

Hari-Nāma-Cintāmaṇi

The Touchstone of the Holy- Name

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Chapter – 3

Nāmābhāsa

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gadāi gaurāṅga jaya jāhnavā-jīvana
sītādvaita jaya śrīvāsādi bhakta-jana

- Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu mercifully lifted Haridāsa up with His own hands and said, "Listen, Haridāsa, to My words. Now explain in detail the meaning of nāmābhāsa.
- If one thoroughly understands nāmābhāsa, one's chanting of the holy name will become pure.
- Then, by the power of that pure chanting, he will end his material existence.
- The holy name, like the sun, dispels the darkness of illusion.

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- However, sometimes clouds or mist cover the sun from the viewer so that only a portion of light comes through.
- In the same way, when ignorance and anarthas predominate, the sun of the holy name becomes covered and only a portion of the full effect of the name is felt.
- Therefore, in some cases, the holy name will appear in full force in the heart of the chanter, but in other cases clouds of ignorance and anarthas will minimize the effect of the name on the chanter.

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- "What is ignorance? Ignorance is of three types.
- If one does not know the true spiritual nature of the holy name which one has accepted, this ignorance of the name, like mist, leads one into darkness.
- Secondly, a person ignorant that Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Lord will take to worship of the demigods and the path of material piety.
- Thirdly, one who is ignorant of the transcendental nature of his own self as an infinitesimal part of Kṛṣṇa and His world, takes shelter of the world of impermanence and illusion; thus he will remain eternally in ignorance."

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- When the Lord had finished, Haridāsa said, "Today I am most fortunate, for from my mouth the Supreme Lord Himself, Śrī Caitanya, will hear about the holy name.
- "Haridāsa first explained about ignorance:
- "Knowledge means knowing Kṛṣṇa is the Lord, that the living entities are His servants, and that the material world is a nonconscious gross manifestation or by-product of the Lord.
- The person who does not know clearly the nature of these principles and their relationship, lives under the shadow of ignorance.
- This is one cause of nāmābhāsa, or covering of the sun of the pure holy name, by which its full effects cannot be felt.

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- "Actually, the mist of ignorance simply covers the individual living entity's eye in a localized position.
- Just as the sun becomes invisible only from the relative position of the individual under the cloud, but is never really covered.
- So the holy name is never covered, for it is nondifferent from Kṛṣṇa, and eternally transcendental and pure.
- The full effects are diminished for those people who have over their eyes the cloud of anarthas and the mist of ignorance.
- "What are anarthas?"
- These are classified as thirst for material objects (asat-tṛṣṇā), miserliness of the heart (hṛdaya-daurbalya) and offense (aparādha).

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- "The category of thirst for material objects is divided thus: craving for material objects in this world, craving for heavenly sense pleasures in the next life, desire for mystic yoga powers, and the desire for liberation in Brahman.
- Weakness of heart may be analysed as attachment to trifling things unrelated to Kṛṣṇa, deceit, envy of someone else's progress, and longing for position and fame.
- Offense may be divided into offenses to the holy name, offenses to Kṛṣṇa Himself (sevāparādha), offenses to Kṛṣṇa's devotees, and offenses to other living entities.
- By these anarthas, the influence of the holy name becomes obstructed and the full transcendental nature of the name is not manifested.

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- "The living entity will continue under the shadow of nāmābhāsa as long as he is ignorant of sambandha-tattva, the basic facts concerning the jīva, God and the material nature, and their mutual relationship.
- However, when the serious student takes shelter of a bona fide guru, by force of his effective spiritual practice he can remove the obstructions blocking the sun of the holy name.
- When the clouds and mist go away, the brilliant sun of the name becomes visible and bestows upon the devotee the treasure of love of God.
- After the bona fide guru gives sambandha-jñāna, he instructs the disciple on the practice of culturing the holy name (sādhana-bhakti).

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- This is called abhidheya or process. By this specific process the name will show its influence and drive out the anarthas.
- Finally, the jīva achieves the goal of life—love of God—and in that position he continues his performance of chanting the holy name in full spiritual bliss (prema).
- "The ignorance of correct knowledge is explained as follows.
- The living entity takes shelter of the bona fide guru and with genuine faith receives the correct knowledge about Kṛṣṇa, the spirit soul, material nature and the relationship of the three, according to scripture.
- Kṛṣṇa is the eternal Lord, and the living entities are His eternal servants, linked to the Lord by the bond of love (prema).

