

শ্রী শ্রী নাম-চিন্তামণি

Śrī Śrī Nāma-cintāmaṇi

Wish-Jewel of the Holy Names

Prabhupāda Kānupriya Gosvāmin



Kṛṣṇa Fluting

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Prabhupāda Kānupriya Gosvāmin

Vol. 1:

The True Form of the Lord's Names,
or,
The Principle of the Holy Names

*Body and possessor of body,
name and possessor of name,
these are not different in Kṛṣṇa.
Nature of the living being?
Name, body, and true nature
— different.*

(The Immortal Acts of Caitanya, 2.17.128)

translated, introduced, and annotated
by
Neal Delmonico (Nitai Das)

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From the “Lambagraon” *Gīta-govinda*. India, Himachal Pradesh, Kangra, circa
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I offer this book at the lotus-like feet of
 Śrī Śrī Gaurarāyahari,
forever my most worshipful deity,
because standing uninterruptedly
 in the middle of the unbroken
flow of his compassion and grace
 and with his inspiration
 this book has been completed.
Then, this remnant, now filled with grace,
 I offer to all the bee-like
 bhaktas for their tasteful delight.

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Letter of Support by Rasikamohana Vidyābhūṣaṇa

Kānupriya Gosvāmī Mahodaya is the author of this very delightful book called *Wish-Jewel of the Holy Names* (Śrī Śrī Nāma-cintāmaṇi). I at the present time have reached the extreme limit of my old age—my body is immobile, my vision is extremely weak. In this condition, that most learned author, though engaged in his own private worship (*bhajana-niṣṭha*), squandered away his own time which was crowded with many duties, by frequently coming to my tiny cottage and reading to me his manuscript from beginning to end. Hearing this book of his, I felt an indescribable joy. There are many other books on the names of the Lord, but this book is not just a collection of scriptural statements on the greatness of the holy names. The way this deep thinking, amazingly clever author has introduced fundamental creativity and deep consideration in relationship to the oneness of the name and the possessor of the name in determining the true nature of the Lord's names—that is not found in any other book of this sort. After listening to this book, I have come to believe that apart from the inspiration of the Lord's power of compassion, it is not possible to write such a book. The author is as good a writer as he is speaker. He has written other books and essays and they are all rightly respected in the Vaiṣṇava community, especially among those who appreciate thoughtful literature. Even if he had not written any other books, if he had written just this one book, the author's name would have become long

remembered in the world of *bhakti*. This is my belief.

In relation to the greatness of the names of the Lord, there are many statements and proofs in our scriptures. But, with respect to the true nature (*svarūpa*) of the names of the Lord I, in my long life, have not seen a demonstration of the non-difference of the Lord and his names with such subtlety and analytical deliberation in any other book before this. The primary excellence of this author's skill in writing is that although, on the one hand, his work is full of statements in the chaste form of the Bengali language (*sādhubhāṣā*) that are simple and pleasing, and yet, on the other hand, these statements are possessed of deep moods and subtle deliberation. In the process of demonstrating the true nature of the Holy Names, the author has drawn to a greater or lesser degree on the methods of deliberation of each of our six schools of philosophy,¹ and has in this book established his conclusions on the firm foundations of scripture and argument. As a result, the conclusions reached in this book and the author's method of research have been in my view absolutely fundamental. On every page of this book have been displayed the highest levels of painstaking effort invested in scriptural research and intellect engaged in subtle deliberations. In the magnificence of the language, the depth of feeling, the establishment of conclusions, and the expertise in deliberation, I have found on every page brilliant examples of this author's clear insight.

Here is one other special observation: the way the author has used subtle deliberation and analysis to demonstrate the non-difference between the Lord and the Lord's names is not easy to understand for ordinary readers. Even for scholars who know scripture, if they do not read it with great dedication and reflection, perhaps they, too, will find all these subtle conclusions quite hard to comprehend. However, I am confident that this book will become immortal and continue to reign supreme at least in the world of Vaiṣṇavas who apply themselves to practice and engage in meditative worship (*bhajana*). And I am also confident that most clever readers, rendered more thoughtful through the inspiration of the power of the Lord's grace, will, succeed in understanding this book.

My heartfelt benediction for this author—who is from a family of great realized Vaiṣṇavas, who has been celibate from his childhood, who is possessed of pure practices, and who is intent on meditative worship of the Lord—is that he will, by the grace of the Lord, have good physical health and a long, peaceful life and thus, will be able to complete the two remain-

¹The Ṣaḍ-darśana, or six schools of traditional Hindu philosophy: Mīmāṃsā, Vedānta, Sāṅkhya, Yoga, Nyāya, and Vaiśeṣa.

ing sections of this *Wish-jewel of the Holy Names*: the *Greatness of the Holy Names* and the *Offenses to the Holy Names*. May he, thus, bring about the greatest of benefits to the Vaiṣṇava world.

Ever a well wisher,
Rasikamohana Devaśarmā
Kalikātā, 1940 CE

Foreword

by

Pramathanātha

Tarkabhūṣaṇa

In what immemorial age human civilization appeared to the truth-seeing sages of the Vedas, it is not possible to determine, because, to the believing Hindu, scripture is beginningless. Still, one can say this much without hesitation: the eternal form of the eternal *dharma* has been reflected as the highest truth in the Hindu scriptures. The stream of its thought, though its manifestation is hierarchical from age to age, has remained undiminished until today. What was promoted by means of sacrificial rites in the Vedic age, what was fully nourished by means of the teaching of non-dual Brahman in the Upaniṣadic age, and again what was ascertained and proclaimed as the highest truth in the different schools of philosophy in the age of philosophy, *that* has become self-manifest in the form of the sacrificial rite of the Holy Names (*nāma-yajña*) in the Caitanya Vaiṣṇava community. Truly in this dharmic field known as Bhāratavarṣe (India) the stream of eternal dharma (*sanātana-dharma*) is forever flowing in variegated ways. The Lord in the *Song of the Lord* (*Bhagavad-gītā*) has spoken about the unbroken succession in the tradition:

This unchanging *yoga* I taught
to Vivasvān. Vivasvān taught
it to Manu; Manu taught it
to Ikṣvāku. This, which was thus

obtained by succession, sagely
 kings learned. *That yoga* through time
 is now lost, Punisher of Foes.
 That very same ancient yoga
 I am now about to teach you.¹

Now because of the impurity of human nature, impurity has become established within this eternal *dharma*. In order to remove that, age after age the Lord accepts a consciousness form (*cid-vigraha*) and takes away *dharma*'s decay. But everywhere one perennial teaching is spread—the goal is always one—only by the degree of manifestation is a hierarchy created.

Actually, the power of human beings in the present age is extremely diminished and contracted. In the unprecedented wild dance of demonic power, divine power has withered and shriveled up and is just biding its time. Ruthless Western civilization, which is everything at this time, is the primary cause for this. As a result, it would not be an exaggeration to claim that in this age engaging humans in the practices related to *dharma*, full of troubles and different methods, is difficult. In particular, it is a difficult matter for modern human beings to have faith in a practice in which power or prosperity is obtained after a long period. In troubled times like these, the Lord of Love, Śrī Caitanyadeva, turned his body grey with the dust of Navadvīpa and distributed to all, down to the lowest, the practice of the rite of repeating the Holy Names of Hari, a practice which is easy to perform. The performance of that is the only practice for this age. The rite of repeating the Holy Names is distinct from other practices in that whether one has faith or not, whether one remembers the Lord or not, the highest goal of humankind—supreme *bhakti* (love)—is achieved if one repeats His Names. This is the firm conclusion of Caitanya Vaiṣṇavas.

Now the question must be asked, from where has so much power in the Names come? By the power of the Names “one quickly becomes a pious soul and gains eternal peace.”² What is the root secret of the power of the Holy Names? If one were to answer this question in one statement, one would

¹Bg., 4.1-3:

imaṃ vivasvate yogaṃ proktavānahamavyayam|
vivasvān manave prāha manurikṣvākave'bravīt||
evaṃ paramparāprāptamimaṃ rājarāyo viduḥ|
sa kāleneha mahatā yogo naṣṭaḥ parantapa||
sa evāyaṃ mayā te'dya yogaḥ proktaḥ purātanaḥ|

²*kṣīpraṃ bhavati dharmātmā śaśvacchāntiṃ nigacchati*

have to say that, since the Names and the one Named are not different, what is gained by remembering the one Named—is [also] obtained from only the Names.

In establishing this most beautiful Caitanya Vaiṣṇava conclusion, Śrī Kānupriya Goswami Mahāśaya has given an excellent introduction to the weight of his knowledge and the depth his experience. If one were to describe that as difficult to achieve, it would no be an exaggeration. His language is lucid, everywhere full of logic, and in his book going from one chapter to another, one very well perceives an astonishing consistency. In a word, the book from beginning to end captures the mind. My firm belief is that this book will become an object of great respect in the society of intelligent *bhaktas*.

Now I wish to give a bit of introduction to the subject of the true nature of the Holy Names and the Holy Named given in a detailed fashion in the present book. I hope through this that readers may find it a little easier to understand the philosophical truths presented in this book. The author's conclusion is that all the names from birth, that is, all the names of the supreme lord (*parameśvara*) or the possessor of power (*śaktimat-tattva*) which have been before established in scripture (like Śrī Kṛṣṇa, etc.) are not different from the supreme lord or the possessor of power and therefore in the Names all the powers of the Named are present. By invoking those Names, living beings bring to perfection the highest goal of human life. This is in agreement with scripture and with the lived experiences of *bhaktas*. This is why the sacred rite of repeating the holy names (*nāma-yajña*) is superior to other forms of spiritual cultivation.

Śrī Jīva Gosvāmin has said: “for the sake of working with an object grasped by the mind, a sound agreed upon by someone becomes its name.”³ In other words, we use an agreed upon sound for the sake of our common understanding and use of an object we know in our minds. We call that a name. Take for example, after knowing a pot, we say, for the sake of making that object known to someone else, “this is a pot.” Here the sound “pot” is the name of the object pot. All objects have names. Objects can be roughly divided into three categories: 1) dull matter, 2) living beings, and 3) the supreme lord. Among them the supreme lord's name is not different from the supreme lord. The other names are different from the objects named. There is something more to be said on this matter. The supreme lord has so many modern names that are not mentioned in the scriptures. All those names are different from the eternal or scripture-evidenced names in that a modern name

³ *manogrāhyavastuno vyavahārthaṃ kenāpi saṅketitaḥ śabda nāmeti*

brings about the goal of human life by causing the one named to be remembered. But, when repeating an eternal name there is no need for remembering. Whether one remembers the one named or not, uttering the name alone brings about the highest human objective. There is such power in the eternal names of the lord. Apart from this, there are other distinguishing traits of the immortal names of the lord.

Take for instance this: 1) when one repeats other names, that is, when one repeats any name apart from the eternal names of the lord, since the name is different from the one named, remembering the one named only brings about some desired worldly objective. Or, if, even though one repeats the names of others, one agrees with the philosophy that “all names are the names of the lord,” then it is possible to achieve the highest goal. Nevertheless, in that case, it is still by means of remembering the lord that one achieves the highest goal of human life. In contrast, by repeating the names of the lord himself, without depending on remembering the one named (i.e., the lord), one will be cultivating the highest goal of human life in the form of *bhakti*.

Moreover, 2) if one repeats some part of the name of another, since there is no invariable connection between it and remembering the one named, attaining a desired worldly objective may also not happen. But, if one repeats some part of the eternal name of the lord, since repeating a part of the lord’s name brings about a direct mental experience of the true form of his name, even by that one attains the highest goal of human life.

Finally, 3) if the letters that make up [an ordinary] name are separated by other letters, and if the name is other [than an eternal name of the lord], remembering the one named may not occur. As a result, attaining the goal of human life may not be possible by that means. But, the greatness of the immortal names of the lord is such that [even] when pronounced with that sort of interruption by other letters, the achievement of the highest goal of human life is easily brought about.

Goswami Mahāśaya has endeavored to demonstrate these kinds of distinctive traits of the immortal names of the lord with the help of scripture and reasoning in an extremely pleasing way, and his endeavors have been crowned with success. There is no doubt about this.

In describing the true nature of the holy names, the author ultimately has praised the name Śrī Kṛṣṇa as the best among all the immortal names of the lord. In his view this is Brahman as sound (*śabda-brahman*). “But Kṛṣṇa

is the lord himself,”⁴ following this statement of the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, we conclude the most excellent form of the lord is Śrī Kṛṣṇa and therefore the name “Śrī Kṛṣṇa” which expresses Śrī Kṛṣṇa himself is the best name of all, and therefore it is Brahman as sound.

Now let us reflect a little on the possessor of the name (*nāmin*, i.e., the lord). The possessor of the name is the possessor of power or the substrate of power. There are fundamentally two kinds of power: 1) essential power (*svarūpa-śakti*) and 2) the illusory power (*māyā-śakti*). By the strength of the illusory power this frozen universe is manifested. And the essential power consists of knowledge, force, and action. The knowledge power is called *saṁvit* (consciousness), the force power is called *sandhinī* (the joining or combining power), and the action power is called *hlādinī* (the delighting power). This threefold essential power is not different from the supreme truth; the highest self is being, consciousness, and bliss (*sac-cid-ānanda*). Among the three forms of power, the delight-giving power is the best. Its function is called *bhakti* and *bhakti*’s condensed form is Śrī Rādhikā.

