালতো কৰি অধম জানিবা, বৈষ্ণৱ পুনু বৰ্ণবাহু হয় তথাপি তিনিও লোকক পৱিত্ৰ কৰে ।

(3) “Padmapurānato haradeve pārvatika kahichā/ he priye, abhakta brāhmana cāndālato kari adhama jānibā, Vaisnava punu barnabāhya hay tathāpi tinio lokaka pavitra kare”

“In the *Padma Purana* also, Haradeva (Siva) says to Parvati, ‘O my dear, know that the a-bhakta (non-devotee) Brahmana is inferior even to the Candala; the Vaisnava again is outside the ambit of varna (caste), yet he purifies all the three worlds’.”

এই প্ৰকাৰে কৃষ্ণত এক-শৰণ হৈয়া তান ভক্তিযেমে গতি হয় । আনমতে পুনু নহয় ।

“ei prakāre Krishnata Eka-Sarana hoiyā tāna Bhaktiyese gati hay / ānamate punu nahay /”

“In this manner [it is the verdict that], only by taking **Eka-Sarana** in Krishna and doing His Bhakti only, one is delivered; again, one is *not* delivered by other means.”

In the 24th Māhātmya, after discussing about the fate of those who are hostile to the Lord’s Devotion (*Bhagavat Bhakti dvesi*), the siddhānta is given,

হে নৰ-নাৰীলোক, দেখ ওহি প্ৰকাৰে ভগৱন্তৰ বচন প্ৰমাণে এক-শৰণ হৈয়া বৈষ্ণৱৰ নিন্দা এৰি ভক্তি কৰিলেমে ভগৱন্তক পায়, অন্যথা নাপায় আক ভক্তি ৰত্নাকৰত নিৰ্ণয় কৰিলো ।

“he nara-nāriloka, dekha ohi prakāre Bhagavantara bacana pramāne Eka-Sarana hoiyā Boisnavara nindā eri Bhakti karilese Bhagavantaka pāy, anyathā nāpāy āka Bhakti Ratnākarata nirnay karilo /”

“O all men and women! Look! In this manner, according to the proof offered by the Word of Bhagavanta, only by taking **Eka-Sarana** and doing Bhakti, leaving the criticism of the Vaisnavas, one obtains Bhagavanta, otherwise not. This I have determined in the Bhakti-Ratnakara.”

After praising the limbs of the Bhaktas ('Bhaktara Anga Prasamsā'), in the 25th Māhātmya, drawing the attention of all, he has declared: -

এইসৰ বচন অনুসাৰে এক-শৰণ হুয়া হৰিভক্তি কৰিলেহে জন্ম-কৰ্মাদিৰ ফল আৰু ভক্তি বত্বাকৰত নিৰ্ণয় কৰিলো ।

“eisava bacana anusāre Eka-Sarana huyā Haribhakti karilese janma-karmādira phala āka Bhakti Ratnākarata nirnay karilo /”

“According to all these statements, it is only through the taking of **Eka-Sarana** and doing **Hari-Bhakti** that the fruit of all life and action is realized, this I have determined in the Bhakti Ratnakara.”

Censuring the life and activities (*janma-karma*) of persons devoid of Hari-Bhakti ('Hari-Bhaktihinara Janma-Karmādi Nindā') in the 27th Māhātmya, it has been said: -

(১) বৈষ্ণৱানন্দতে কৃষ্ণদেৱে কহন্ত । হে সখে, যদ্যপি মোৰ নাম আছে, গাৰে গাৰে মুখো আছে, তথাপি অজ্ঞানীসৰ ঘোৰ নৰকত পৰে ।

(1) “Vaisnavānandate Krishnadeve kahanta / he sakhe, yadyapi mora Nāma āche, gāve gāve mukho āche, tathāpi ajnānisava ghora narakata pare /”

“There, in the *Vaisnava Ananda [Lahari]* itself, Lord Krishna says, “O Beloved Friend! Although there exists [such a thing as] **My Name** and although along with every body, there comes a mouth, yet the ignorant ones fall into terrible hell’.”

