

Jaiiva-dharma

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This book, Jaiva-dharma, is a guide for those fortunate souls whose hearts yearn to attain the highest platforms of kṛṣṇa-prema.

As such, it is the ecstatic endeavour of the author, Śrīla Bhaktivinode Thākura, to fulfill the desire of his beloved Lord, Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

In Chapter Two, the Thākura defines jaiva-dharma, “The unblemished pristine love for the Supreme Absolute Whole experienced by the minute particle of spiritual substance—the jīva—is defined as jaiva-dharma.”

To bestow this unblemished krsna-prema, transcendental love of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, upon the fallen souls of the material creation was, in part, the mission of the Golden Avatāra, Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

Ecstatic love is the intrinsic nature of the relationship between the all-attractive Supreme Person, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and His dear eternal servants, the jīvas, the individual souls.

However, just as the unlimited Lord is supremely independent, the tiny jīvas, partaking of His nature, are minutely independent.

The free exercise of this minute independence is a prerogative bestowed by the merciful Lord upon His servants and finds its defining characteristic in the choice between selfless service to the Lord and selfish service by the jīva to his own self.

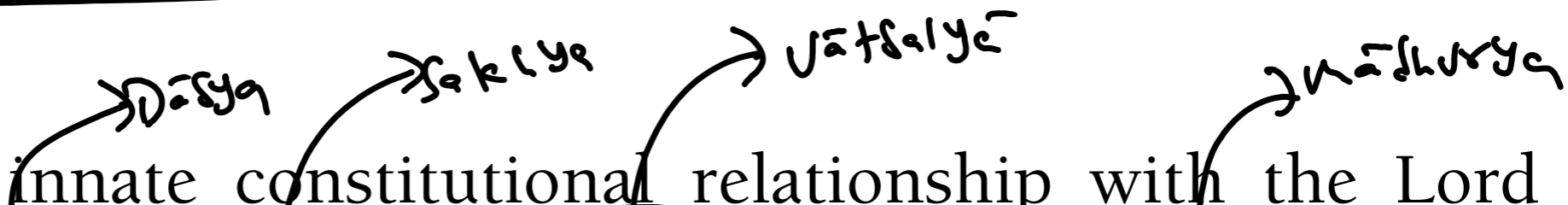
These mutually exclusive alternatives define the subsequent spheres of activity of the jīva.

Those fortunate souls who surrender to the Lord live eternally under the shelter of His internal spiritual energy, engaged in His ecstatic pastimes with hearts that know only pure transcendental love.

→ नरक सिद्धि

Ever attentive to the satisfaction of the Lord and their fellow servants, they eternally perceive and interact with Him and His associates, immersed in unlimited intoxicating happiness.

They attain their innate constitutional relationship with the Lord as His transcendental servants, friends, parental figures, and conjugal lovers; thus their jaiva-dharma, intrinsic nature, of ecstatic attachment to Godhead finds unrestricted expression in the union of love with the Lord in His transcendental abode.



The text is annotated with four handwritten Odia words and arrows pointing to specific terms in the paragraph above:

- ଦାସ୍ୟ (Dāsya) points to "transcendental servants"
- ସାକ୍ଷୀ (Sākṣī) points to "friends"
- ପିତୃଭାଗ୍ୟ (Pitṛbhāgya) points to "parental figures"
- ସଂହାରୀ (Saṅhārī) points to "conjugal lovers"

The same cannot be said for those souls who reject the Lord and His service; for them there is no station in the spiritual world.

Māyādevī, the great mistress of the mundane universes manifested by the external material energy of the Lord, beckons such souls and covers their spiritual nature with the cloth of the subtle mental body and the outer dress of the gross material body.

Now forgetful of the Lord and their natural spiritual relationship with Him, they are subjugated by the illusory potency and consider themselves a product of the inferior material nature.

	deha dhama	JaiVa dhama
ātma buddhi	body	Vaiṣṇava dēśa Vaiṣṇavās.
Sva buddhi ijya buddhi	wife, husband, house place of birth	Vaiṣṇavās congregatō.