Because of the variegatedness of the principle of power, the possessor of power manifests in four forms: the Impersonal Absolute (Brahman), the Highest Self (Paramātmā), the Fortunate Lord (Bhagavān), and Śrī Kṛṣṇa. 1) When, because of not comprehending the distinction between the power and possessor of power, the unqualified truth appears absent of any qualifying properties, then the truth as Impersonal Absolute appears. In it pure being or existence is predominant. 2) Then again, when he (it?) is manifest as an inner controller (*antaryāmi*) for whom the illusory power is predominant, then the manifestation of that consciousness-dominant being is called the Highest Self. 3) When he manifests in a form composed of consciousness and bliss and possesses all the powers, that is him as the Fortunate Lord in whom bliss predominates. 4) Finally, when he appears in Vṛndāvana as an superb dancer carrying his flute, as a reservoir full of all the powers, and in a figure of condensed *rasa* (sacred rapture), that is his Śrī Kṛṣṇa form, in which he is the king of *rasas*.

The Impersonal Absolute is the knower’s (*jñānin*) highest object of reverence, the Highest Self is the highest object of honor for the practitioner of *yoga*, the Fortunate Lord is the highest object of reverence of the *bhakta*, and Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the ultimate concern of the *rasa*-loving *bhakta*. Among these four practitioners, the *rasa*-loving *bhakta* is the best, because the Lord himself has said:

⁴*kṛṣṇastu bhagavān svayam.*

Greater than ascetics is a yogī;
better than knowers also is a yogī;
better than a man of action (rites), too, is a yogī;
therefore, become a yogī, Arjuna.

Among all yogīs one whose inner self (heart)
has gone to me, who with faith worships me,
him I consider most [intimately] connected with me.⁵

Again, among these four kinds of possessors of power, Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the fullest form. Although in that form there is an inconceivable difference and nondifference with the power of *māyā* and although he is the substrate of the effects of the *māyā* power—i.e., substance, quality, and motion—all the contradictory and non-contradictory properties, the Lord is separate from that—he is the unthinkable, inconceivable truth. With respect to this truth Śrī Jīva Gosvāmin has said: “he in whom all contradictory qualities are combined, he indeed is the Lord.”⁶ In his essential nature (*svārūpa*) there are again four manifestations: name, form, quality, and sport. Here contradictory traits are not possible. That Youth of Vraja is eternally joined with his essential power. He is free of intra-class (*sajātiya*) and extra-class (*vi-jātiya*) differences—the supreme truth differentiated only within himself. This kind of essential nature of Kṛṣṇa is the best “named” and the name that fully expresses him, the sound “kṛṣṇa,” is the best name. While an absolute non-difference exists between this sort of name and this sort of named, in the topmost stage of practice in the form of [repeating] the name “Kṛṣṇa,” the topmost *bhakti* or the fifth goal of human life (*preman*) is attained.

Śrī Kānupriya Gosvāmī Mahāśaya has established the non-difference between this name and this named in an expert way in this book, *Wish-jewel of the Holy Name* (*Śrī Śrī Nāma-cintāmaṇi*). This truth of non-difference, which is established on the core conclusions of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava teaching, is not available gathered together in one place in such a clear fashion in any other modern book. Therefore, just as this book is suitable to be counted as a special jewel in the royal treasury of Bengali books, similarly it will give

⁵Bg., 6.46-7:

tapasvibhyo'dhiko yogī jñānibhyo'pi mato'dhikah|
karmibhyaścādhiko yogī tasmād yogī bhavārjuna||
yogināmapi sarveṣāṃ mad-gatenāntarātmanā|
śraddhāvān bhajate yo mām sa me yuktatamo matah||

⁶*yatra sarva-viruddha-dharmāṇāṃ samanvayaḥ sa eva bhagavaṇ*

the greatest assistance on the path of practice to intelligent *bhaktas*—this I firmly believe. At the request of Gosvāmī Mahāśaya I have somehow finished this little introduction, thinking of it as an act of service to the Lord. By the ambrosial touch of Śrī Gosvāmī Mahāśaya’s book, may this modern world so full of sorrow be brought back to life, and may this book bring about the greatest fulfillment of the teachings of Vaiṣṇavism. This is the only blessing and prayer of this old, possessionless *brāhmaṇa*.

Pramathanātha Tarkabhūṣaṇa
Kāśīdhāma
12 Jyeṣṭha, 1349 (1943 CE)

An Appreciation by Sundarānanda Dāsa Vidyāvinoda

Even¹ though there is no reason or need for the private reminders or notes of a student and researcher to be published, at the powerful urging of the deity who oversees my mind and at the wholehearted enthusiasm of several Vaiṣṇava friends, they have been published.

Nearly twelve years ago some great *bhakta* residing in Vṛndāvana instructed me that I must read the book entitled *Wish-jewel of the Holy Names* (*Śrī Śrī Nāma-cintāmaṇi*) by the Vaiṣṇava master-teacher (*ācārya*) Kānupriya Gosvāmī. Moreover, he said that he himself had been greatly helped by reading that book. “This book is full of scientific and fundamental research in relation to the principles of the immensely important Holy Names that were practiced and spread by Śrī Caitanya, and it incorporates the leads and conclusions of Śrī Caitanya’s companions and immediate followers like the Gosvāmīns. This kind of book has not been seen in the last four hundred years. It is a superb treatise on the subject of the Holy Names.” Hearing such praise from the mouth of such a great soul, I tried to acquire a copy. But at that time the first edition of the book had been sold out and I had to wait for some time. As soon as the second edition was published the author,

¹This is an excerpt from Sundarānanda’s “Dedication” to his work entitled *A Small Flash of a Ray from the Wish-jewel of the Holy Names* (*Śrī Śrī Nāma-cintāmaṇi-kiraṇa-kaṇikā*), 9-10. (Navadvīpa, West Bengal: Navīnakṛṣṇadāsa, 1961)

Gosvāmī Mahodaya, on the 30th of Kārtik, 1359 BA (1953 CE), gave me a copy as a gift through the hands of one of my Vaiṣṇava friends, kindly inscribing the book with his signature. In the Bengali year 1360 (1954 CE) before the beginning of Niyama Sevā I took the book to the holy land of Vṛndāvana, and there for more than a year's time, until the next Rāsayātrā holiday, I continued to study it. Along with it I studied Śrīdhara Swami's *Bhāvārtha-dīpikā*, Śrī Jīva's *Kramasandarbhā*, Sanātana Gosvāmin's *Bṛhat* and *Samkṣepa Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī* and other works² by the grace of the Lord.

From Vṛndāvana I returned to Navadvīpa where, staying at a great Vaiṣṇava's house, I spent the whole day studying all these books of the great *bhaktas* together. In addition, every day in the evening I was fortunate enough to listen to the spontaneous lectures of [Kānupriya] Gosvāmī sitting in the courtyard of his Śrī Gaurarāya, Gosvāmī's ever worshipped sacred image, at [the house called] "Śrī Gaurakiśora's Sāntikuṇja" on the bank of the Ganges. Also at times when Gosvāmī was in Kalikata for a while and at Pānihāṭī I had opportunities to attend his lectures. When he returned again to Navadvīpa, I sent him letters from time to time asking questions about the Holy Names, and I received answers full of fine conclusions by his causeless grace. In my collection of notes wherever quotation marks are used, those are portions taken from his letters.

In 1366 BA (1960 CE) in the month of Vaiśākh Gosvāmī completed and published a new book called *A Sliver of the Secret of Bhakti* (Śrī *Bhakti-rahasya-kaṇikā*) as a prelude or introduction to his *Wish-jewel of the Holy Names*. Obtaining a copy of that book, I became even more fortunate. Studying all these works along with foundational works like the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* and so forth and adding all the discussions from the occasions of his lectures that I found personally useful, I published in book form a work called *A Small Flash of a Ray from the Wish-jewel of the Holy Names*, stringing it all together on the thread of Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmin's "Eight Verses on the Names of Kṛṣṇa" (Śrī *Kṛṣṇa-nāmāṣṭaka*).

²In the "Dedication" in Sundarānanda's own book, he lists another ten books that he studied during this period. All of the works cited here are important commentaries on the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*.

A Humble Submission by Kānupriya Gosvāmin

By the causeless and inconceivable grace of my beloved lord, Śrī Śrī Gaurāyāhari, nearly eight years after the publication of my first book, *The True Nature and Function of the Living Being* (Jīver Svarūp o Svadharmo), it was possible to publish this book entitled *Wish-jewel of the Holy Names* (Śrī Nāma-cintāmaṇi). Since long before the publication of *The True Nature and Function of the Living Being* the manuscript of the *Wish-jewel* was ready, the result of many years of intense effort, and since it was even announced in the pages of the first book that the *Wish-jewel* would be published quickly, I feel it necessary to give some explanation to those readers who were anxious to read it about why there was a long, eight year delay after the publication of *True Nature*.

It is not possible for anyone to ascertain completely when, for what purpose, in what way, through whom, and to what effect the most auspicious lord causes something to come about. A few days after my first book was printed, when arrangements were moving forward for the printing of the previously described *Wish-jewel*, at the urging of the most auspicious lord I received a new realization in my heart and with the help of that obtained new light on the subject of how to describe the nature and truth of the lord's holy names. The invention of a better system than the previous one caused a delay of these eight long years to rewrite this book according to that completely new system.

Now I see with my heart that the most auspicious lord, who is kind to

the lowly, has, through his grace, caused me to give up the previous book I wrote and caused me through his urging to write with my own hands this present book. Therefore, if some part of this book has merit, it is not my doing. Then, too, whatever flaws, confusions, and errors may be found in it, for those, certainly my natural, easily-come-by ignorance is responsible—this goes without saying. Had I not been touched by the power of his grace, it would never have been possible for an insignificant, unqualified, and ignorant living being like me to remain engaged, through numerous roadblocks and obstacles, in this one small book for eight long years. This is my firm conviction. By his grace, the work of writing of this book and the work of getting it printed have been accomplished in the midst of the frightful and dangerous situation of the present world.¹ Therefore, today, before all else, I offer my unceasing bows to the lotus feet of that lord who is the most compassionate, who is extremely kind to those seek shelter with him.

To all those who gave me encouragement in the project, I give my grateful thanks. The great Bhāgavata and one hundred year old Vaiṣṇava master-teacher Paṇḍita Rasikamohana Vidyābhūṣaṇa Mahodaya, even with his body pained by old age, out of grace and affection for me listened to this entire manuscript with great interest. And with special pleasure, he provided a letter of support for this book. For that reason I remain indebted to him by bonds of boundless gratefulness. The great Bhāgavata and celebrated teacher of great teachers, Paṇḍita Pramathanātha Tarkabhūṣaṇa (D. Lit.) Mahodaya, even in his illness wrote a substantial and beautiful introduction that increases the value of this little book. He thus showed great favor towards me and his firm engagement in service to the lord. For that I make known to him my boundless thanks and gratitude.

Finally, this humble submission: all those greatly realized, high minded, and good folks who encouraged me and gave their valuable letters of support on the subject of this little book, to all of them I convey my thanks. It is also necessary to remark that all of those favorable descriptions used in those letters of agreement with respect to me are not evidence of my worthiness. Rather, they are excellent indicators of the greatness, freedom from ego-tism, and respect-giving nature of the hearts of those great souled writers. Even though I, who am an insignificant, ignorant, lowly living being, am not worthy of all those statements, I have taken them as the grace-bestowing blessings of all those good people. If I am able some day to wander about as a bug of a bug in the realm of *bhakti*, being sprinkled by the dust of the feet of

¹This book was completed and published during World War II.

bhaktas, I cannot imagine any greater good fortune than that. O Great ones, please show that grace on this poor soul—this is my humble submission.

The author

457 CA (1943 CE)

Bhājanaghāṭa (Nadīyā)

Awakening

The living being (*jīvātman*) is in its essential nature an eternal servant of Kṛṣṇa. Even though it is an eternal servant of the Lord and even though non-material, conscious service of the Lord is its own true function, it has simultaneously forgotten who and what it is. Why? Because of beginningless forgetfulness of Kṛṣṇa, and because of the ignorance produced by that forgetfulness, it has covered its self-identity with a body. Because of forgetfulness, the living being makes the mistake of thinking of the body and things related to the body as “me” and “mine.” It therefore regards practices which are beneficial to the body as its true functions. The intended meaning of all of the scriptures is described in just two lines of the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* in a condensed, aphoristic form:

A living being’s true nature
Is to recognize itself as
A servant of Kṛṣṇa.
By thinking it is body,
that awareness is covered over.¹

Therefore, a person’s sense of herself as consciousness is veiled by a sense of being a body which veiling is caused by ignorance derived from forgetfulness of Śrī Hari. Moreover, the degree to which a human being has forgotten herself, to that degree do misfortune and moral torpitude arise in the external world. This must be understood.

