

Hari-Nāma-Cintāmaṇi

The Touchstone of the Holy- Name

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Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura

Chapter – 1

Glories of the Holy Name

Chapter – 1 Glories of the Holy Name

- All glories to Gadādhara and Gaurāṅga, to the life of Jāhnavā, Nityānanda Prabhu.
- All glories to Sītā and Advaita, to Śrīvāsa and all the devotees.
- On the shore of the ocean at Nīlācala, in the temple of Jagannātha, resides dāru-brahmān, the Supreme Personality of Godhead in wooden form.
- Having mercifully descended in this material world, He is bestowing both material enjoyment and liberation.
- At this same dhāma, in order to give good fortune to mankind and make known the dharma of Kali-yuga, Śrī Caitanya, the Supreme Personality of Godhead in the form of a sannyāsī, came and set up residence in the house of Kāśi Miśra.

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- There, along with His devotees, He gave out love of Godhead to all, just as a desire tree gives treasure freely.
- There the Lord took great care to present the proper spiritual teachings to the living entities.
- This He did by making various devotees explain different aspects of devotional service, while He sat and listened in great bliss.
- In this way, through Rāmānanda Rāya's mouth He taught the concept of rasa, through the mouth of Sarvabhauma He taught the real principle of liberation, through the mouth of Rūpa Gosvāmī in Vṛndāvana He taught the details of rasa and through the mouth of Haridāsa He taught the full glories of the holy name.

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- One day, after bathing in the ocean, the Lord met with Haridāsa Ṭhākura at the Siddha-bakula tree, and in blissful mind He carefully inquired from Haridāsa how the jīvas could easily become delivered from material existence.
- Grasping the Lord's feet, Haridāsa's body shivered and tears poured from His eyes. In great humility he spoke: "O Lord, Your līlā is very deep.
- I have absolutely nothing—I have nothing. Your lotus feet are my only possession.
- For no good reason have You asked this question to such an unfit person as I. What can the result be?"

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- "O Lord, You are Kṛṣṇa Himself, who has this time descended in Navadvīpa dhāma to deliver the jīvas of Kali-yuga.
- There You mercifully display Your pastimes.
- If You kindly put those pastimes within my heart, I will be happy.
- It is by Your great mercy that You have revealed Your unlimited name, qualities, form and pastimes in the material world so that even low rascals such as I can taste them.”

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- "You are the spiritual sun; I am the particle of its light.
- You are the Lord; I am Your eternal servant.
- The nectar of Your lotus feet is my wealth of happiness; my hope rests in the nectar of Your name.”
- "As I am such a low person, how do I know what to say, O Lord and Master?
- Still, I must obey Your order.
- What comes from my mouth I will happily present to You, not considering the faults.”

Part – I

Kṛṣṇa and His Energies

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Part – I Kṛṣṇa and His Energies

- "The Supreme Person who is completely independent and free to act according to His desire is Śrī Kṛṣṇa.
- He exists as the Supreme Truth, one without a second; but is inconceivably always in the company of His eternal energies.
- These energies are never independent of Kṛṣṇa; rather they are intimately related with Him.
- This is stated in the Vedic mantras.
- Kṛṣṇa is the independent principal conscious entity, and the energies are His attributes.
- They can never be independent.

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Part – I Kṛṣṇa and His Energies

- Kṛṣṇa may be called vibhu, the omniscient, omnipresent, omnipotent master, and the manifestations from His energies—all other existing phenomena—may be called vaibhāva, the opulent expressions of His factual existence.
- Yet, even in the midst of unlimited, countless energies scattered throughout endless time, Kṛṣṇa remains separate and independent in His original form.
- It is through these energies, these vaibhāva of the vibhu, that the Lord's presence can be perceived.
- "The manifestations from Kṛṣṇa's energies are of three types: cid-vaibhāva, or spiritual manifestations coming from Kṛṣṇa's spiritual potency; acid-vaibhāva, or the dull, unconscious material world; and jīva, or countless souls, small particles of spirit. This is the statement of scripture.