(২) বৃহৎ-নাৰদীপুৰাণতো নাৰদে বোলন্ত । অহো চিত্ৰ, অহো চিত্ৰ, অহো চিত্ৰ, হৰি-নাম থাকন্তেও পুনৰপি সংসাৰতে পৰে ।

(2) “Brihat-Nāradipurānato Nārade bolanta / aho citra, aho citra, aho citra, Hari-Nāma thākanteo punarapi samsārate pare /”

“In the *Brihat-Naradi Purana* also, Narada says, “What an irony! What an irony! What an irony! One falls again into samsāra (trans-migratory existence) even when Hari-Nāma is present!”

(৩) আৰো ভজন থাকোক সেই সেই ভাগ্যবন্ত যদি হৰি ভক্ত হৈলে তাৰ আন ধৰ্ম নকৰিবাব দেখি সেই দুৰ্জন সৰে বেটি অসুয়া কৰে । হা হা নিশ্চয়ে জানিলো ই পাপীসৰ অধোগতি গৈল । হে নৰ-নাৰীসৰ, নাৰদৰ দয়াৰ বচন দেখা, আক জানি এক-শৰণ হৈয়া হৰি-ভক্তি কৰা ।

(3) “āro bhajana thākoka sei sei bhāgyavanta yadi Hari Bhakta hoile tāra āna dharma nakaribāra dekhi sei durjana save bedhi asuyā kare / hā hā niscaye jānilo i pāpisava adhogati goila / he nara-nārisava, Nārādara dāyāra bacana dekhā, āka jāni Eka-Sarana hoiyā Hari-Bhakti karā /”

“ ‘Not to speak of worship, if these wicked people even witness those extremely fortunate ones who have become Devotees of Hari not doing any other dharma, they do hatred against them, surrounding them. Yes! I have realized for sure, these sinners (pāpis) have had their downward fall’. O all men and women! See Narada’s compassionate words! Knowing this, do Bhakti to Hari taking sole-refuge (**Eka-Sarana**) in Him.”

In the 28th Māhātmya, after discussing about the fault of profane-talk (uttering profane words) (‘Brithā Kathana Dosa’), the following siddhanta is given: -

এৰমাদি বচন অনুসাৰে এক-শৰণ হৈয়া কুকথা এৰি কৃষ্ণ-কথা কীৰ্তনেৰে সংসাৰ নিস্তৰি, অন্যথাও নতৰি, আক ভক্তি ৰত্নাকৰত নিৰ্ণয় কৰিলো ।

“evamādi bacana anusāre Eka-Sarana hoiyā kukathā eri Krishna-Kathā Kirttanere samsāra nistari, anyathāo natari, āka Bhakti Ratnākarata nirnaya karilo /”

“From these statements, only by taking **Eka-Sarana** and doing the **Kirttana** (Uttering) of the Kathā (Name) of Krishna, forsaking bad-talk, one is liberated from samsāra; and not in any other way; this I (Sankaradeva) have determined in the Bhakti Ratnakara.”

The siddhanta of the 29th Māhātmya entitled ‘Abhaktara Sanga Nindā’ (Censure of the Company of the Abhaktas): -

এই প্ৰকাৰে এক-শৰণ হৈয়া বিষ্ণু-ভক্তসৰ সুখে সংসাৰ নিস্তৰে ।

“ei prakāre Eka-Sarana hoiyā Visnu-Bhaktasava sukhe samsāra nistare /”

“In this way, by taking **Eka-Sarana**, the Visnu-Bhaktas happily cross samsāra.”

In the ‘Censure of the Rites of Expiation (Prāyascitta)’ (‘Prāyascitta Nindā’), the verdict of the 30th Māhātmya is: -

ইসৰ বচন অনুসাৰে এক-শৰণ হৈয়া হৰি-ভক্তিসে সমস্ত পাপৰ শ্ৰেষ্ঠ প্ৰায়শ্চিত্ত ।

“isava bacana anusāre Eka-Sarana hoiyā Hari-Bhaktise samasta pāpara srestha prāyascitta”

“According to these statements, doing **Eka-Sarana Hari-Bhakti** alone is the Best prāyascitta (expiation) for all sin.”