¹ Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja, *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, 2.24.130:

জীবের স্বভাব—কৃষ্ণদাস অভিমান।
দেহে আত্মজ্ঞানে আচ্ছাদিত সেই জ্ঞান।।

According to the power of the character (*dharma*) of the age, the degree to which mankind's identification with the body increases from its leastmost state gradually towards a state of completeness—to that degree human society neglects and disregards the Self (*ātman*) and all subjects relating to the Self (*ātmika-viśaya*). Instead, society regards the pleasing and nourishing of one's physical senses as the source of pleasure and nourishment. In this way, the degree to which the Self is forgotten, to that degree, too, the human self is cheated out of or has fallen away from the object it is meant to achieve, the highest goal, the remembering Śrī Hari. In other words, the degree to which Śrī Hari is forgotten, to that degree the human self is forgotten and as a result, we are cheated of our true natures. Even though the flaw of aversion to the Lord or forgetfulness of Kṛṣṇa is the cause of falling under the control of *māyā*, the cosmic illusion, and of the self-forgetfulness that is connected with that forgetfulness of Kṛṣṇa, since both (the flaw of forgetfulness of Kṛṣṇa and self-forgetfulness) are beginningless, the cause and the effect occur simultaneously. The seed is well known as the cause of the tree, but since both are beginningless, it is not justifiable to determine one as prior and the other as later. It is the same in this case [of forgetfulness of Kṛṣṇa and Self].

That age in which identifying the body as the self is for the most part [recognized as] a mere semblance in human society, and in which identifying consciousness as the self is practically complete—that age is called the Age of Truth (Satya-yuga or, Kṛta-yuga). At that time there is the least sense of the need for the physical in human society and an almost complete insistence on the subject of higher truth and the sense of the need for the Self. The Age of Truth is the beginning state. That least amount of the identification with the body gradually grows somewhat until the end of the age. Later, when it clearly manifests in one quarter of the population and in three quarters an identification with consciousness remains, then the Triadic Age (Tretā-yuga) begins. When identification with the body increases among human beings to about half or two parts identification with the body and two parts identification with consciousness, then the age is called the Dyad Age (Dvāpara-yuga). Finally, when identification with the body increases so that it covers three-quarters of identification with consciousness and only one quarter remains, then the Age of Strife (Kali-yuga) begins. After identification with the body increases until it becomes almost full, and only the least amount of identification with consciousness remains, then it becomes

the full Age of Strife or the last stages of the Age of Strife.²

During this last age, the bodily senses become almost completely of over-riding importance in human society. For this reason, while discussions of the true self of humankind become mostly forgotten in human society, there is great deal of interest in matters of physical need and behavior, and the attainment of success in those matters is considered to be the greatest goal of human life. On the other hand, interest in the subject of the purpose of the self or of the highest truth remains only the mere semblance of a smidgen.

The present age has been identified as the Age of Strife in scripture. The symptoms of the Full Age of Strife have been described in the *Bhāgavata* and other scriptures. If one calmly considers and observes all sides, one can understand that at the present time nearly all the symptoms of the Full Age of Strife have fully manifested. At the very least, if one also looks at the dictionary meaning of the word *kali*, it is not difficult to understand this age as the Age of Strife. In the dictionary the word *kali* is defined as war, quarrel, strife. In other words, that time [arrives] in which identification with the body has awakened almost completely among humans, and, as a result, there has been—in large measure and in a pervasive way—a manifestation of enmity and quarrel in human society over gross objects like the body, and over all this-worldly things. Such a time is called the Age of Strife, or simply the Age of Quarrel.

In actuality at the present time in human society, the way in which every subject is taken as a matter of selfish interest—the way the entire world in unison is pervaded by violence, enmity, war, and quarrel—the way the symptoms of quarrel are manifest in every matter—if one were to say that this has never been seen before in the history of the world, it would not be an exaggeration.

Because mankind's identification as consciousness (spirit) has been covered by a profound identification with the body through the influence of the Age of Strife, today we [rarely] have “I am not this gross body; I am an eternal living being, a particle of consciousness who is a servant of the Lord.”³ In place of this awareness of equality in the hearts of all humans, we have, “I

²Based on a passage in the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, 12.3.18-24. The names of the four ages actually come from the game of dice. Satya or Kṛta (complete) is the winning throw, the side of the die with four dots. Tretā is a good throw with three dots. Dvāpara refers to the side with two dots and *kali* to the losing throw with only one dot. The connection of the names of the ages with the game of dice seems to have become forgotten by the time of the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* (circa 6-7th century CE).

³दासभूतो हरेरेव नान्यस्यैव कदाचन

am a brahmana, I am a śūdra, I am a Hindu, I am not a Hindu, I am a Bengali, I am a Bihari, I am English, I am German, I am wealthy, I am a laborer, I am a man, I am a woman, I am a householder, I am a sannyāsi.” Gross materialism in the form of the cognition of differences produced by such forms of identification with the body has become so deeply rooted that among human beings powerful quarrels have been ignited over the external, worldly things considered connected to oneself, things that are useful to the gross physical senses; and as a result, the present world has been forced down a path full of frightening calamities and destruction. If the state of *bhakti* were infused into the hearts of human beings, then only peace and equality would appear, and one recognition would be reached, that of oneself and everyone else as servants of the Lord. Realizing that all living beings have the same relationship and the same rights, the *bhakta* of the Lord is able to understand that:

Not a priest am I, nor a king,
neither merchant nor laborer.
No celibate student, nor
householder, nor retiree, nor
renunciant am I. Instead I’m but
a mere servant of a servant of
a servant of the lotus feet
of the husband of cowherd girls
who’s a rising ocean of nectar
full of all the highest joy.⁴

Knowledge and civilization based on materialism have in the course of a long time become complete, and when they destroy themselves by means of thunderbolts (atomic bombs) discovered by material science, then out of remnants of that devastation something will awaken again with new respect in the world and it will be called “consciousness or spiritual science (*cid-vijñāna*).” It is what the ancient sages of India discovered, and it once illumined and astonished the whole world with the shining light of metaphysical truth (spirituality).

⁴Rūpa Gosvāmin, compiler, *Padyāvalī*, 74:

नाहं विप्रो न च नरपतिर्नापि वैश्यो न शूद्रो
नो वा वर्णी न च गृहपतिर्नो वनप्रस्थो यतिर्वा ।
किन्तु प्रोद्यन्निखिलपरमानन्दपूर्णांमृताब्धे-
र्गोपीमतुः पदकमलयोर्दासदासानुदासः ॥

When the present material science advances a little further, the place that it will reach will be the beginning of a series of shining steps of the science of consciousness. The rediscovery of conscious substance apart from material substance—the perception of the separate existence of the consciousness particle, or minute conscious living being, will be the beginning stage or first step. That science will gradually become more and more elevated and finally reach fullness in the perception of the full existence of the vast, all-pervading consciousness, that is, of the supreme controller. Then one will be able to understand the universe fully. The ancient sages of India were not unscientific. Even though they were not materialistic scientists, they were elevated scientists of consciousness.

In this way, through the rotation of the rules of the supreme controller the influence of the Age of Kali will be completely ended, and after spreading the news of the victory of consciousness, a supremely pure age of divine love will arise in the universe. When humankind, free from all materialism, becomes bound to one another by uncuttable bonds of love, and together becomes intoxicated by praise songs of the supreme controller, that will be considered the highest fulfillment of human life.

In the not too distant future, the rise of the afore-mentioned new age is certain. It will come out of the remains of the destruction of the present world, which is maddened by materialism and tormented by the Age of Kali. If before that the world is protected from the final and most vigorous attack of the departing Age of Kali, then, after completely transforming civilization and education based on materialism, all the world will have again to be filled with the pure, fragrant incense of faith and trust in the great existence of consciousness or of the supreme controller who is being, consciousness, and bliss. Again in all matters the dignity of consciousness over matter—the throne of higher objectives over ordinary ones—must be firmly established. Protecting the world from destruction is the heaviest responsibility weighing on modern human society. In particular that burden rests on the descendants of the sages and seers of India.⁵

Now, comes the counter argument. The question can be raised: we or-

⁵Recently in London in a speech at a conference on world religions Sir Francis Younghusband made the following comments: "In the present day, when brutal attacks are being made on religion everywhere, we can look for hints to India as an example of a land wherein religion abides. ... In this troubled time we here hope that India will continue to shine as a beacon light. ... India by its example can show the whole world—of all the various ways of establishing the *Yoga-sūtra* among humans to drive us to the goals of human society—which way can be accepted as the most effective way to reach, through it [yoga], religion. (*Yugāntara*, 8th Agraḥāyaṇa (November-December), 1348 [1942])

dinary living beings beaten down by the Age of Kali are naturally lazy when it comes to ultimate concerns and are intent on pursuing our worldly pleasures and enjoyments. Is it possible for us in our current condition to regain a sense of spiritual identity in place of identifying with our bodies through practicing austerities and renunciation? Is it possible to regain this sense without being under the constraints of the practices, dealings, manners, and rules of the Age of Truth and the other prior ages? And, if that cannot happen for modern human society tormented by the Age of Kali, what way remains for us to attain salvation from these terribly bad days and horrid conditions?

In answer to this question it must be asserted that if the diagnosis of the disease is not wrong the prescribed medicine will not fail. There is no need to mention more than this. Since the cause of this world-wide disease of lack of peace has been very well ascertained and the medicine too has been prescribed in the scriptures of eternal *dharma* spread by the omniscient sages and seers of India, it is proper that it will not fail to counteract the disease. This can be easily inferred.

Scripture assures us that since one is able to attain greater results from taking shelter in the easily practiced names of the Lord, it does not recommend, for the living being brought low by the Age of Kali, engaging in harsh practices like those in the Age of Satya and the rest. This is seen here:

That which is achieved in Kṛta
by meditation on Viṣṇu,
in Tretā by sacrifice,
in Dvāpara by worship,
is achieved in Kali by
singing songs in praise of Hari.⁶

Not only that, in this special Age of Kali of the present (that is, in the Age of Kali within the twenty-eighth quadruple age of Vaivasvata Manu, or, the Age of Kali in which Gauracandra is manifest), divine love (*prema-bhakti*), an indescribably special good fortune, arises as the principal result of taking shelter in the Lord's name. Out of a desire to attain this love, the human

⁶Bhāg. 12.3.52:

कृते यश्चायतो विष्णुं
त्रेतायां यजतो मखैः ।
द्वापरे परिचर्यायां
कलौ तद्धरिकीतनात ॥

beings of the other ages (the Age of Satya and the rest) pray to take birth in this special Age of Kali.⁷

Therefore, although the Age of Kali is a source of all flaws, its one great quality is that by singing Śrī Kṛṣṇa's names or taking shelter in the names of the Lord, human beings will be able to become free from all the unfortunate influences of the Age of Kali and become successful in attaining the highest state of most exalted love for the Lord. Scripture declares this truth clearly:

O king, among the ocean of faults
that is Kali there is one great merit:
by praise of Kṛṣṇa one is freed
from attachment and goes to the supreme.⁸

What more needs to be said—especially since this too is seen: all of the instructors of spiritual practice and private worship (*bhajana*) again affirm this scripture. With extreme firmness they loudly proclaim that in the Age of Kali there is no other way for living beings to gain release than by taking shelter in the Holy Names. For example:

Hari's name, Hari's name, only Hari's name!
In Kali there is no, there is no
there is no other way.⁹

How strongly this instruction of scripture was broadcast can be understood from the unprecedented explanation of the verse given by Śrī Kṛṣṇacaitanya:

For emphasis “Hari's name”
is repeated three times.
So even dullards understand,
the emphatic *eva* is added.

⁷Bhāg. 11.5.38: कृतादिषु प्रजा राजन् कलाविच्छन्ति सम्भवम् ।

⁸Bhāg. 12.3.51:

कलेर्दोषनिधे राजन्नस्ति ह्येको महान् गुणः ।
कीर्तनादेव कृष्णस्य मुक्तसङ्गः परं ब्रजेत् ॥

⁹*Brhan-nārāḍīya*:

हरेर्नाम हरेर्नाम हरेर्नामैव केवलम् ।
कलौ नास्त्येव नास्त्येव नास्त्येव गतिरन्यथा ॥

The word “only” is again used
for the sake of certainty.
Knowledge, yoga, rites, askesis
and other practices are banned.
One who thinks otherwise does not
find salvation: no, no, no—
and those with three emphatic *eva*-s.¹⁰

The import is this: the verse states that *kalau*, that is, in the Age of Kali, the Holy Name is the only recourse for living beings. First, to make this claim as emphatic an injunction as possible, in the verse at hand *harernāma* or Hari’s Name is repeated three times. Even though this thrice-affirmed truth has been so firmly emphasized, since all those with dull intellects will not be able to understand this assertion, to help them understand the emphatic particle *eva* has been added to the final “Hari’s Name.” If even after this there is anyone remaining who does not understand this assertion, scripture, which is dedicated to the welfare of living beings, provides even more certainty by using the word *kevalam*, “only.” In other words, in the Age of Kali *only* Hari’s Name, Hari’s Name, Hari’s Name [is recommended], not any other practice such as knowledge, yoga, rituals, or asceticism. By this the assertion is made even more emphatic.

After that comes a statement of prohibition, designed to make the injunction, “Only repeat the name of Hari,” even more powerful. To put it another way, just in case someone still thinks there are other recourses available besides the name of Hari, the statement makes it perfectly clear that for him there are no other means of liberation. The word, *nāsti* (*na asti*) or “there is no” is employed three times, with emphasis like before. Again, the emphatic *eva* is joined with the three re-statements: “there is no.” In other words, the idea that there is no other way is even more firmly established by the addition of “indeed.” Thus, with, “there is indeed no [other way]” the verse has become a thrice-spoken (*tri-satya*) truth.