In a mood of rebellion against the supremacy of the Lord and thereby their own innate spiritual constitution, they consider their self to be the external material body and items in relationship to the body to be their rightful possessions.

tīrtṭha
buddhi | water → go
← wash hrs
sth | Vaiṣṇavās engage
in bathing & chantō

With such a false conclusion, fear and anxiety pervade their consciousness as they consider death to be the inevitable all-devouring end; thus, they launch into material life attempting to control and enjoy before the final curtain falls.

Pushed and pulled by ^{दुष्ट}repulsion and ^{शुभ}attraction, in the alien environment of the mundane energy, in bewilderment, they foolishly fear no sinful activity and become increasingly mad after material enjoyment.

However, they are bound by the laws of karma, and when the time comes their particular mixture of pious and impious activity defines their next arena of attempted material enjoyment: They find themselves reborn in another material body.

Thus, their karmic reactions sometimes heave them up to Paradise in the higher, more subtle material planetary systems or sometimes throw them down to Hell.

Ignorant of their previous births, the forlorn jīvas rotate ceaselessly through the multifarious bodies of the lower material creation.

Sometimes they attain birth as a human, sometimes as an animal, sometimes as a tree, and sometimes as an insect.

Attaining rebirth within a human body, the jīva may enquire into the ultimate truth of existence, but still harbouring a rebellious mentality he becomes swayed by philosophies that deny service in surrender to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

Lamentably, the jīva becomes absorbed in voidism and impersonalism, which define the infinitesimal jīva to be the ultimate and highest reality.

In such madness, the jīva offensively considers himself the Supreme; thus, degrading himself even further than he did by previous purely sensual pursuits.

With misery and ignorance as his constant companions, the jīva thus continually sojourns throughout the practically unlimited species of material life.

How can this cycle be broken? How can the jīva uncover the lost treasure within his heart? How can he uncover his now dormant jaiva-dharma, eternal ecstatic kṛṣṇa-prema, transcendental love of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Śrī Kṛṣṇa?

To answer these questions, Śrī Kṛṣṇa descends periodically from the spiritual realm, either in His original form or in the form of one of His multifarious avatāras, to manifest His pastimes within the prison house of His external material creation.

The Vedas, the grand handbooks of material and spiritual knowledge, inform us that time in the material world moves in a cyclic continuum of four ages known as yugas.

The present age is known as Kali-yuga, beginning five thousand years ago when the highest manifestation of the Supreme Person, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, returned to his transcendental abode after displaying His pastimes of transcendence at Mathurā-maṇḍala, India.

The material conditions vary with each yuga, so in each yuga an avatāra appears to teach the particular spiritual practice that is most effective for that age in uncovering the innate jaiva-dharma of the fallen souls.

These divine manifestations are known as yuga-avatāras.

In the Śrīmad Bhāgavatam, the book described as the ripened fruit of the desire tree that is the Vedas, the yuga-avatāra for Kali-yuga is described:

kr̥ṣṇa-varṇam tviṣākṛṣṇam sāṅgopāṅgāstra-pārṣadam
yajñaiḥ saṅkīrtana-prāyair yajanti hi su-medhasaḥ

“In the age of Kali, intelligent persons perform congregational chanting to worship the incarnation of Godhead who constantly sings the names of Kṛṣṇa. Although His complexion is not blackish, He is Kṛṣṇa Himself. He is accompanied by His associates, servants, weapons and confidential companions.” (11.5.32)

This kali-yuga-avatāra is Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Mahāprabhu, who advented Himself in Śrī Māyāpura-dhāma, Navadvīpa, West Bengal, India, on the Phālgunī Pūrṇimā evening in the year 1407 Śakābda (corresponding to February 1486) as the full moon arose under an eclipse.

His life and teachings are most cogently described in four books: the Caitanya-bhāgavata of Śrīla Vṛndāvana dāsa Thākura, the Caitanya-caritāmṛta of Śrīla Kṛṣṇa dāsa Kavirāja, the Caitanya-maṅgala of Locana dāsa Thākura, and the Śrī Caitanya-carita of Śrīla Murāri Gupta.