Part – II

Cid-vaibhāva—Spiritual Manifestation

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Part – II Cid-vaibhāva—Spiritual Manifestation

- "The cid-vaibhāva consists of Kṛṣṇa's abodes, such as the unlimited number of Vaikuṅṭha planets; Kṛṣṇa's unlimited names, such as Govinda, Hare, etc.; Kṛṣṇa's unlimited forms, such as the two-handed form holding the flute; Kṛṣṇa's extraordinary qualities, such as affectionately giving bliss to His devotees; Kṛṣṇa's pastimes, such as the rāsa-līlā of Vraja and the saṅkīrtana activities of Navadvīpa.
- Even though these spiritual manifestations may descend into the material world and be visible or perceivable by the living entities, they remain spiritually untouched by material influence.
- All these elements intimately related to Viṣṇu or Kṛṣṇa are called Viṣṇupāda throughout the Vedas.
- The word denotes that the cid-vaibhāva are inseparable from the Lord Himself. The spiritual phenomena are inseparable from the prime spiritual entity.

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Part – II Cid-vaibhāva—Spiritual Manifestation

- "Therefore, in the spiritual realm of Viṣṇupāda, the changes which occur due to the influences of the material energy are not present.
- That realm is transcendental to material change, and like Lord Viṣṇu Himself, is pure goodness, unmixed with passion or ignorance in the least, unlike the condition of the material world. Kṛṣṇa and the plenary Viṣṇu expansions are all of pure goodness.
- Thus, whether in Goloka, Vaikuṅṭha, the Causal Ocean, or the material world, these personalities remain unaffected, as the Lord of all the demigods and the Lord of māyā.
- "Viṣṇu forms are the Lords of māyā and are in pure goodness, whereas Brahmā, Śiva, etc. possess goodness mixed with other modes.

Part – III

Acid-vaibhāva

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Part – III Acid-vaibhāva

- "Across the Virajā River, which is the separating boundary, opposite from the Viṣṇu forms, spiritual abodes, spiritual pastimes and other spiritual manifestations, lies the nonspiritual realm composed of the universes of fourteen planetary systems.
- This realm under the control of the Lord's illusory energy is called Devī-dhāma, the abode of māyā.
- It is composed of the five material elements (earth, water, fire, air and ether), plus mind, intelligence and false ego, which form the gross and subtle bodies of the living entities.
- The seven upper and seven lower planetary systems are all contained within the acid-vaibhāva, or nonspiritual manifestation of one of the Lord's energies.

Part – IV

Jaiya-vaibhāva

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Part – IV Jaiva-vaibhāva

- "Whereas the spiritual manifestation (cid-vaibhāva) is the full spiritual principle, and the illusory material world (acid-vaibhāva) is its shadow, jīvas are atomic particles of spiritual element.
- Because the jīvas are spiritual in character, they also have some degree of independence, and have the potentiality of unlimited bliss which is natural to the spiritual realm.
- Those jīvas who resort to Kṛṣṇa to attain that bliss remain as liberated souls eternally associated with Kṛṣṇa.
- But, thinking of his own happiness, if one selfishly desires to enter the neighboring abode of māyā, he turns away from Kṛṣṇa and takes a material body in the material universe.

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Part – IV Jaiva-vaibhāva

- Having fallen into the revolving wheel of continuous activities, good or bad, with their results, the jīva wanders throughout the universe, sometimes in svarga, sometimes in hell, taking birth with a material body to enjoy life in all the eight million four hundred thousand species of beings.
- "But as You are the Lord, the controller of the jīvas, and the jīvas are Your energies, You are always thinking of their welfare.
- Whatever happiness a jīva may seek, You kindly bestow it.
- Therefore one who desires impermanent happiness in the material world achieves it without difficulty by the Lord's mercy.

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Part – IV Jaiva-vaibhāva

- All the processes to achieve this happiness of sense gratification, such as rules of varṇa and āśrama, yajña, yoga, homa and vrata, which are pious activities, are simply material without spiritual transcendental nature at all.
- The results of these practices—elevation to higher planets and sense enjoyment—are material and temporary.
- Thus, in such activities for satisfying the temporary senses, the soul remains unsatisfied.
- The attempt to achieve happiness by gaining a temporary situation in a higher planet is a gross error by the soul.