¹⁰Cc., 1.17.20-22:

দাঁঢ়ি লাগি হরেনাম উক্তি তিনবার |
জড়লোক বুঝাইতে পুনরেক-কার |
কেবল-শব্দ পুনরপি নিশ্চয় করণ |
জ্ঞান, যোগ, কর্ম, ভপ আদি নিবারণ |
অন্যথা যে মানে তার নাহিক নিস্তার |
নাই নাই নাই তিন—তিনে এবকার |

If one thinks about it calmly, the actual intended meaning of the verse is understood to be that for the Age of Kali, singing the names of Hari (*harināma-saṅkīrtana*) is the primary religious rite (*dharma*)¹¹ to be practiced. When the names of Hari are added to other practices—the influence of the names of Hari makes those other practices successful. But, if the names of Hari are excluded, no practice in this age succeeds. Other than the holy names, in the Age of Kali there is no other way—this is the meaning of that. By the influence of Kali, which is full of faults, places, times, participants, and substances and the rest, or *mantras* and *tantras* and so forth are restrained by limitless defects; therefore, practices like sacrificial rites, cultivation of salvific knowledge, yoga, austerity, renunciation, visiting pilgrimage sites, and vows do not in the Age of Kali produce results by themselves. However, if one adds to them the names of Hari, all of those practices become free of flaw and defect as a side effect of those holy names. From declarations of this kind from scripture, one can understand this. For instance:

From *mantra* and *tantra* come defects
from place, time, the worthy, and objects too.
All are made free of flaw
by singing your holy name.¹²

In the *Skandha Purāṇa* it is said:

By the recollection of whom
and by uttering whose names
deficiencies in austerity,
sacrifice, and ritual
are suddenly removed,
him, Acyuta, do I extoll.¹³

¹¹ See the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, 11.5.31.

¹² *Bhāg.* 8.23.16:

मन्त्रतस्तन्त्रतश्छिद्रं
देशकालाहंवस्तुतः ।
सर्वं करोति निश्छिद्रं
नामसङ्कीर्तनं तव ॥

¹³ *Skandha Purāṇa*, ?:

यस्य स्मृत्या च नामोक्त्या
तपोयज्ञक्रियादिषु ।
न्यूनं सम्पूर्णतामेति

Again, since all the good results of other forms of spiritual practice and auspicious rites are located in their fullest form in the holy names of the Lord, they are accomplished as side effects of the holy name. One can understand this from scripture:

The auspicious and sin-removing
powers that are located in
charity, vows, austerities,
holy places and the rest,
in the gods and in the saints,
in the sacrifices of
royal consecration and
of offering up the horse,
in knowledge of the transcendent Self,
Hari, gathering them together,
has placed them all in his own names.¹⁴

For human beings fouled by all flaws—swallowed up by the Age of Kali—the impossibility of obtaining the difficult goal of the virtuous people in some way other than by taking shelter of the holy names is free-throatedly broadcast by the scriptures. Take, for instance:

Mortals with no other goals
than enjoyment and giving pain
to others, completely lacking
in knowledge and renunciation,
not practicing celibacy,
rejecting all pious duties,
if they but once say Viṣṇu's name
they easily reach a reward
not reached even by pious folk.¹⁵

सद्यो वन्दे तमच्युतम ॥

Acyuta = Imperishable = Viṣṇu.

¹⁴*Skandha Purāṇa*, ?:

दानव्रततपस्तीर्थक्सेत्रादीनां च याः स्थिताः ।
शक्तयो देवमहतां सर्वपापहराः शुभाः ॥
राजसूयाश्वमेधानां ज्ञानस्याध्यात्मिकवस्तुनः ।
आकृष्य हरिणा सर्वाः स्थापिताः स्वेषु नामसु ।

¹⁵*Padma Purāṇa*, ?:

Therefore, one can now understand why it is that Sage of the gods (*deva-vaṛṣi*) Nārada has said in his *Pañcarātra* text, in order to teach that Śrī Hari is the primary object of worship, that “If Hari is worshiped (pleased, *ārādhita*) what is the need for austerity? If Hari is not worshiped (pleased, *ārādhita*) what is the need for austerity?”¹⁶ One should understand that this text is precisely relevant to the idea that in the Age of Kali the holy names are the primary means of attainment. In other words, if one repeats the holy names of Hari then what is the need for other practices? And, if the holy names of Hari are excluded, what is the need for other (fruitless) practices?

From purification of the mind all the limbs of *bhakti* and the limbs of practice in due time and in due order appear, and finally the *bhakti* of divine love arises—this is the primary result of the holy name. Beginning from all the limbs of *bhakti* as practice up to the manifestation of feeling (*bhāva*) and divine love (*prema-bhakti*)—this should be understood to be the effect of the holy name of the Lord.¹⁷ Therefore, up until the rise of divine love, the holy names of Hari—which bestow all desires, possess all powers, and are self-existent—are the primary form of cultivation in the Age of Kali. Therefore, there is no other way in the Age of Kali apart from the holy names of Hari. This is confirmed by the previously cited instruction of scripture: “there is no other, no other, no other way.”¹⁸

There is something else special about the holy names of the Lord: there is no better practice than the holy names for binding together in the unbreakable bonds of a great reconcillation a human society that has been divided by enmity and violence caused by the influence of the Age of Kali. This is so because according to the rules of scripture only in the ritual space of singing the holy names does everyone have the equal rights, the same authority. Here—in this case of the rite of praise-singing (*saṅkīrtana*) it is human with human; no distinctions are maintained. All the differences of caste and class are forgotten—all the things that constrict and mix up our

अनन्यगतयः मर्त्या भोगिनोऽपि परन्तपाः
ज्ञानवैरग्यरहिता ब्रह्मचर्यादिवर्जिताः ।
सर्वधर्माज्झिता विष्णोर्नाममात्रेकजल्पकाः
सुखेन यां गतिं यान्ति न तां सर्वेऽपि धामिकाः ॥

¹⁶Nārada-*pañcarātra*, ?:

आराधितो यदि हरिस्तपसा ततः किम्
नाराधितो यदि हरिस्तपसा ततः किम् ।

¹⁷Cc., 3.20.10: छिन्नशुद्धिं शर्वभङ्गिं साधन उदगम

¹⁸*nāsty eva nāsty eva nāsty eva gatiṁ anyathā*

lives—all the bindings of pride and conceit are broken. For the pure exhalation of our life's breath—for becoming joined with each other in the embrace of divine love—this kind of suitable space is not discovered anywhere else in the universe of religious cultivation. In particular, in nearly all religions in some way or other there is the practice of seeking shelter in the names of the Lord. The kind of similarity [among religions] found in practices of cultivating the holy names is not found in the performance of any other religious practices. Even though the eternally established holy names mentioned in scripture are distinguished as the highest of all holy names, and even though any name accepted by someone as referring to the supreme lord is also accepted into the Lord's names and forms—since limitless auspiciousness for living beings can be achieved by those names—therefore in scripture the supreme lord has been referred to by the words “All-names (*sarvanāma*).”¹⁹

Since living beings are engulfed by the Age of Kali, and since the holy names of the lord are their only means of salvation, gaining an understanding of the details of the essential nature and greatness of the holy names is the most important subject of all for them in the universe of religious cultivation. In this matter there cannot be even an atom of doubt. Therefore, any person who exerts himself in meditative worship and practice—especially in the Age of Kali—has as his or her foremost duty becoming completely familiar with the fundamental truths concerning the holy names.

If one must become acquainted with the names of the Lord in the finest way, it is necessary first of all to comprehend the essential nature of the holy names and their fundamental truths or principles. If one gains knowledge about the essential nature of something, then that thing's powers and greatness become easily understood. But, until one knows the essential nature of a thing, comprehension of its power does not arise. One can give the following as an example—just as when a famous person possessed of some kind of greatness is present among ordinary people, as long as there is no familiarity with that person's nature, or, as long as he is not known as so and so, comprehension of his greatness and accomplishments does not arise. But, once someone else reveals his essential nature (i.e., identity), even if that person does not mention his abilities or power, those themselves become revealed in one's heart. From that moment on one's special attention becomes focused on that person and one perceives him as possessed of greatness every moment thereafter.

¹⁹Bhāg., 6.4.28: *sa sarvanāmā sa ca viśvarūpaḥ*, “he has all names and he has all forms.”

In this way, if one wants to understand the greatness of the names of the Lord, one has to first of all learn about the nature and principles of those names. In order to understand completely Śrī Kṛṣṇa, it is just as the honorable author of the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* has written:

One who knows Kṛṣṇa's nature
and his three powers has
nothing more to know about him.²⁰

In the same way, since Śrī Kṛṣṇa and his names, the Lord and the Lord's names, are completely non-different, it is absolutely necessary to gather knowledge properly about the nature and power of the Lord's names.

As long as the nature of the Lord's names is not understood, generally, full-fledged passion for repeating the holy names or real faith in the holy names on hearing them is not possible. But if, by means of evidence from scripture and reasoning consistent with scripture, one in the beginning is able to fully understand the truth of the nature of the Lord's names, that "the one who is Hari is his names," then the lack of an inclination to establish faith in repeating the holy names and in the greatness of the holy names cannot remain.

In the universe for as many "things" or named objects as there are, there are as many names. All of these names refer to a name-object by convention or agreement. In other words, the purpose of a name is to refer to a named object. Apart from that, none of the qualities of a named object are seen to exist in its name. Since the name of any worldly thing is perceived to be different from its named object, ordinary people, who in their training are long-practiced in understanding names and named objects to be different, think that in the case of the Supreme Lord, too, that kind of name and named object are separate from each other. For this reason though many perhaps are able to hold Śrī Hari as the "cause of all," "possessor of all powers," "all-auspicious" and so forth, they still don't think of all his names as anything other than conventional words that refer to him. Therefore, the sort of devotion that many have towards the Lord is not seen towards his names.

If one understands the nature of the Lord's names then one is able to understand that even though in all other cases the name and the named are

²⁰ Cc., 1.2.79:

কৃষ্ণের স্বরূপ আর শক্তিতেই জ্ঞান।
যার হয় তার নাহি কৃষ্ণেতে অজ্ঞান।

different, in relation to the highest truth or the supreme lord the name and the named are not different. The great distinction in the form of the non-difference of the name and the named is only possible in relation to the Lord who is the causal principle or the cause of all—not anywhere else. Only the Lord is the causal principle; everything else is his power or the effects of his power. In accordance with this distinction between cause and effect, or, the possessor of power and the power, only in the case of the possessor of power or the causal principle are the name and named not different. In the case of the power or the effects of power, the name and the named are different from each other. In the latter case, apart from indicating the named through a conventional sound, none of the qualities or traits of the named are found to be present in the name. Just as when from a cause in the form of a seed an effect in the form of a tree appears, in that effect-tree distinctions such as branches, leaves, and such are noticed, but previous to that, in the causal principle seed, no distinctions are noticed. In the same way, even though in his (the Lord's) effect in the form of the universe/cycle of rebirth a difference exists everywhere between name and named, in the case of the supreme lord alone, who is the highest cause of all things, the name and the named are completely non-different. The Lord himself in his special descent (*avatāra*) in the form of his names pervades the universe. Since there is fundamentally no difference between the Lord and his names, all of the Lord's powers and greatness are present in his names. Therefore, if one is able to take shelter in the names of Śrī Hari one takes shelter directly in Śrī Hari. If we are able to grasp this essential nature of the Lord's names then we are able to understand clearly this statement. If we are able to recognise that the names of Śrī Hari are directly Śrī Hari himself, then there remains no room for any more doubt on the subject of the Lord's name possessing inconceivable power and greatness just like the Lord.

In this first ray (volume) of *The Wish-Jewel of the Holy Names* an expanded consideration is given only to the nature and fundamental principles of the holy names of the Lord. Even though taking up a topic like this is an impossible affair for someone like me, a lowly living being, who is ignorant and unqualified, it has become possible by the force of the Lord's urging me on. I am firmly confident of this in my heart. Therefore, I am not able myself to say anything about whether this book is good or bad. I place the burden of considering that on the discrimination of my sensitive readers and remain unworried. If the urging and the power of the grace of the Lord on me remains undiminished, if I am not deprived of the good wishes and auspicious desires of *bhakta* readers, then I hope I will obtain perhaps the ability

to publish the second and third rays (volumes) of this book. Otherwise, it is the Lord's task—he will cause that to be completed according to his wish by some suitable noble person. Of this I am confident. Jaya Gaurarāya Hari!

humbly,
The author

Opening Verses

हरे कृष्ण हरे कृष्ण
कृष्ण कृष्ण हरे हरे ।
हरे राम हरे राम
राम राम हरे हरे ॥

*hare kṛṣṇa hare kṛṣṇa
kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa hare hare|
hare rāma hare rāma
rāma rāma hare hare||¹*

चेतोदर्पणमार्जनं भवमहादावाग्निनिर्वापनं
श्रेयःकैरवचन्द्रिकावितरणं विद्यावधूजीवनम् ।
आनन्दाम्बुधिवर्धनं प्रतिपदं पूर्णामृतास्वादनं
सर्वात्मस्नपनं परं विजयते श्रीकृष्णसङ्कीर्तनम् ॥

*cetodarpaṇamārjanaṁ bhavamahādāvāgninirvāpanaṁ
śreyaḥkairavacandrikāvitaranaṁ vidyāvadhūjīvanam|
ānandāmbudhivardhanaṁ pratipadaṁ pūrṇāmṛtāsvādanaṁ
sarvātmasnapanam paraṁ vijayate śrīkṛṣṇasaṅkīrtanam||²*

It cleans the mirror of the mind;

¹This is the Mahāmantra. There are many varieties of interpretation of this mantra. The simplest is to take these words *hare*, *kṛṣṇa*, and *rāma* as names of the god Kṛṣṇa (*kṛṣṇa*, *rāma*) and his beloved lover Rādhā (*hare*). Thus, the mantra consists of a series of calls to Kṛṣṇa and Rādhā. Each of the names is in the vocative case. *Hare*, however, in the Caitanya tradition is not the vocative of Hari (another name of Kṛṣṇa), but of Harā, a name of Rādhā, the one who steals Kṛṣṇa's heart. The Mahāmantra is presented here because it is the primary focus of this book, representing the divine names of God Kṛṣṇa and his pleasure-giving power Rādhā.

