

## Ramakrishna's Ecstasy

G D C D  
 You are to me Lord what wings are to a fly-ing bird  
 C D G Dn  
 You are to me Lord what wings are to a fly-ing bird - Ha-re  
 G D C D  
 Krish-na Krish-na Krish-na Ha-re Ha-re Ha-re Ha-re  
 G D C D Em  
 Ha-re Ra-ma Ra-ma Ra-ma Ha-re Ha-re Ha-re Ha-re

Words traditional Hindi  
 Music and Dance W. & A. van der Zwan © 2016

*You are to me Lord  
 What wings are to a flying bird  
 Hare Krishna Krishna Krishna  
 Hare Hare Hare Hare  
 Hare Rama Rama Ram  
 Hare Hare Hare Hare*

### Background

The original inspiration for this dance comes from James Burgess' 'Flying Bird'. The lyrics seem a commentary to the Sufi saying that we need two wings to fly (hence the heart with wings): the wing of Love (*ma'bud* or '*ishq*') and the wing of Understanding (*marifat*, gnosis). However, these words come from the singing of Swami Vivekananda, addressing Lord Krishna. Inspired by this source and for the mantric feeling, we added as a refrain a form of the Maha-Mantra ('great mantra') to the English lyrics.

### Maha-Mantra

The traditional Mahamantra consists of the word HARE and the names KRISHNA and RAMA.

*Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare  
 Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare*

As the Bhagavad Gita tells us, Krishna descends to earth in times of need (when dharma is in decay, Bhagavad Gita 4: 7). Rama is the avatar preceding Krishna. However, for the Krishnites, devotees of Lord Krishna, Lord Krishna is not an avatar but the personification (*ishvara*) of the One, the divine principle from which the Indian pantheon emanates.

Translating the Mahamantra offers different possibilities:

- Hare The vocative form of *Hari*, another name of Vishnu meaning 'the one who removes illusion'. Hare is generally translated as the energy (or *shakti*) of God, so in this context it can also be the vocative form of *Hara*, referring to Radha, Krishna's *shakti*.
- Krishna 'The dark one', the eighth incarnation of Vishnu.
- Rama 'The charming one', the seventh incarnation of Vishnu, honored in the great epos of the Ramayana. Rama can also be seen as a contraction of RADHAMARANA (the beloved of Radha, so Krishna) and thus by Krishna devotees is used as synonym to Krishna.

From the above, the Mahamantra can be translated as: 'O Krishna, O energy of Krishna, please engage me in Your service' or 'O Krishna, You who all all-attractive and all-pleasure'.

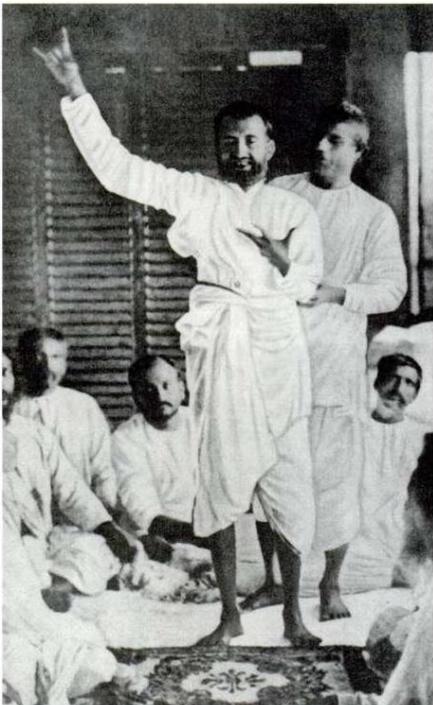
### **The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna**

The great Indian saint Sri Ramakrishna (1836 – 1886) was a bhakti devotee of Kali (the female principle of Shiva), who also immersed in non-dualism (advaita). He thus grew both the wing of Love (*bhakti yoga*, essentially a dualistic faith, placing the divine outside of oneself) and of Understanding (*jana yoga* in the non-dualistic form of Advaita).

His main disciple Swami Vivekananda (1863 – 1902) was the first to bring Indian spirituality to the West (World Parliament of Religions, Chicago, 1893) in the form of Vedanta.

The Gospel of Ramakrishna, written in Bengali and translated into English by Sri Ramakrishna's students (he himself could read nor write), offers us a detailed look into the life of this remarkable saint:

Ramakrishna and the devotees are greatly moved by the song. The Master and Rakhhal shed tears of love. Narendra [the later Swami Vivekananda] is intoxicated with the love of the gopis of Braja for their Sweet-heart, Sri Krishna, and sings:



*O Krishna! Beloved! You are mine.  
What shall I say to You, O Lord?  
What shall I ever say to You?  
Only a woman am I,  
And never fortune's favourite;*

*I do not know what to say.  
You are the mirror for the hand,  
And You are the flower for the hair.  
O Friend, I shall make a flower of You  
And wear You in my hair;  
Under my braids I shall hide You,  
Friend!  
No one will see You there.*

*You are the betel-leaf for the lips,  
The sweet collyrium for the eyes;  
O Friend, with You I shall stain my lips,  
With You I shall paint my eyes.  
You are the sandal-paste for the body;*

*You are the necklace for the neck.  
I shall anoint myself with You,  
My fragrant Sandal-paste,  
And soothe my body and my soul.  
I shall wear You, my lovely Necklace,  
Here about my neck,  
And You will lie upon my bosom,  
Close to my throbbing heart.*

*You are the Treasure in my body;  
You are the Dweller in my house.  
You are to me, O Lord,  
What wings are to the flying bird,  
What water is to the fish.*

The Gospel of Ramakrishna, volume 2  
(The Master at Cossipore, December 11,  
written December 23, 1885)

The general Indian pattern is to worship Lord Krishna as a youth, playing with the as Gopala (cowboy) making merry with the Gopi's (cowgirls). As the lyrics of Vivekananda's song are from the perspective of the Gopi, the focus in this dance is not making merry (*rasa lila*, divine play), but devotion (*bhakti*).

### **Dance description**

1. *You are to*
2. *me Lord, what*
3. *Wings are to a flying bird*
4. *You are to*
5. *me Lord, what*
6. *Wings are to a flying bird*
7. *Hare Krishna Krishna Krishna, Hare*
8. *Hare Hare Hare*
9. *Hare Rama Rama Ram, Hare*
10. *Hare Hare Hare*

Dancers stand in circle, holding hands and facing center.

1. Take four steps (r-L) in in rhythm of the music on YOU ARE raising arms
2. Place hands on heart, taking four steps back (R-L), starting on ME
3. Turn clockwise in stately manner, opening arms as wings, starting on WINGS, end up facing partner
4. Hold hands with partner (heart with wings hold) and make half turn clockwise.
5. Stand on place, releasing hands, placing them on the heart on ME
6. Turn clockwise in rhythm on WINGS, opening arms, ending up facing center
7. Hold hands, side-stepping clockwise, massaging the heart by moving the upper body zikr-style from left to right
8. Turn anti-clockwise, hand receptive (moon), ending in Namaste on the last -RE
9. Hold hands, stepping anti-clockwise, raising hands from elbow in Ram-mudra

10. Turn clockwise, hands in Ram-mudra ending facing center to start dance again.