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Part – IV Jaiva-vaibhāva

- "Similarly, by the mercy of devotees, a jñānī may perform activities of bhakti.
- Such jñāna mixed with devotional activities is also classified as a secondary path of bhakti.
- Such a jñānī easily arrives at the stage of faith in Kṛṣṇa, and can quickly proceed in full devotional service.
- "The servant jīvas, desiring the trifling fruits in the hell of the material world, reject their master, but Kṛṣṇa, knowing what is best for their welfare, forces them to give up the enjoyment (bhukti) resulting from fruitive activities (karma) and the liberation (mukti) resulting from speculative endeavors (jñāna), and at last bestows the sweet fruit of devotion to Kṛṣṇa (bhakti).

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Part – IV Jaiva-vaibhāva

- It is only the mercy of the Lord, who is made of pure mercy, that He puts the jīvas on a secondary path which lets the jīva fulfill his material desire for some time, but simultaneously gives him faith in the process of bhakti.
- If it were not for the mercy of the Lord, how could the living entities ever become pure and enter their position of happiness in the spiritual realm?
- "In the Satya-yuga the Lord supplied the process of meditation, by which the ṛṣis became purified.
- Attaining purification, the Lord gave the treasure of bhakti.

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Part – IV Jaiva-vaibhāva

- Similarly, in the Treta-yuga, the Lord arranged for purification by performance of sacrifices, and in Dvāpara-yuga, the Lord gave temple worship for purification, as paths leading to bhakti.
- But seeing the pitiful state of the jīvas in the Kali-yuga, the Lord gave up hope in the processes of karma, jñāna and yoga.
- In Kali-yuga such troubles as short life, many diseases, decreased intelligence and strength, afflict all jīvas.
- Therefore the secondary paths of karma and jñāna—the practices of varṇāśrama, sāṅkhya, yoga and jñāna, mixed with a little devotional activity—are too narrow and obstructive.
- The only result in Kali-yuga of these paths is deviation from the path of bhakti. Thus if one takes to these paths in hope of success in the Kali-yuga, life will simply become difficult for the jīvas.

Part – V

The Chief Path—Bhakti and the Holy Name

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Part – V The Chief Path—Bhakti and the Holy Name

- "Therefore, thinking of the welfare of the jīvas in Kali-yuga, the Lord has descended with His name.
- The Lord descended and preached the path for Kali yuga—the process of nāma-saṅkīrtana.
- Since by this process the jīva may directly achieve the highest treasure of Kṛṣṇa prema, which is actual happiness, it is called the major or chief path, as distinct from the secondary paths of karma and jñāna.
- In this process all the jīva has to do is sing and remember the name of the Lord constantly.

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Part – V The Chief Path—Bhakti and the Holy Name

- When the impure jīva takes up the process of bhakti for his purification, he is performing sādhana-bhakti, or devotional service in practice.
- When his practice reaches purity and perfection (sādhya), in other words, when the jīva achieves prema-bhakti, the activities of sādhana-bhakti—hearing and chanting the Lord's name, etc.—remain as the activities of prema-bhakti.
- The principal activities of devotional service are eternal.
- At the perfectional stage of prema, the means (sādhana) and the end (sādhya), or the method (upāya) and what is to be attained by the method (upeya) become nondifferent.

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Part – V The Chief Path—Bhakti and the Holy Name

- Thus there is no barrier or obstacle between the life and activities during training and at the perfectional stage: the holy name remains constant in both cases. In this way the jīva can easily transcend the material world.”
- Haridāsa continued: "I am just a fallen, low person, so much absorbed in sense objects. Being so foolish, I did not even take up Your name, O Lord!“
- With tears flowing incessantly from his eyes, Haridāsa, the incarnation of Brahmā, fell breathless at the Lord's feet.
- Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura prays that whoever is able to take refuge in the Lord, the Lord's devotees and devotional service, receives the full effects of the holy name, which is a touchstone yielding all desires. At that time the name becomes the centre of his existence.