²Verse one of the *Śikṣaṣṭaka* or *Eight Teachings* attributed to Caitanya.

Puts out the great fire of material life;
 Spreads moonlight on the white lotus of well-being;
 Brings back to life the wife of knowledge;
 Increases the ocean of joy; with every word
 It causes tasting of the fullest nectar;
 It bathes the entire soul; supreme glory
 To the singing of Kṛṣṇa's names.

जयति जयति नामानन्दरूपं मुरारे-
 विरमितनिजधर्मध्यानपूजादियत्नम् ।
 कथमपि सकृदात्तं मुक्तिदं प्राणिनां यत्
 परमममृतमेकं जीवनं भूषणं मे ॥

*jayati jayati nāmānandarūpaṁ murāre-
 rviramitanijadharmadhyānapūjādiyatnam|
 kathamapi sakṛdāttaṁ muktidaṁ prāṇināṁ yat
 paramamamṛtamekaṁ jīvanaṁ bhūṣaṇaṁ me||*

Glory, glory to Murāri's
 blissful form, his holy name,
 which ends the care for performing
 one's own *dharma* duties,
 meditation, ritual worship, and such.
 Even if somehow spoken only once
 It bestows liberation on living beings.
 It is the greatest nectar,
 my one life and ornament.³

³ Attributed to Sanātana Gosvāmin, *Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta*, 1.1.9.

Eight Verses on Kṛṣṇa's Names (Kṛṣṇa-nāmāṣṭaka)

निखिलश्रुतिमौलिरत्नमाला-
 द्युतिनीराजितपादपङ्कजान्त ।
 अयि मुक्तकुलैरुपास्यमानं
 परितस्त्वां हरिनाम संश्रयामि ॥ १ ॥

*nikhilāśrutimauliratnamālā-
 dyutinīrājita-pādapaṅkajānta/
 aya muktakulairupāśyamānaṁ
 paritastvāṁ harināma saṁśrayāmi|| 1||*

O Name of Hari, the tips of whose feet
 are illuminated by light
 from the jewel-lined crowns
 of all the Vedas. You are worshiped
 by the clan of the liberated.
 I surrender to you completely. (1)⁴

जय नामधेय मुनिवृन्दगेय
 जनरञ्जनाय परमक्षराकृते ।
 त्वमनादरादपि मनागुदीरितं
 निखिलोग्रतापपटलीं विलुम्पसि ॥ २ ॥

*jaya nāmadheya munivṛndageya
 janarāñjanāya paramakṣarākṛte/
 tvamanādarādapi manāgudīritaṁ
 nikhilogratāpapaṭalīṁ vilumpasi|| 2||*

Glory to you, O Name Holder.
 Praised by multitudes of sages,
 you take a syllabic form
 only for the people's pleasure;
 you, even slightly pronounced
 and without proper respect,
 destroy all the fierce sufferings
 [of worldly existence]. (2)⁵

⁴Rūpa Gosvāmin, "Eight Verses on Kṛṣṇa's Names," 1.

⁵ibid., verse 2.

यदाभासोऽप्युद्यन् कवलितभवध्वान्तविधवो
 दृशं तत्त्वान्धानामपि दिशति भक्तिप्रणयिणी ।
 जनस्तस्योदात्तं जगति भगवन्नामतरणे
 कृती ते निर्वक्तुं क इह महिमानं प्रभवति ॥ ३ ॥

*yadābhāso'pyudyān kavalitabhavadhvāntavidhavo
 dṛśaṃ tattvāndhānāmapi diśati bhaktipraṇayinīm/
 janastasyodāttam jagati bhagavannāmatarāṇe
 kṛtī te nirvaktuṃ ka iha mahimānaṃ prabhavati|| 3||*

The rising of the mere appearance
 of the Name destroys the pervasive
 darkness of material existence
 and gives—even to those blind
 to its true nature—sight that brings
bhakti. O sun of the lord's name!
 What learned person in this world
 can describe your lofty greatness? (3)⁶

यद्ब्रह्मसाक्षात्कृतिनिष्ठयापि
 विनाशमायाति विना न भोगैः ।
 अपैति नामस्फुरणेन तत्ते
 प्रारब्धकर्मैति विरौति वेदः ॥ ४ ॥

*yadbrahmasākṣātkṛtiniṣṭhayāpi
 vināśamāyāti vinā na bhogaiḥ/
 apaiti nāmasphuraṇena tatte
 prārabdhakarmeti virauti vedah|| 4||*

That which is not destroyed without
 having to experience it
 by a direct experience
 of Brahman—that is, *karma*
 already in force—is destroyed
 when your name appears. So loudly
 proclaims the Veda. (4)⁷

⁶ibid., verse 3.

⁷ibid., verse 4.

अघदमन-यशोदानन्दनौ नन्दसूनौ

कमलनयन-गोपीचन्द्र-वृन्दावनेन्द्राः ।

प्रणतकरुण-कृष्णावित्यनेकस्वरूपे

त्वयि मम रतिरुच्चैर्वर्धतां नामधेय ॥ ५ ॥

aghadamana-yaśodānandanau nandasūno

kamalanayana-gopīcandra-vṛndāvanendrāḥ|

praṇatakaruṇa-kṛṣṇāvityanekasvarūpe

tvayi mama ratiruccairvardhatām nāmadheya|| 5||

O You who are named!

As Subduer of Agha,

Son of Yaśodā, Son of Nanda,

Lotus-eyed, Moon of Cowherd Girls,

Lord of Vṛndāvana,

Kind to Those Who Surrender,

Kṛṣṇa, you reveal many forms.

May my attraction and taste

for you greatly increase. (5)⁸

वाच्यं वाचकमित्युदेति भवतो नाम स्वरूपद्वयं

पूर्वस्मात् परमेव हन्त करुणः तत्रापि जानीमहे ।

यस्तस्मिन् विहितापराधनिवहः प्राणी समन्ताद्भवे-

दास्येनेदमुपास्य सोऽपि हि सदानन्दाम्बौ मज्जति ॥ ६ ॥

vācyaṁ vācakamityudeti bhavato nāma svarūpadvayaṁ

pūrvasmāt parameva hanta karuṇaḥ tatrāpi jānīmahe|

yastasmin vihitāparādhanivahāḥ prāṇī samantādbhave-

dāsyenedamupāsya so'pi hi sadānandāmbdhau majjati|| 6||

Your name rises up in two forms,

as signified and signifier.

We should know that between them

the latter is the kinder

since even a living being

who has committed offenses

to the former but worships

the latter with his tongue

⁸ibid., verse 5.

forever swims in an ocean of joy. (6)⁹

सूदिताश्रितजनार्तिराशये
रम्यचिद्धनसुखस्वरूपिने ।
नाम गोकुलमहोत्सवाय ते
कृष्णपूर्णवपुषे नमो नमः ॥ ७ ॥

*sūditāśritajanārtirāśaye
ramyacidghanasukhasvarūpine/
nāma gokulamahotsavāya te
kṛṣṇapūrṇavapuṣe namo namaḥ|| 7||*

O Holy Name! To you I bow
repeatedly, destroyer of
the pains of those who surrender;
your true essence is beautiful,
solid consciousness and pleasure,
Gokula's greatest festival;
you are fully Kṛṣṇa's body. (7)¹⁰

नारदवीणोज्जीवन सुधोर्मिनिर्यासमाधुरीपुर ।
त्वं कृष्णनाम कामं स्फुर मे रसने रसेन सदा ॥ ८ ॥

*nārada-vīṇojjīvana sudhorminiryāsamādhurīpura/
tvaṁ kṛṣṇanāma kāmam sphura me rasane rasena sadā||8||*

Enlivener of Nārada's *vīṇā*,
filled with the sweetness of
the extract of waves of nectar,
You! Kṛṣṇa's name! Please appear
on my tongue with rapture always! (8)¹¹

⁹ibid., verse 6.

¹⁰ibid., verse 7.

¹¹ibid., verse 8.

Chapter One: The Necessity and Superiority of Scriptural Evidence

His grace causes a lame person
to cross over a mountain,
a dumb person to recite Veda;
I praise him, the supreme Lord,
Śrī Kṛṣṇacaitanya.¹

The Lord and subjects related to the Lord are called the highest truth. Generally, the kind of interest seen among people for pursuing the objects of wordly affairs, such as wealth, fine food, reputation, and so forth, is not seen among them for pursuing the objects of the highest truth. For those who like rice (*anna*) their liking is even greater for the highest rice (*parama-anna*). But, for human beings in general the sort of taste they are seen to have for worldly objects like wealth (*artha*) and such, they are not seen to have for the highest aims or purposes (*parama-artha*). It is difficult, even with many teachings and instructions, to interest ordinary people in matters like meditation and worship by which one can reach the supreme Lord.

¹In imitation of Śrīdhara's famous verse in the introduction to his commentary on the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*:

पङ्क्तुं लङ्घयते शैलं
मूकमावर्तयेत श्रुतिं ।
यत्कृपा तमहं वन्दे
कृष्णचेतन्यमीश्वरम् ॥

But, we find that even without instruction, from the five year old to the aged facing imminent death, nearly everyone, whether man or woman, is ceaselessly trying to enjoy the objects of this world. One primary cause for this unusual occurrence is that the objects of ordinary affairs such as wealth and such, which are favorable for worldly happiness, are all perceptible and thus there is interest in them. Objects of the highest truth are generally not perceptible like that, and thus people are found not to be interested in them.

Wealth and the rest can be seen, and by obtaining worldly prosperity such as wealth and so forth, one enjoys happiness and ease in the world. That can be seen and known. Therefore, since the objects of wealth, food, and the rest and their results are perceptible, one observes an interest in all these perception-proven objects of worldly affairs. But generally people are not able to perceive or to know the existence of objects of the highest truth. For this reason, the Lord and his eternal abode, his companions, names, qualities, and activities, the existence of all the objects made of consciousness must be doubtful. In terms of reality, those things are real. Even though they indeed are the highest truth and highest joy, thinking, in place of them, that perception-handly, small and quickly passing, worldly sensual pleasure is the highest truth and the highest joy, people are enthusiastic to obtain these things. Therefore, for people in general, interest in worldly objects such as wealth, food and such and their lack of interest in objects of the highest truth is primarily caused by the perceptibility and non-perceptibility of those objects.

Is it justified to not believe in the existence of something if it is not seen with the eyes? First we have to consider this. Primarily a thing cannot not be seen or perceived for the two reasons below:

1. because a thing does not exist.
2. because senses suitable to perceive something are absent.

For the first reason all nonexistant things like “sky flowers,” “hare-horns,” “sons of a barren woman” are not perceived. In other words, since there are no sky flowers or horns of a hare, they cannot be seen.

For the second reason the supreme Lord and his highest-bliss-filled eternal abode, companions, and activities, which are all formed of consciousness, are not perceived. In other words, if suitable senses are present, all the objects of the highest truth can be seen and known. Because those senses are absent these things are generally not seen and not known.

Since it has never been heard that someone has seen false things like sky-flowers and such, and since we certainly will never hear of anyone seeing them in the future, those types of things do not exist. Therefore, one should know them to be unreal. But one does hear of many in the past who have seen the holy abode formed of consciousness and the supreme lord along with his companions or the things of the highest reality. Those who have seen the highest truth are everywhere respected in the world by great souls who are without self-interest, dedicated to the welfare of others, and whose lives are righteous. Again, it is not that we will not hear of many in the future who will see that highest reality. Therefore, it is not true the things of the highest reality are unseen like sky-flowers and other things that are unreal and false. It is because senses, minds, and intellects that are suitable for seeing those things are absent that they are unseen or not understood. Therefore, one must understand that:

1. If a thing or an object exists but it is not perceived then senses in the form of instruments suitable for perceiving that object are not present.
2. Whatever type an object may be, the instruments or senses that perceive it must resemble it. By one type of sense organ another type of object cannot be perceived.
3. All objects are predominantly divided into different types: dull or unconscious and conscious, or material and non-material.