In the 31st Māhātmya having as its subject the ‘Censure of Pravritti Mārga’ (‘Pravritti Mārgara Nindā’), it is declared: -

প্ৰবৃত্তিপৰা: সন্তো নোত্তমগতিম প্ৰাপ্নুৱন্তি ।

“pravrttiparāh santo nottamagatim prāpnuvanti”

In other words, the man who is pravritti parāyana (one who is inclined to the path of pravritti), even if he be a saint, does *not* attain to the Supreme State. It is only by forsaking the path of pravritti and doing the **bhajana** (single-minded devotion by singing His Glory) of Visnu, *taking Eka-Sarana in Him*, that one obtains the Highest State.

ভাৰতে জন্ম লভি যাৰা এক-শৰণ হৈয়া কৃষ্ণক ভজে তাৰা অনায়াসে সংসাৰ তৰে । -

“Bhārate janma labhi yārā Eka-Sarana hoiyā Krishnaka bhaje tārā anāyāse samsāra tare /” -

“They, who, having obtained birth in the land of Bharata, engage in the **bhajana** of Krishna, taking **Eka-Sarana** in Him, they effortlessly cross samsāra.” -

This only is the verdict of the 33rd Māhātmya entitled ‘Bhāratabhumi Prasamsā’ (‘Praise of the Land of Bhārata).

The ‘Bhakti Adhikārira Bhakti-yoga’ is the 34th Māhātmya. Its verdict:-

এইসৰ বচন অনুসাৰে এক-শৰণ হুয়া ভক্তি-অধিকাৰীসৰে ভক্তিযোগে সংসাৰ তৰে আক ভক্তি ৰত্নাকৰত নিৰ্ণয় কৰিলো ।

“eisava bacana anusāre Eka-Sarana huyā Bhakti-Adhikārisave Bhaktiyoge samsāra tare āka Bhakti Ratnākarata nirnaya karilo /”

“According to these statements, by taking **Eka-Sarana**, the Bhakti-Adhikāris, through Bhakti-Yoga (Sravana-Kirttana), are liberated from samsāra - this I (Sankaradeva) have determined in the Bhakti Ratnakara.”

The 35th Māhātmya is ‘Jnāna-Bhaktiyukta Vairāgya Māhātmya’ (‘Detachment Attended with Knowledge Born of Devotion’). The verdict of it is: -

এইসৰ বচন অনুসাৰে এক-শৰণ হৈয়া বৈৰাগ্য বিনেও কেৱল ভক্তি মাত্ৰকে ভগৱন্তক পায় ।

“eisava bacana anusāre Eka-Sarana hoiyā boirāgya bineo kevala Bhakti mātrake Bhagavantaka pāy /”

“According to these statements, even without vairāgya (detachment) and solely through **Eka-Sarana Bhakti**, one immediately obtains Bhagavanta.”

‘Māyātaranopāya’ (‘Way to Release From Māyā’), the 36th Māhātmya, gives the verdict: -

এইসৰ ভগৱন্তৰ বচন অনুসাৰে এক-শৰণ হুয়া ভগৱন্তৰ কৃপায়ে অনায়াসে মায়াক জানেও তৰেও ।

“eisava Bhagavantara bacana anusāre Eka-Sarana huyā Bhagavantara kripāye anāyāse māyāka jāneo tareo /”

“From these words of Bhagavanta (God), by taking **Eka-Sarana** in Him, *one gains the Lord’s favor*

and is [thus] able to effortlessly understand māyā (nescience) and [also] liberate oneself from it.”

In the 37th Māhātmya ‘Srimad-Bhāgavata Māhātmya’ (‘The Glory of the Srimad-Bhāgavata’), several significant verdicts are found: -

(১) আন শাস্ত্রসৰ ঋষিলোকে কৰে, এতেকে তাত আশয়, আসক্তি, ভ্ৰান্তি, প্রমাদ এই চাৰি দোষ থাকে । আৰু যাতো শ্ৰী-নাৰায়ণে আপুনি সংক্ষেপে প্ৰথমে কৰিলা এতেকে আত সি দোষ নাই ।

(1) “āna sāstrasava rishiloke kare, eteke tāta āsay, āsakti, bhrānti, pramād ei cāri dosa thāke / āru yāto Sri-Nārāyane āpuni samksepe prathame karilā eteke āta si dosa nāi /”

“The other sastras (religious texts) are authored by rishis (scholars), therefore, in those texts, the four blemishes (dosas) of āsay, āsakti, bhrānti and pramād are always present. But, since **Sri-Narayana** (God) Himself had originally created this work [the Srimad-Bhāgavata], in summary, therefore those faults are not present within it.”