In second chapter of the Caitanya-bhāgavata of Śrīla Vṛndāvana dāsa Thākura, we find description of the birth of the kali-yuga-avatāra, Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Mahāprabhu, during the simultaneous lunar eclipse:

- “Upon seeing the lunar eclipse, the residents of Navadvīpa began to loudly chant harināma and make other auspicious sounds.
- “Endless teeming millions congregated on the banks of the Ganges for holy ablutions and rent the air with loud chanting of the Lord’s name.
- “All the devotees experienced deep exhilaration and exclaimed, ‘Such great joy! Maybe the Supreme Lord, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, is making His appearance.’

- “The only sound within the universe was the all-prevailing chanting of, “Hari! Hari! Hari! Hari!”
- “Amidst the resounding adulations, the Lord and the very soul of the universe appeared as the son of Śrīmatī Śacīdevī.
- “Rāhu eclipsed the moon; the ocean of the Holy Name inundated Navadvīpa, drowning and subduing the darkness of Kali-yuga. The Supreme Lord was manifest!”

From the moment of His appearance, Śrī Caitanya revealed His mission. He would establish the fallen souls of Kali-yuga in their innate jaiva-dharma by inaugurating the hari-nāma saṅkīrtana-yajña, the transcendental sacrifice of the congregational chanting of Śrī Kṛṣṇa-nāma.

Herein lies a most esoteric aspect of the avatāra of Śrī Caitanya. Śrī Caitanya is Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself, however intrigued by the position of His greatest devotee, Śrīmatī Rādhārānī, Śrī Kṛṣṇa clothes Himself in Her mood and complexion, entering the mood of devotion to Himself.

Thus, He fulfils His desire to experience the role of a devotee, taste the nectar of His own service, and understand the qualities of Himself which so attract His devotees.

Thus internally absorbed in the divine nectar of kṛṣṇa-prema, transcendental love of Godhead, He becomes anxious to distribute this intoxicating beverage to all lost souls without discrimination, thus bestowing upon them their jaiva-dharma.

Śrī Caitanya declares in the Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Ādi-līlā 3.19-20:

yuga-dharma pravartāimu nāma-saṅkīrtana
cāri bhāva-bhakti diyā nācāmu bhuvana
āpani karimu bhakta-bhāva aṅgikāre
āpani ācari' bhakti śikhāimu sabāre

“I shall personally inaugurate the religion of the age—nāma-
saṅkīrtana, the congregational chanting of Śrī Kṛṣṇa-nāma. I shall
make the world dance in ecstasy, realizing the four mellows of
loving devotional service. I shall accept the role of a devotee, and I
shall teach devotional service by practicing it Myself.”

In this mission, the Lord is accompanied by four intimate associates—Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu, Śrī Advaita Ācārya Prabhu, Śrī Gadādhara Paṇḍita and Śrī Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita—who together with the Lord form the pañca-tattva, the five aspects of the Absolute Truth.

Śrī Caitanya though renowned in His early life as the greatest of scholars, Śrī Nimāi Paṇḍita, left us only one composition, the Śrī Śikṣāṣṭakam.

However, within these eight verses of four lines, all the transcendental truths of the Vaisnava philosophy taught by Śrī Caitanya are contained in a highly condensed form.

The Lord ordered His disciples, the foremost of which were known as the Six Gosvāmīs, to write books expanding and propounding these truths, a task which the followers of Śrī Caitanya have continued to the present day.

What then is the weapon of Srī Caitanya, as mentioned in the Srīmad-Bhāgavatam śloka above?

In chapter two of the Caitanya-bhāgavata Śrīla Vṛndāvana dāsa Thākura describes the Lord's weapon, which became evident from the moment of His birth:

- “His beautifully brilliant golden lustre overshadowed the sun's shining rays and dazzled my eyes. His large, blossoming, softly upturned, lotus eyes defied description.
- “His exquisite complexion was the colour of glowing sandalwood paste. His expansive breast was decorated with a gently swaying wildflower garland and His radiant, moon-like face was pleasing, cooling and comforting. His elongated arms reached down to His knees.