It is not that in the natural world we are able to grasp the five objects: sound, touch, form, flavor, and smell. Rather, because we have instruments that are capable of grasping and experiencing those five objects, we are able to grasp them. Our five natural senses: ears, skin, eyes, tongue, and nose in that order are the instruments to grasp and experience the five kinds of gross objects. If all those instruments did not exist, then even though the objects of sound, touch, and so forth do exist in the world, their existence would not be known. Even though someone who is blind cannot perceive form, someone without a tongue taste, someone deaf sound, a person with those senses can perceive them. In the natural world, though all the sense objects are temporary they are real, and those who think they do not exist do not have the senses to perceive them. We can be certain about this. Similarly, those who have obtained consciousness-based senses are able to perceive the consciousness world whereas others without those senses who do not perceive that world think that it is non-existent or false. One should

know that the things of the consciousness-based highest reality are not non-existent. When the right senses appear that consciousness-based world is visible. Those who do not perceive it simply do not have the right senses.

Even though objects are perceived by the senses, all objects are not perceived by all the senses. It is necessary for the sense that grasps an object to be of the same genre as the object. The natural world is made of the five mixed or gross elements (*pañcīkṛta-bhūta*): ether, air, fire, water, and earth.² The five sense objects: sound, touch, form, flavor, and fragrance in that order are the qualities of those five gross elements. From the *sāttvika* portions of the unmixed or subtle elements called *tanmātras* are produced the subtle senses: the sense of hearing, the sense of touching, the sense of seeing, the sense of tasting, and the sense of smelling. The gross forms of those: the ear, skin, the eyes, the tongue, and the nose are able to grasp the quality of their kind of gross element. Since sound is the quality of ether, only the sense of hearing, which is produced from the *sāttvika* portion of subtle ether element (*ākāśa-tanmātra*), in its gross form as the ear, is able to grasp or perceive it. But none of the other senses like the eye or the nose is able to perceive sound. Touch is the quality of air and only the sense of touch, which is produced from the *sāttvika* portion of the subtle air element (*vāyu-tanmātra*), in its gross form of skin, is able to perceive it. But none of the other senses like eyes and ears is able to perceive touch. The same is the case with all the senses.

Since the previous is the case, one sees that, apart from objects of the same kind of element from which a sense is produced, a particular sense is not capable of grasping other kinds of objects. When one kind of natural sense object is not graspable by different kinds of natural senses, then there is no reason to be unable to understand how a natural or gross sense is unable to grasp in any way all of the supernatural objects which are consciousness-based and which are completely different from and opposite to gross objects.

That direct perception that we always place our faith in, the limits of our seeing and knowing with those natural senses are so constricted and faulty that, forget about perceiving supernatural, consciousness-formed objects, even in our perception of natural or gross objects those gross senses are incomplete and incompetent. It is not as if we cannot understand this if we

²Here Kanupriya Goswami is drawing from the cosmology of Vedānta. There are many texts in which this is described. One of those in the *Vedānta-sāra* by Sadānanda. See paragraphs 53-56 (pp. 84-87) in *The Fundamentals of Vedānta* edited, introduced, and translated by Neal Delmonico. (Kirksville, US: Blazing Sapphire Press, 2006)

think about it calmly a little. A very distant object that we cannot see, with the help of an instrument for long distance seeing (binoculars or telescope) we can see and thus know it exists. If we did not have the help of one of those instruments for long distance seeing, then even though a thing exists, would we not have thought for a long time that it did not exist? When the natural senses are so imperfect in grasping natural objects, it is easy to understand, if we think about it, that for our gross (natural) senses there can be no capacity to perceive consciousness-based objects, which are so different in kind from them. Very tiny things we cannot see and thus consider to be nonexistent. If, however, with the help of instruments for seeing minute things (microscopes), we perceive them, then we can understand how inadequate our gross senses are at perceiving all the gross objects in the best possible way.

It is not difficult to understand that all those illusory senses which are so unsuitable for thoroughly perceiving gross objects are entirely incapable of perceiving supernatural quality-less (*nirguṇa*) or consciousness-formed (*cinmaya*) objects. Once again, because of distant or nearby position or various changes in the sense organs, a single object may be seen in different ways, a single sound may be heard in different ways, a single smell may be smelled in different ways, and because of softness or hardness of skin and tongue various differences are noticed in touching and tasting. Among all the different kinds of hearings, touchings, seeings, tastings, and smellings of one single object, which perception is true? When that cannot be ascertained, that direct perception of the natural senses upon which ordinary people are seen to depend so much cannot but be recognized as full of flaws and incomplete. One will be able to accept this if one thinks a little about it calmly.

Our natural minds and intellects, which have the nature of will and ascertainment respectively, are constantly being changed in the different stages of childhood, early youth, youth, adulthood, and old age. In the midst of this gradual changing of the human mind and intellect in which stage can one determine that the functioning of the intellect has reached its complete fullness? If increase in age is the measurer of the highest development of the mind and intellect, then why in old age does one find that there is generally a mental decline and the reappearance of a mind and intellect like those of a child in many subjects? Again, when the deliberative intellects of all human beings are found to be not of one form—what one person considers just another person considers unjust, what one person considers truth another person considers untruth, one person's conclusion is the object of

someone else's counter-argument, what is desirable to one person is to be rejected by another person—when one finds so many flaws such as disunity, instability, and changeability in the limited human mind and intellect even in thoroughly comprehending and ascertaining natural objects, no possibility remains for perceiving all the consciousness-based, supernatural objects, which are so foreign to the gross objects, by means of our gross minds and intellects. There is no need to dwell on this topic any further.

That which is correct knowledge of an object is called certain knowledge, truth, or *pramā*. That from which certain knowledge is born or arises is called evidence or means of knowledge (*pramāṇa*). Though our natural eyes and the rest of our senses, our minds, and intellects are somehow more or less useful as evidence for knowing natural or gross objects, our worldly perceptions, inferences, logic, and argumentation, are all worthless as evidence for knowing the consciousness-based objects of the highest truth, which are completely opposite to and different from gross objects. Even if our gross senses were infallible and incorruptable and even if our natural minds and intellects reached their highest excellence, their perceptions and inferences would not be counted as means of knowledge for knowing the supreme lord, who is being, consciousness, and bliss, nor the goals and practices related to him, which are completely beyond the gross material world. There is no obstacle to our saying this. Therefore, apart from developing our own hyper-natural, consciousness-based senses, mind, and intellect, in the matter of knowing other-worldly and hyper-natural objects of the highest truth, we should understand that even though we have illusory eyes we are blind, and even though we have illusory intellects we are ignorant.

For a blind person, until he or she obtains the power of sight, he or she must depend upon the help of someone with sight and follow that person's guidance. In the same way, since we are completely blind to and ignorant about the preter-natural, consciousness-based world, the transcendent highest truth, we have a singular necessity: until we obtain a sense of sight capable of discerning that world, we have to take the help of someone who has such sight and follow the path pointed out by that person in the belief that that person's advice and instructions are not mistaken. That the scriptures, headed by the Veda, are our eyes for determining what are the goals and the means of attaining those goals in the case of the trans-natural highest truth, this we can learn from the scriptures themselves:

Of ancestors, gods, and humans
your Veda, lord, is the best eye

for goals and how to achieve them
in matters imperceptible.³

A blind person cannot see, but is able to walk; a crippled person cannot walk, but is able to see. Moreover, even though the ability to move is present for a blind person and the ability to see is present for a crippled person, both are inactive as long as they do not cooperate with each other. In other words, if the blind person carries the crippled person on their shoulders then the blind person is well directed according to the guidance of the sighted crippled person. Gradually they reach the place they need to go and they are able to fulfill their desires. In the same way, we, though able to travel the path to the supreme, have no way to travel that path because we lack consciousness-based eyes or are spiritually blind. Scripture, as our eyes, can guide us on that path without mistake, but by ourselves we cannot go. Therefore, applying the analogy of the crippled and the blind if a human being becoming scripture-eyed strives to find the highest truth, then after reaching the place they wanted to go, the efforts of scripture and practitioner both become very successful. Just as the practice of a practitioner who does not depend on scripture is fruitless, the objective of a scripture without practitioners is never accomplished.

The previous being the case, we have learned that even though all natural and worldly objects can be grasped to some degree by our natural senses, minds, and intellects, those things that are preter-natural and other-worldly, that are beyond the three qualities of nature [clarity, translucence, and opacity],⁴ can never be objects of the perceptions and inferences of our gross senses, minds and intellects. Therefore, even though direct perception and inference are somehow useful in knowing the objects of the ordinary or natural world, for comprehending all the objects of the preter-natural, consciousness-based kingdom beyond the three natural qualities, the self-evident Vedas

³Bhāg., 11.20.4:

पितृदेवमनुष्याणां
वेदश्चक्षुस्तवश्चर।
श्रेयस्त्वनुपलब्धेऽर्थे
साध्यसाधनयोरपि॥

This is my literal translation. Kanuipriya Goswami gives a more liberal translation: “Hey Kṛṣṇa! Your true nature and greatness are beyond the scope of worldly means of knowing. Thus, the goals and the means of achieving those goals based on knowing those things about you are not understood. Therefore, the Veda as your own directives are the best eye for ancestors, gods, and human beings.”

⁴aka. *sattva, rajas, tamas*.

and the scriptures that follow them are the only indicators or evidential sources. That is what has been determined in uninterrupted successions of learned people from time without beginning. The all-knowing supreme lord is the source or direct cause of the Vedic scriptures. Thus, those great Vedic scriptures are the revealers of the supreme lord, or the means of knowing him.⁵

Apart from the all-knowing, all-seeing, and all-powerful supreme lord it is not possible for others to have complete knowledge about him.⁶ The knowledge of the living being, because of being covered by ignorance,⁷ is corrupted by error (mistaking one thing for another), oversight (inattentiveness), deception (the desire to cheat), and faulty senses (the senses' lack of skill). Or, because of changes in its limited, illusory intellect which increases and decreases, the living being is unsteady. For this reason, apart from reflections that follow the scriptures, let someone's self-conceived reasoning and argument be by chance however pleasing, it is not found to be firmly grounded or enduring.⁸ One person's view established by reasoning and argument can be refuted by another person who is a more expert logician in another country or another time. One sees one person's established opinion, refuted by another logician and then again re-established by yet another logician. When, in this way, reasoning and argument born of the independent intellect of human beings are not found to be firmly founded or enduring, then, because of faults such as multiplicity, uncertainty, and impermanence of the limited and gross turnings of the human mind, apart from the Vedas and arguments that are favorable to the Vedas, any reasoning and argumentation that are outside the Vedas, no matter how pleasing they may be in ordinary affairs, can never be considered sources of knowledge in learning about the preter-natural highest truth. Therefore, one must understand that the Vedas and Veda-based scriptures which are in essence the words of the supreme lord, free of the faults of mistake, oversight, and the rest, are the only sources of knowledge in discovering the highest truth.

Mistake, oversight, misdirection,
and weakness of the senses:

⁵Because scripture is the source [of knowledge of the supreme lord], शास्त्रयोनित्वात्, *Brahma-sūtra*, 1.1.3.

⁶But me no one knows, *Bhagavad-gītā*, 7.26, मां तु वेद न कश्चन.

⁷*Bhagavad-gītā*, 5.15, "Knowledge is covered by ignorance," अज्ञानेनावृतं ज्ञानम्

⁸*Brahma-sūtra*, 2.1.11, "Because of argument's lack of foundation," तर्काप्रतिस्थानात्.

in the words of the lord
all these faults are absent.⁹

That which makes known unknown and unthinkable objects is called scripture.¹⁰ Things of the highest truth are completely beyond the senses, or, beyond objects that are graspable by the eyes, ears, and the rest and are not approachable by the natural intellect. Therefore, these kinds of unknown and unthinkable objects are never in the domain of the natural logic and argument which are rooted in direct perception and inference.

Even though ordinary logic and argument are somehow useful and even helpful in practical matters that can be grasped by the senses, they are completely useless in knowing objects that are beyond the senses, preternatural, and inconceivable. Therefore, revelation and tradition have forbidden their use in relationship to those objects. *Naiṣā tarkeṇa matir āpaneyā*, or, “this pure intellect or capacity to grasp the supreme truth of yours cannot be achieved by dry argument.”¹¹

All those objects that are
inconceivable cannot
be solved by reasoning.
“Objects that are beyond
nature”—that is the very
definition of inconceivable.¹²

⁹ *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, 1.2.72:

ভ্রম প্রমাদ বিপ্রলিঙ্গা করণাপাটব |
ঐশ্বরের বাক্যে নাহি দোষ এই সব |

¹⁰ Source unknown, अज्ञातज्ञापनं हि शास्त्रम्

¹¹ A more concise translation would be: this understanding cannot be gained by reasoning (conjecture?).

¹² *Mahābhārata*, Bhīṣma-parvan, 5.12:

अचिन्त्याः खलु ये भावास्
तान्न तर्केन साधयेत् ।
प्रकृतिभ्यः परम् यत्तु
तदचिन्त्यस्य लक्षणम् ॥

Unthinkable indeed are those
entities; they cannot be known
by reasoning. That which is beyond
nature is the definition
of the inconceivable.

The kind of reasoning that all the scriptures have forbidden in attempting to know preter-natural objects is only the kind of reasoning that is outside the Vedas, that is imagined in one's own noggin. Otherwise, the scriptures would not state that reflection and reasoning favorable to the scriptures is not forbidden in passages like: "One should ponder the Self."¹³ Therefore, for determining the supreme object of worship and best form of worship no other form of evidence can be relied upon apart from the scriptures—which are perfect from beginningless time and respected by unbroken successions of the wise—and reasoning which is favorable to those scriptures. This is established.