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- This relationship of jīva to God in prema-bhakti is also eternal. This is the living entity's constitutional nature, which has only to be uncovered.
- "However, when the jīva forgets that he is the eternal servant of Kṛṣṇa, he comes into the material world looking for happiness.
- But this universe of illusion is a prison house for the jīvas, acting as the remedial or reformatory process by punishing the jīvas for turning away from Kṛṣṇa.
- The material world is meant as a place of purification.

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- "By the mercy of the pure Vaiṣṇava devotees of the Lord, if the jīva takes up Kṛṣṇa's name with correct knowledge of sambandha, he will certainly attain the great treasure of prema, the perfectional activity of the living entity.
- At that time, even liberation of merging into the Lord's effulgence becomes detestable.
- But as long as the transcendental knowledge of sambandha is not accepted, the anarthas and ignorance must remain, and the person will continue on the platform of nāmābhāsa.
- Though the person chants, the effect is limited.

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- "However, even chanting in the nāmābhāsa stage is considered to be very auspicious.
- It is considered the chief of pious activities, for by the accumulation of nāmābhāsa activity one eventually gains faith to accept devotional service properly.
- Nāmābhāsa is considered higher than the activities of yoga, sacrifice, varṇāśrama rules, austerities, etc., because it will lead to the path of pure bhakti.
- The processes of yoga, austerities, etc. unless mixed with some activities of bhakti, will never lead to bhakti.

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- "What are the effects of chanting in nāmābhāsa?"
- By chanting in nāmābhāsa all sinful effects are destroyed and one can attain liberation from the material world.
- All the effects of Kali-yuga are overcome.
- By chanting at this stage, all anxieties will go and peace can be obtained.
- Evil influences of ghosts, demons, spirits and unfavorable planets are also nullified.
- Even the residents of hellish planets can achieve liberation by chanting in nāmābhāsa, for nāmābhāsa destroys the effects of sinful activities already committed (prārabdha-karma).

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- For these reasons, nāmābhāsa is even more powerful than the Vedas and all holy places. It surpasses all the materialistic pious activities of karma-kānda.
- "Because the holy name is invested with all Kṛṣṇa's transcendental energies, even by chanting in nāmābhāsa one can attain the goals of dharma, artha, kāma and mokṣa, the cherished aims of the varṇāśrama, system.
- This chanting can give one the position of happiness in the material universe.
- It is the only resort for the helpless.
- One can go up to the border of Vaikuṅṭha planets by this chanting. Scriptures recommend the name as the process for Kali-yuga in particular.

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- "Nāmābhāsa as unintentional pious activity may be classed into four types: saṅketa, parihāsa, stobha, and hela.
- Chanting in saṅketa, or indirectly, means that one chants the name of Viṣṇu or Kṛṣṇa with a specific material conception, or chants the holy name unintentionally while thinking of some other object with the same sound.
- An example of the first type is Ajamīla, who called the name of his son, who happened to be named Nārāyaṇa.
- He chanted the name of Viṣṇu but with the intention of calling his son.

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- Still he was saved from the yamadūtas and eventually attained Vaikuṅṭha.
- An example of the second type of saṅketa is the yavana who exclaims "hārām" when dying.
- Because the syllables "hā" and "rām" are present forming a name of the Lord accidentally, that person attains liberation.
- Because this type of nāmābhāsa is the least offensive, the power of the holy name is intact to a large degree.

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- "One who utters the name of the Lord in parihāsa, a joking mood, such as Jarāsandha, also crosses over the material world.
- Uttering the name in stobha or derision, as Śiśupāla did, can also cut the chains of material existence.
- Uttering the name in hela or disregard, without attention, also brings benefit.
- The mlecchas attain liberation by all these types of nāmābhāsa.
- "These types of nāmābhāsa: coincidence, jest, derision and disregard, being without real faith in Kṛṣṇa, are situated on the lower border of nāmābhāsa.

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- On the other hand, if one has genuine faith in Kṛṣṇa and takes to the holy name while anarthas are still present, that stage is called śraddhā-nāmābhāsa.
- Since even by chanting in nāmābhāsa without faith one can attain liberation, how can one describe the results of chanting in nāmābhāsa with faith?
- By chanting in nāmābhāsa one can get everything except prema.

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- "If one gets to the point of śraddhā-nāmābhāsa, quickly the anarthas will go and the pure name will be revealed.
- Chanting the pure name, śuddha-nāma, one will certainly get prema very quickly.
- It may be concluded, therefore, that nāmābhāsa itself cannot give Kṛṣṇa prema; but by progressing from this stage to the stage of śuddha-nāma, by means of following rules of sādhana as laid down by the guru, one can get love of God.