(২) সকলে বেদ ভৈল কল্পতৰু বৃক্ষ, তাৰ ফল ভাগৱত । ই পুনু পূৰ্বত বৈকুণ্ঠত আছিল । তেৰে লোকক কৃপায়ে পদ্ম-কল্পত শ্ৰী-নাৰায়ণে ব্ৰহ্মাক দিলন্ত । ব্ৰহ্মায়ে নাৰদত কহিলা, নাৰদে আনি মোক দিলা, ময়ো শুক মুখত নিৰেদিলা । শুক মুখত হন্তে শিষ্য-প্ৰশিষ্যাди দ্বাৰে অখণ্ডে পৃথিৱীত নামিল ।

(2) “sakale veda bhoila kalpataru briksa, tāra phala Bhāgavata / i punu purbata Vaikunthata āchila / teve lokaka kripāye padma-kalpata Sri-Nārāyane Brahmāka dilanta / Brahmāye Nāradata kahilā, Nārade āni moka dilā, mayo Suka mukhata nivedilo / Suka mukhata hante sisya-prasisyādi dvāre akhande prithivita nāmila /”

“The entire Veda has become, as it were, the Wish-Yielding Tree (kalpataru); the fruit (phala) of it is the **Bhagavata**. Previously, it was in Vaikuntha. Then, out of His extreme compassion for the [people of the] world, **Lord Sri-Narayana**, in the Padma-Kalpa, gave it to Brahma. Brahma spoke it to Narada and Narada, bringing it, gave it to me (Vyasa); I also imparted it in the mouth of **Suka**. From Suka’s mouth, falling (down) through the branches and sub-branches of disciples, this fruit [of Vaikuntha], in its original, undivided form, landed on earth.”

(৩) আত কেবল নাম মাত্র প্রধান ।

(3) “āta kevala Nāma mātra pradhāna /”

“In it only the **Lord’s Name** is the Central Thing.”

The final opinion of this Māhātmya is given: -

এইসৰ বচন প্ৰমাণে এক-শৰণ হুয়া শ্ৰী-ভাগৱতৰ শ্ৰৱণ ইচ্ছা মাত্ৰকে পৰম সুখে সংসাৰ তৰে । আক ভক্তি
বত্বাকৰত নিৰ্ণয় কৰিলো ।

“eisava bacana pramāne Eka-Sarana huyā Sri-Bhāgavatara sravana icchā mātrake parama sukhe
samsāra tare / āka Bhakti Ratnākārata nirnaya karilo /”

“On the proof of these statements, taking **Eka-Sarana** and merely harboring the wish of listening to the
[recitation] of the *Srimad-Bhagavata*, a person crosses the ocean of samsāra in Supreme Joy, this I
(Sankaradeva) have determined in the Bhakti Ratnakara.”

The 38th chapter entitled ‘Yama Niyama’ is the final Māhātmya of the Bhakti-Ratnākara grantha
(book). Of it also, it is important to pay especial attention to certain siddhantas. For instance,

জানা উদ্ধৱ, বন্ধ-মোক্ষ জানিলেহে পণ্ডিত, দেহাদিত অহং-বুদ্ধি যাৰ সেইসে মূৰ্খ, শাস্ত্ৰ নজানিলে মূৰ্খ নোহে ।

“jānā Uddhava, bandha-moksa jānilese pandita, dehādita aham-buddhi yāra seise murkha, sāstra
najānile murkha nohe /”

“Know, O Uddhava! The one who is in knowledge of bandha (bondage) and moksa (liberation) alone is
pandita (scholar), he who develops aham-buddhi (feeling of I-ness) in the [gross] body etc. alone is the
murkha (fool); one is not a murkha if one does not know the sāstras.”