Whatever one's inclination may be within the one eternal, Vedic tradition, whether one is a worshipper of Viṣṇu, the Goddess, Śiva, the Sun, Gaṇeśa, or a worshipper of different gods, or a worshipper of the formless and undifferentiated Brahman, or a practitioner of desire-free works, a pursuer of liberating knowledge, a practitioner of yoga, or a bhakta, to determine the object of worship and the method of worship the Vedas, Upaniṣads, Purāṇas, Epics, and all the scriptures of the eternal tradition are necessarily accepted as means of knowing. And, one must engage in the practice of those traditions according the direction of that scripture. A difference of opinion about the intention of the statements of scripture may arise. Let there be mutual disagreements about the meaning of scripture. Nevertheless, those differences of opinion must be supported using scripture as evidence. This is the long-practiced eternal Hindu tradition.¹⁴

That which is true Hindu tradition, apart from auspiciousness for all beings, is unable to bring about anything unfortunate or unwanted for anyone. This is firm. If that sort of misfortune is seen somewhere, it should be understood that what is considered unwanted or unfortunate is a mistake of understanding. And if that is not the case, the custom from which that inauspicious thing arose should be known as not the eternal and all-auspicious Hindu tradition manifested from the most beneficial highest lord.

An exalted Hindu would not disrespect or disregard any religious person, even though their religion is not accepted as a Hindu tradition because it is not in agreement with the Vedic scriptures, or [disrespect or disregard] any human being with respect to their humanity. Therefore, while skillfully maintaining boundaries in matters of external human activity according to

¹³*Bṛhad-āraṇyaka*, 4.5.6: आत्मा वारे द्रष्टव्यः श्रोतव्यः मन्तव्यः ...

¹⁴By the word "Hindu" is meant: the noble folk of India who follow the traditions of the eternal Vedas and by the words "Hindu tradition" is meant the traditions of the eternal Vedas. One should understand these in these ways throughout.

distinctions of quality, work, and so forth from the angle of the unavoidable inequality arising from variegatedness in creation, the eternal Hindu tradition has created a genuine way of recognizing equality or a state of being equal in the hearts of human beings by means of a transformation into immortality. There is nothing equal to it in the world. When that recognition of equality awakens in a person's heart, all the human beings in the world—why just human beings?—all the *living beings* in the world are bound together by the unbreakable cord of the inner self. As a result, that the world is filled with Brahman, the great spirit, (*sarvaṃ khalv idaṃ brahma*), or with Hari's power (*śakti, parasya brahmaṇo śaktistathedaṃ akhilaṃ jagat*) becomes a matter of all experience. Then a wish arises to express a desire for the satisfaction and peace of all living beings of the entire universe, from the creator Brahmā down to a blade of grass (*ābrahmastambaparyantaṃ jagat tṛpyatu*). Whether or not anyone anywhere else has been able to proclaim an exalted expression of equality, magnificent and illumined by such dignity, other than the eternal Vedic tradition, I implore modern proponents of equality to consider calmly and see. The degree to which external equality is observed through efforts to impose artificial equality only in matters of the body and of things related to the body, to that degree is one's internal inequality caused. This, too, can be understood if one calmly reflects on it.

The fundamental Hindu course of action is *bhakti* and trust in the supreme lord and desire for the well-being of all beings. While keeping that unbroken, after taking into account different places, times, and the fitness of different persons, from time to time its outer practices are in need of change or purification. That idea is also in agreement with the eternal Vedic tradition. But, if that purification is not undertaken according to the directions of scriptures, but instead is driven by one's independent whims then, apart from heretical (*upadharma*) one cannot refer to that as the eternal tradition.

The texts on tradition (*dharma-śāstra*) are divided into "modern" and "aboriginal," that is, "present from the beginning" (*ājānika*). A work that was written by a particular person, possessing an extraordinary ability, from some clearly defined or indicated time is called a "modern" or "human-produced" (*pauruṣeya*) scripture on tradition (*dharma-śāstra*). And a work that was revealed, from time without beginning, in each creation like in the creation before, and from the supreme lord himself is called an "aboriginal" or "not-human-produced" (*apauruṣeya*) scripture on tradition. The scripture that is revealed by the supreme lord who is himself the eternal or permanent being is the eternal scripture and the teaching given in that scripture is called the eternal teaching or tradition (*sanātana dharma*). The

difference between the Hindu tradition or the tradition of the eternal Vedas and other traditions is that among all the traditions on earth the only one that can introduce itself as eternal or permanent is the Hindu tradition. No other tradition can claim to be eternal.

All the other religions of the present world are “man-made.” Therefore, they are not aboriginal, but “modern.” Since there exist in clearly defined forms histories of the creations of all those religions from certain well-known times by certain powerful individuals or persons, such that before those times those religions did not exist, and since a created thing will not exist later (*yajjanyam tadanityam*)—all those religions or traditions can be understood as “modern” or impermanent. In this way how many “modern” or “man-made” religions have been born and then in the course of long periods of time have been swept away? History can give only some testimony to that. Though efforts have been made, applying the methods used to determine the histories of all those impermanent and man-made religions, to determine the beginning of the non-man-made, eternal, Vedic tradition, even until today no one has been able to prove unmistakably when that was, since various scholars are not of the same opinion. Moreover, the difference of opinions concerning ascertaining its age is so great that nothing solid can be decided from that. Instead, the beginninglessness of Hindu tradition and Hindu culture is demonstrated. Many among those who are not used to thinking in terms of the beginningless or of eternal things are at least forced to accept the Vedas as the earth’s oldest texts.¹⁵

Therefore, if one considers it from many different angles one can understand that the Vedas, Purāṇas, Epics, and other works of tradition and the Vedic tradition that is taught in them are, in the midst of the impermanent, permanent and eternal things. None of the eternal scriptures are written by any individual people. They are manifested from the supreme lord playfully like exhalation. In this way, from the supreme lord himself comes an introduction to his own appearance, and he himself gives the eternal law. As it is said:

The Ṛg Veda, Yajur Veda, Sāma Veda, Atharva Veda, the history
and ancient lore are the exhalation of this great being.¹⁶

¹⁵The Vedas are not considered the oldest religious texts in the world. There are hymns from Sumer (2600 BCE), texts from Egypt (2400-2100 BCE), and epics from Mesopotamia (2100 BCE) that are older. The Rg Veda is usually dated to 1500-1000 BCE). -Translator

¹⁶*Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, 2.4.10: अस्य महतो भूतस्य निश्चितमेतद् यद्वेदो यजुर्वेदः सामवेदोऽथर्वाङ्गिरसः इतिहासः पुराणम्।

Therefore, it is understood that, along with the creation of the universal kingdom, the books that are the basis of the laws or the injunctions and prohibitions made by the supreme lord as overseer of the universe for the well-being of the human species are manifested in this world in the form of the Vedas and Purāṇas from beginningless time with each creation like the re-creation of the sun and the moon from previous creations.¹⁷ In the eternal Vedic scriptures is placed, in an unchanging form, all of the guidance in the form of the direct orders and instructions of the supreme lord himself for the whole human species. No one doubts that, since without food, water, and air it is not possible for human beings to remain alive, along with the creation, because of their necessity, those things are created as well. In the same way without the regular rules and constraints it is not possible to protect human society. Those laws in the form of injunctions and prohibitions or ethical practices are suitable for establishing human life on a permanent foundation and making it successful. That those traditions or *dharma* will be produced by the supreme lord himself just like he produces food and water cannot be considered unlikely.

One sees in the ordinary world that when a country is established, along with that establishment it is extremely necessary for the ruler of the land to initiate laws in the form of injunctions and prohibitions. Without laws no kingdom's rules and constraints can remain intact and without rules and constraints it is not appropriate to call a place a country. Therefore, along with founding a country one observes the need everywhere to institute at the same time the laws of the country.

If it is so important for the founding of a tiny kingdom on earth that the rulers establish laws in the form of injunctions and prohibitions, then how can one consider it logical that, at the time of the establishing of the limitless, universal kingdom, there is no necessity for the universal emperor who has limitless glory to institute laws consisting of injunctions and prohibitions for the benefit of the human beings of the universe? Therefore, one should know that, in order to protect the laws and limits of the universe, the beginningless law for the protection and discipline of the universal kingdom in the form of the teachings and commands of the universal emperor, the overlord of the universe, is [first] manifested in natural tendencies for all non-human life forms, whose mental functions are undeveloped and who are thus unable to distinguish between what is beneficial and what is not for themselves, and then in the rules and regulations of the Vedas and other

¹⁷Rg Veda, 10.190: सूर्यचन्द्रमसौ धाता यथापूर्वमकल्पयत्

scriptures, which are instituted in each age like in previous ages, for human beings whose mental functions are fully developed or, in other words, who have knowledge and discrimination and are thus able to distinguish between what is beneficial and what is harmful.

If the laws of the lord of the universe, the supreme lord, in the form of the instructions of scripture, can be respected, then in order to establish peace and regulation in the world the worldly kings have no special necessity for writing laws of their own. When and to the degree which human society—after neglecting and disrespecting the instructions of scripture which are the direct orders of the universal emperor who possesses supreme greatness—becomes intent on acting according to its own desires, then and to that degree is lack of peace and lack of regulation seen in the world. Moreover, though earthly rulers may become busy in limitless ways to institute ever newer laws on top of laws to counteract that lack of peace, there is no possibility of getting lasting good results from such efforts. Rather, the lack of discipline and regulation becomes ever greater.

Though there are many who believe in the eternity and non-human origin of the Vedas, with respect to the Purāṇas and other scriptures many among them support the opposite view. In order to change that point of view, I humbly request that those of that view read the book called the *Tattva-sandarbha* (*Treatise on Truth*) by the crown-jewel of Caitanya Vaiṣṇava teachers, the most honorable and learned Śrī Jīva Gosvāmin. In that book, he has considered in detail with super-natural brilliance and arguments from scripture that the Purāṇas are Veda and even more than Veda and that among the Purāṇas the *Bhāgavata* is the best of all. Since it is useful to the present topic, a dim reflection of some part of that discussion is being provided here.

From the previously cited passage of *śruti* it can be understood that not only the four Vedas, but the scriptures known as the histories (*itihāsa*) and the ancient lore (*Purāṇa*) have been manifested by the supreme lord. Therefore, when one says “scripture” one should also understand that [term] to refer to the ancient lore and histories like it does to the Veda, since their being Veda is also well established in the scriptures.

The Ṛk, Yajur, Sāman, and
Atharvan Vedas came out of
Brahmā's mouths starting with the east.¹⁸

¹⁸Bhāg. 3.12.37:

The histories and ancient lore,
the fifth Veda, the lord
created from all his mouths,
he who sees all things.¹⁹

In other places, too, it is said, “the ancient lore is the fifth Veda,”²⁰ “The histories and ancient lore are well known as the fifth Veda,”²¹ and “he taught the Vedas of which the Mahābhārata was the fifth.”²² In many places it is found that the ancient lore and histories are referred to by the word Veda.

Even in revealed scriptures (*śruti*) it has been said, “O lord, I have read the Ṛg Veda, the Yajur Veda, the Sāma Veda, the fourth—the Atharvan, and the history and ancient lore—the fifth Veda of the Vedas.”²³

Therefore, the divinity of the histories and ancient lore has been established by statements from both the non-human composed (*apauruṣeya*) revealed scriptures and the traditional (*smṛti*) scriptures. In a revealed text (*śruti*) called Bhāllaveya a reference to the histories and ancient lore is clearly found:

The god to be worshipped is one,
indeed, higher than the highest,
with all virtues, from perceptions
by all the Vedas, along with
histories, sacred texts, and ancient lore.²⁴

ऋग्यजुर्सामाथर्वसंख्यानं
वेदान् पूर्वादिभिर्मुखैः ।

¹⁹Bhāg. 3.12.39:

इतिहासपुराणानि पञ्चमं वेदमीश्वरः
सर्वेभ्य एव वक्त्रेभ्यः ससृजे सर्वदर्शनः ।

²⁰Cited in Jīva Gosvāmin, *Tattva-sandarbhā*, para 13: पुराणं पञ्चमो वेदः

²¹ibid., *Bhāg.*, 1.4.20: इतिहासः पुराणं च पञ्चमो वेद उच्यते

²²ibid., *Mahābhārata*, *Mokṣadharmā* 340.11: वेदानध्यापयामास महाभारतपञ्चमान्

²³*Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, 7.1.2, cited in the *Tattva-sandarbhā*, 13: ऋग्वेदं भगवोऽध्वेभि यजुर्वेदं सामवेदमाथर्वणं चतुर्थमितिहासं पुराणं पञ्चमं वेदानां वेदम् ।

²⁴Cited in Jīva Gosvāmin, *Sarva-saṃvādinī* on the *Paramātmā-sandarbhā*:

उपास्य एकः परतः परो वै
वेदेश्च सर्वैः सह चेतिहासैः ।
सपञ्चरात्रैः सपुराणैश्च देवः

All of those beginningless and trans-human texts that are of the nature of the statements of the supreme lord and all the texts that follow those should be called scripture. As it is stated:

Ṛg, Yajus, Sāman, Atharvan,
the Bhārata, Pañcarātra,
and root Rāmāyaṇa are called
scripture. Those texts that agree
with these are also called scripture.
Texts other than these aren't scripture.
They promote the path of reproach.²⁵

Thus, we have understood that the four Vedas, the histories such as the *Bhārata* and *Rāmāyaṇa*, the eighteen *Purāṇas*, and the scriptures on *dharma* such as the *Pañcarātras* and others are all beginningless and, along with creation, are first manifested from the supreme lord and then are published in the world by *Brahmā*. All those texts and all the texts that are in agreement with them are known as scripture and are considered in human communities from beginningless time as evidence of the inconceivable highest truth—the supreme lord. Therefore, apart from all those scriptures and the reasoning that in supportive of those scriptures, nothing else can be considered as evidence in the subject of the highest truth.