- “The Golden Moon, Srī Caitanya, had arisen as sounds of great joy filled the air. His beauty humbled a million cupids, and at His own dancing and singing, He smiled.
- “His lovely face and charming eyes added to the marks of divinity upon His transcendental person; His feet were marked with the auspicious signs of the flag and lightning. His entire exquisite form was decorated to enchant the minds of everyone.”

In this incarnation, the Lord’s infinite transcendental beauty would attract all souls and sever their attachments to the material world, enchanting them with kṛṣṇa-prema.

Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, one of the Six Gosvāmīs wrote as recorded in the Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya 19.53:

namo mahā-vadānyāya kṛṣṇa-prema-pradāya te
kṛṣṇāya kṛṣṇa-caitanya-nāmne gaura-tviṣe namaḥ

“I offer my respectful obeisances unto the Supreme Lord, Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya, who is more magnanimous than any other avatāra, even Kṛṣṇa Himself, because He is bestowing freely what no one else has ever given—pure love of Kṛṣṇa.”

In Kali-yuga, the condition of human society is more degraded than at any other time in the cycle of ages; however, the Vedic sages glorify Kali-yuga as the best of ages since in this age the most magnanimous avatāra, Śrī Caitanya, has appeared.

One should understand the nature of Śrī Caitanya's compassion: He gives the most degraded souls (the residents of Kali-yuga) the highest attainment (kṛṣṇa-prema) with the most sublime and simple practice (the congregational chanting of the Holy Name).

Śrī Caitanya, the son of Śrī Jagannātha Miśra, a learned brāhmaṇa from Sylhet, exhibited His transcendental pastimes for forty-eight years and then disappeared in the year 1455 Śākābda (1534) at Purī in Orissa.

The first twenty-four years the Lord exemplified household life. He was the devoted son of His mother, Śrī Sacīdevī, a daughter of Śrīla Nīlāmbara Cakravartī, the great learned scholar of Navadvīpa, and married the most beautiful Śrī Lakṣmīpriyā.

At that time, Navadvīpa was the centre of learning in all India and even in His childhood the Lord, then known as Śrī Nimāi Paṇḍita, was unquestionably recognised as the crest jewel of scholars when he defeated in debate the great Kashmir scholar named Keśava Kāśmīrī.

While the Lord was away travelling and teaching, his first wife, Śrī Lakṣmīpriyā, unable to bear His separation, left this world. At the request of His mother, the Lord married again in great pomp and ceremony to the divine Śrī Viṣṇupriyā.

Displaying to the world the necessity of taking a spiritual master, the Lord was initiated by Śrī Īśvara Purī, and from this point progressively changed from Nimāi, the unconquerable paṇḍita, to Nimāi, the devotee of the Supreme Personality, Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

Sri Sacīmātā had had eight daughters before Nimāi was born and all of them had expired at an early age.

Śrī Viśvarūpa, Nimāi's elder brother, soon left hearth and home to become a wandering sannyāsī and Nimāi felt increasingly drawn to take this direction in life, the surrender of everything in devotion to the Supreme Lord.

When Śrī Jagannātha Miśra departed this world, Nimāi was the only support for His mother and new wife, however the call of a life totally dedicated to the service of Śrī Kṛṣṇa was too strong and at the age of twenty-four the Lord shaved off His beautiful locks to take sannyāsa.

His sannyāsa guru was Śrī Keśava Bhāratī, who bestowed upon the Lord the sannyāsa name, Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya.

After taking sannyāsa, the Lord made His headquarters at Jagannātha Purī at the request of His mother, Śrī Śacīdevī, and was based there for the remaining twenty-four years of His life.

For six years of this time, the Lord travelled widely throughout India, particularly in the South. He met all the big religious teachers of the time and in debate with them established pure devotion to Śrī Kṛṣṇa as the sublime goal and necessity for all souls.

This He did upon the basis of the Bhagavad-gītā and the Śrīmad Bhāgavatam, the teachings of which He also propagated widely by practical demonstration, thus becoming known as Mahāprabhu, the great teacher.

In this way, the august hari-nāma saṅkīrtana movement was established.