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- "Thus, provided one does not commit nāma-aparādha, nāmābhāsa is praiseworthy.
- It is considered unlimited times better than karma or jñāna because a person with such nāmābhāsa will eventually get faith, and that seed of faith will then develop into attraction and taste for Kṛṣṇa, which will lead to the stage of śuddha-nāma and then prema.
- "Ābhāsa means a faint light or indirect image.
- It is of two types: reflected light and obstructed light.
- Similarly, there are two types of faint faith: reflected or distorted faith, and shadow or partial faith.

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- From partial faith comes dim nāmābhāsa, which eventually develops into the pure name and love of God.
- This is classed as actual nāmābhāsa.
- Just as clouds obstruct the full brilliance of the sun, so the clouds of anarthas and the mist of ignorance in the jīva's heart allow only a faint light of the name to enter.
- "Though having the opportunity to take pure faith, other living entities take a distorted faith, which is compared to the light reflected from water.
- The light is broken and the image not intact.

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- When people with distorted faith receive the holy name, the name that they take is also distorted.
- Such people are characterized by deeply rooted desire for enjoyment and liberation, to the extent that they strive day and night to fulfill their desires for enjoyment and liberation.
- Because such people may use the name, they may appear to have faith in the name, but this is not actual faith.
- If one takes to the name with that faith, no matter how long one continues, one will not progress to purification, but will remain at the same perverted stage continually.
- Instead, such practice usually leads to māyāvāda mentality, and finally one becomes a cheater.

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- Such a person thinks that the holy name is simply a means to a higher end, and by such mentality the glory and power of the name become lost.
- The only result is offense.
- "Here is the difference between real nāmābhāsa, where due to obstruction the effects of the name are felt faintly, and distorted nāmābhāsa.
- In real nāmābhāsa, many anarthas may be generated out of ignorance and weakness of heart, but all these effects can be cleared by continual chanting of the name.
- However, in distorted nāmābhāsa born from cheating knowledge, offenses simply increase. This is not called nāmābhāsa but nāma-aparādha.

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- "The māyāvādīs consider Kṛṣṇa, His name, form, līlā and qualities to be false and perishable.
- On this ground they will never receive love of God, for such a path leads in the opposite direction from the path of devotional service or bhakti.
- Thus there can be no real compromise between the two paths; the māyāvāda philosophy is considered the enemy of bhakti and its followers are considered the greatest offenders.
- Actually, the holy name never comes from the mouths of these people, for although the syllables may be heard, the holy name with all its transcendental potency does not reside there.

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- The māyāvādī chanting the name in this way, simply goes to hell because he thinks that the name is temporary and material.
- While chanting the name, the māyāvādī desires enjoyment and liberation, and by being so deceptive and chanting with motivation, he receives only pain for all his troubles.
- "If, by the mercy of the devotees, he can give up the aspiration for bhukti and mukti and accept his position as servant of Kṛṣṇa, being repentent and obedient, he can receive the real name and realize actual knowledge of sambandha-jñāna.
- Then, by constantly chanting the name, tears will come to his eyes, the mercy inherent in the name will come, and his true nature, prema-bhakti, will become manifest.

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- "But, the māyāvādī who holds that both Kṛṣṇa and the position of the jīva as Kṛṣṇa's servant are temporary and imaginary is an offender against the name, and dwells in the deep hole of misfortune.
- Since the name is a desire tree, it gives the māyāvādī his desire of merging into the Lord's effulgence.
- Of the five types of liberation, sāyujya or merging gives relief from the pains of the material ocean, but extinguishes one's own identity as well.
- Illusioned men, thinking there will be happiness in that state, receive only this shadow of happiness.

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- For in that state, forgetting Kṛṣṇa completely, they cannot obtain service in eternal bliss and knowledge, which is the perfection of life.
- If one has no bhakti, no love for Kṛṣṇa, no constant faith and conviction in Kṛṣṇa, how can one attain real, eternal happiness?
- "In summary, one who is at the stage of nāmābhāsa does not accept the māyāvādī philosophy, nor is his heart contaminated or weakened by its influence.
- The full glory of the sun is not visible when covered by clouds; but when the clouds are removed, the sun shines in full glory.

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- That is the Lord's instruction. Whoever accepts this instruction is a fortunate soul, and whoever rejects it is a rascal who will not be delivered for a hundred million births.
- To state it in another way, one should simply give up bad association and take shelter of Lord Caitanya's lotus feet.
- Other than Mahāprabhu's feet, other than His mercy, there is no way.“
- Thus did Haridāsa Ṭhākura conclude his explanation of nāmābhāsa.
- One who takes shelter at the two lotus feet of Haridāsa, will sing incessantly his glorification of the name entitled "Hari-nāma-cintāmaṇi."