এইসৰ বচন অনুসাৰে এক-শৰণ হৈয়া শম-দম বিভাগ নজানি ভক্তি কৰিলেও সংসাৰ তৰে । বিভাগ জানি
কৰিলে কি কৈম ।

“eisava bacana anusāre Eka-Sarana hoiyā sama-dama bibhāga najāni Bhakti karileo samsāra tare /
bibhāga jāni karile ki koim //”

“From these statements, [it is concluded that], even without knowing about the categories of sama, dama, etc., if a person does Bhakti to the Lord taking **Eka-Sarana** in Him, he is released from samsāra; knowing these divisions, if one does [Eka-Sarana Bhakti], then, oh! what will I say.”

মহাপুরুষ শ্ৰী শংকৰ ঈশ্বৰে
ইদানীক উচচ কৰি হৰি বোল হৰি ॥

“Mahāpurusa Sri Sankara isa viracitam Bhakti-Ratnākara grantha samāpti bhoila /
idānik ucca kari Hari bola Hari //”

“The Mahapurusa Sri Sankara composed Bhakti-Ratnākara grantha hereby comes to its finis.
Now, please utter out aloud ‘Hari, Hari’.”

From this discussion, it is proved that, Bhakti-vāda as well as **Eka-Sarana** is the *mula tattva* (main essence) of the *Mahā-Bhāgavata* which [in turn] is the essence of the four Vedas.

Essence of the Vedas → Mahā-Bhāgavata
Essence of the Mahā-Bhāgavata → Eka-Sarana Bhakti

Srimanta Sankaradeva, Sri Sri Madhavadeva, Sri Sri Dāmodaradeva – the religion propagated by all three Mahāpurusas is ‘*Eka-Sarana Hari-Nāma Dharma*’ or ‘*Nāma Dharma*’ spread and radiated by **Krishna-Surya** Himself.

A few utterances of **Gopālacarana Dvija**, the author of the ‘Kathā Bhakti-Ratnākara’, are quoted here: -

মহা অগাধ শাস্ত্ৰ, মহাপুরুষ শংকৰ ঈশ্বৰে সংগ্ৰহ কৰিলা । আৰু বচনাত বঢ়া-টুটা যি দোষ হৈয়াছে তাক ক্ষমা কৰিবে লাগে । মই মহামূঢ়ে দান্তে তৃণ কৰি প্ৰাৰ্থনা কৰো । যাতো বেহাৰ নগৰত দেখি শ্ৰী দামোদৰ ক্ষেত্ৰত পৰম ভাগৱত সৰে শোভিত দেখি সেই স্থানত বসি গোপালচৰণ নাম মঞি অধমে নিবন্ধিলো ।

“mahā agādh sāstra, Mahāpurusa **Sri Sankara Isvare** samgraha karilā / āra racanāta badhā-tutā

yi dosa hoiyāche tāka ksamā karibe lāge / mai mahā mudhe dānte trina kari prārthanā karo / yāto Behār
nagarata dekhi Sri Dāmodara ksetrata Parama Bhāgavata save sobhita dekhi sehi sthānata basi
Gopālacarana nāma maii adhame nibandhilo/ ”

“A scripture, supremely great; **the Lord Mahapurusa Sri Sankara** had compiled it. Whatever
faults of omission and commission (badhā-tutā) have occurred in its composition, those may kindly be
forgiven. This extremely foolish one, taking a straw in my teeth, pray to all of you thus. Since the
sacred place of Sri Dāmodara, in the city of (Koch) Behāra, is adorned by the Parama Bhāgavatas,
therefore, sitting at that [sacred] place, I, of the name of Gopālacarana, the most inferior one, have
[thus] composed it”.

[Source: - 'BHAKTI-RATNĀKARAR ĀDHĀRAT EKA-SARANA TATTVA', 'Vaisnava Pandit Sonaram Chutiya Racanawali',
Srimanta Sankaradeva Sangha, 1998;

*Although we have tried our best to faithfully adhere to the original, we admit that it is impossible to convey the spirit
of the original in the case of writings of this stature. As such, our translation is most imperfect and we seek forgiveness
from all, including the author, for any lapse on our part – translator]*

[For a brief background, see http://www.atributetosankaradeva.org/eka_sarana.htm]

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