Even though all the scriptures such as the Vedas and the rest are manifested directly from the supreme lord, that the creation of the four Vedas from the four faces of *Brahmā*, the lord of beings, is described in the scriptures doesn't mean that *Brahmā* wrote them himself. *Brahmā* remembers the Vedas, which are manifested from the supreme lord and exist without beginning, and spreads them throughout the universe in each age just as in the age before. This is the way one should understand it. Even though, by the wish of the supreme lord and through his impetus, *Brahmā* created

सर्वैर्गुणैस्तत्र तत्र प्रतीतेः ॥

It is not clear what this text is. *Bhāllaveya* comes from the word *bhallu* which means the animal “bear.”

²⁵*Skanda Purāṇa*, ?:

ऋग्यजुःसामाथर्वश्च भारतं पञ्चरात्रकं ।
मूल्परामायणञ्चैव शास्त्रमित्यभिधीयते ॥
यच्चानुकूलमेतस्य तच्च शास्त्रं प्रकीर्तितम् ।
अतोऽन्यग्रन्थविस्तारो नैव शास्त्रं कुवन्मे तत् ॥

the manifest universe full of all life forms, the sun, the moon, the constellations, and the stars just as it was in the previous age. the subtle and causal creations are not possible for anyone but the supreme lord, who possesses all powers and is the cause of all. Just as the supreme lord is established in scripture as the cause of the creation or birth of the universe,²⁶ so is the omniscient, supreme lord praised in scripture as the cause of scripture,²⁷ even though—by his wish—his own words, the eternally existing Vedas, are revealed by Brahmā in the manifest universe in every age. Not only that, at the beginning of creation he causes Brahmā to appear and later the lord teaches him the Vedas and gives him the ability to create the manifest world.²⁸ This too has been clearly mentioned in the revealed texts. Therefore, just as Brahmā, apart from spreading the scriptures, is not their author, so too all the names of sages and gods that are connected with the Vedic hymns and scriptures such as the histories and ancient lore, names such as Madhucchāndā Medhātithi, Viśvāmitra, Vaśiṣṭha, Vāmadeva, Atri, Agastya, Ṛṭsamada, Bharadvāja, Lopāmudrā, Mitrāvaruṇa, and so forth and others like Skanda, Vāyu, Agni, Vyāsa, Vālmiki, Śuka, Nārada, Mārkaṇḍeya and so forth—their names are connected with all those texts not as creators or as authors, but only as those who cause the recollection and dissemination of those hymns and texts.²⁹ After remembering a previously heard or read topic, when by whatever means that instruction or scripture is disseminated among people in many ways, then the disseminator's name becomes connected with that and is glorified. Scripture itself reveals this secret:

From Śiva up to the sages,
they are causers of remembrance
of this eternal scripture
not the creators of it.³⁰

There are and may be many writers of books that agree with the scriptures, but the beginningless, eternal Vedas and scriptures themselves are the words of the eternal supreme lord himself. Since those are not written

²⁶*Brahma-sūtra*, 1.1.2: जन्माद्यस्य यतः

²⁷*ibid.*, 1.1.3: शास्त्र-योनित्वात्

²⁸*Gopāla-tāpanī*, Pūrva 24: यो ब्रह्माणं विदधाति पूर्वम्

²⁹ब्रह्माद्या ऋषिपर्यन्ताः स्मारका न तु कारकाः

³⁰A traditional text (*smṛti*) cited in Baladeva, *Śrī Govinda-bhāṣya*, 2.1.4:

शिवाद्या ऋषिपर्यन्ताः
स्मर्तारोऽस्य न कारकाः ।

by any other person besides the supreme lord, the Vedas and *dharma* scriptures are called *apauruṣeya*, trans-human or uncreated by human beings. Because of this clear and huge distinction of the eternal religion and the eternal scriptures embodying *dharma* from other religious traditions, they are not from other countries. Only from India and from the eastern land infused with the majestic power of India are all of the religions in all the other countries inspired. In all of the other civilized countries of the world, all matters of practical life are their own. No country wants to remain dependent on another country for anything. But, only in matters of the highest truth, only in religious insight have all countries been dependent on the East. This clear truth, perhaps, no one is able to deny. Here, in the midst of this distinctiveness, the tidings of eternity and the trans-human nature of the eternal Vedic *dharma* of sacred India, the source-mine of spirituality, the eastern holy land, is situated. If we are not able to keep the memory of this fact before all other facts, our highest of all form of dignity will be forgotten.

Previously I said an ethical life is the foundation of a pious (*dharma*) human life. From the manifestation of piety on the foundation of ethics, humanity gains its true fulfillment and the human soul becomes qualified for peace. Therefore, in order to protect the peace and orderliness of human society, what is absolutely necessary is the law or, all the instructions made up of *dos* and *don'ts*, composed by the supreme lord himself. His greatest blessing for human society along with creation was manifested from him in the form of eternal Vedas and other scriptures. These descended first of all on this land of India, the source-mine of spirituality. Musk falls in one place and its fragrance in part and in semblance spreads a great distance and gradually, in mixing with other aromas, its base fragrance takes on many different states and even then, as a substance in some form, makes everything fragrant. Similarly, what was placed in source form in the eternal scriptures of sacred law, those rules and sacred laws, either in part or in semblance, are spread all over the earth in many ways. When on the foundation of those rules and sacred laws—on that Vedic truth—some powerful individual or person devises his own religious view, the book that teaches that new religion is a man-made religious book and the religion established in it is fittingly considered a “modern” religion. Though in time that newly formed or modern religious view becomes lost, its foundation, that part or semblance of Vedic truth, is not lost. In time again after finding support in that, on that foundation some other new religion—a new view point—is created. The first and source of all religions and all languages is this eter-

nal Veda and related scriptures and the degree to which the truth spoken in them in part or in semblance is found in the other religions of the earth, to that degree is that religion fittingly graced with success. Moral conduct such as faith in the lord, non-violence, truth, purity, helping others, renunciation, self-control, and so forth are the basis and foundation of sacred law and are considered true for all people. That basic moral conduct which is considered the oldest on earth—being first spoken in the scriptures of sacred law headed by the Vedas—in this way, too, is the eternal Vedic sacred law the beginning and source of all religions.

In this way, nearly all of the world's religions, are established on a foundation of truth, in the form of religions belonging to different communities. They arise for the manifestation of religious and moral lives consistent with the nature and qualifications of different types of human beings, and in time become lost. The beginning and unchanged fullest form as well as the source of all of these partial forms and simulacrum of the truth is pious India's trans-human, primordial scripture headed by the Vedas and the eternal Vedic religion, as well as the eternal Hindu culture and civilization. This shining distinction of eternal Hindu religion from all the other religions of the world we must remember with pride in all conditions. The Vedic religion of India, the culture and civilization of ancient India, is the root of all of the world's other religions, the root and beginning of all cultures and civilizations. To accept this great truth much supporting evidence has been discovered in the present time and continues to be discovered, such that one is able now to claim without being mistaken the idea of the beginningless existence of the eternal Hindu religion.³¹

³¹The superb scholar of Eastern and Western philosophy and internationally famous teacher, [Dr.] Sir Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan gave a speech as the featured speaker at a Convention on Indian Agriculture. Some portion of his speech is translated [into Bengali] here.

How many storms and how many battles and wars have occurred on the breast of India age after age. But Indian civilization is even now standing with pride. On the other hand not even the Greek civilization of 800 years, the Roman civilization of 900 years, and the Byzantine civilization of 1000 years were able to survive even a little longer. Indian civilization is victorious over time. ... The civilization that has been discovered at Mohenjo Daro, the archeologists have called essentially Indian. Some consistency of the civilization of Greece with the civilization of the Vedic have been noticed. ... All scholars agree that Pythagoras and Plato were influenced by the philosophical views of India. In this way, let one examine the philosophical views any country on earth and it will be found that everywhere they have been influenced by the views of India. As a result, it has come to be that now two books have been published, *Hinduism Invades America* (1930) and *In Defence of the West* (1942). Even in the present age one will

Even though there continues to exist such an important difference between the eternal Hindu religion and all the other religions on earth, an unexpected effect of the influence of time is that only among modern Hindus, we find, has reliance on the evidence of scripture become zero and instead, in accordance with self-invented views that agree with their own suppositions or desires, an object of worship and a method of worship are determined and the people in general, without deliberation, accept that as the eternal Hindu religion.

The ancient tree of Hindu religion is now almost completely covered by the parasitic plants of heresy. The root cause of this great calamity is that at present there is an absence of provision for good instruction in religion for people in general based on the ancient example of the unadulterated Hindu religion. Vedic India supplied instruction in religion for nearly all the countries of the earth, and while even now all those countries remain conscientious in relationship to the teaching of their religions, today only in India no arrangement like that is found for high quality teaching of the religion of Hindus. This unexpected turn of events has happened—is this the influence of time’s joke on us?³²

The root practice in the eternal religion of Hindus is that those objects and forms of worship that are not established on the evidence of scripture which is the direct word of the supreme lord himself—no matter how big a person is who initiates and supports them—cannot be accepted as eternal Hindu religion. This is the practice in the lineages of the learned—this rule has been observed for a long time. Any book that is completely favorable to-

find that the influence of Indian civilization is everywhere. Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Ireland’s poet Yeats, Romain Roland, etc., all well-known thinkers of the modern age are influenced by Indian streams of thought. (*Ānandabājār Patrikā*, 19th Agraḥāyaṇa [November-December], 1344 [1938])

³²What Baroda’s former king, the highly respected Gaekwad Sir Sarojirao Bahadur, mentioned in a speech at a Kolkata Sanskrit College’s Invocation meeting supports my statement. Therefore, some part of that is cited here:

I have travelled to Europe, America, Africa and many other lands, but I have not found the general public to be deprived of instruction in religion anywhere else besides India. Previously many students used to live in the house of the guru and obtain instruction in religion. But nowadays the general public is completely ignorant with respect to religion. You should give students required instruction in religion. Then you will see that the condition of the country and society will advance on the path of elevation. (*Ānandabājār Patrikā*, 9 Pauṣa [December-January], 1344 san. [1938 CE])

wards and consistent with scripture also has been considered like scripture. But, when, by writing a book or devising a fundamental viewpoint that is not dependent on scripture, someone has demonstrated an uncommon possession of knowledge, still, while Hindus are not slow to respect that genius, that is not accepted and honored as a part of or as a means of valid knowledge for the eternal Hindu religion.

For this reason, just as Śrī Rāma, Nṛsiṃha, Matsya, Kūrma, Vāmana, Paraśurāma, Kalkī and others are approved in scripture, Śrī Buddhadeva is also acknowledged in Hindu sacred scripture as a descent (*avatāra*) of the lord and Hindus show *bhakti* towards Buddhadeva as the lord. But, the word of the Buddha or the Buddhist teaching (*dharma*), since it was not spread in allegiance to Vedic scriptures, is not accepted as a part of the Hindu religion or as a means of valid knowledge. Instead, it has been considered non-Vedic or a heresy for all this time. When words from the lord's own mouth are not supported by scripture, if even that teaching—even that instruction cannot be accepted, then is it necessary to mention again that some human statement that is not supported by scripture should necessarily be rejected? When there is no iota of disagreement about rejecting even a teaching of the lord, if it does not agree with scripture, that one finds in that very same Hindu society today on the subject of religion the promotion of self-invented views and of self-willed behavior in great measure can only be the influence of time, nothing else. The slackening of the restraining rope of sacred law and its collapse are the root causes of the way lack of peace throughout the country, lack of discipline, and lack of able governance have taken on the frightening form they have today.

Even though the Ganges is flooded in the rainy season and in the winter becomes much reduced, just as its natural flow is unchecked at all times, in the same way this eternal religion of India, through the favorable and unfavorable influences of time, or, in accordance with the hierarchy of the increase and decrease of the three strands (clarity, translucence, and opacity)³³ in human society, can be considered to be expanded or contracted; but, its root stream, from the time of creation until today, is not destroyed through any kind of obstruction and never will be. This is a deathless stream in the land of death, by the pure touch of which the ashes of how many corpses have become infused with the power of life; there is no counting.

Therefore, in determining the object and method of worship, scripture is the only source of valid knowledge; this Hindu practice every teacher in

³³ Aka. *sattva*, *rajas*, and *tamas*.

the Vedic community of this country has supported. When he who, on the evidence of scripture, has been proven to be the fullest form of highest principle, Mahāprabhu Śrī Gaurāṅga, spread the religion of divine love, the goal and means of that religion, too, or its object and means of worship would have to be understood as completely approved by scripture. Therefore, in the *Immortal Acts of Śrī Caitanya* one finds that when, after infusing his dear companion, Śrīla Rāya Rāmānanda, with power, he adopted a suitable firmness and, though Rāmānanda's mouth, ascertained the object of that religion of love which is the essence of all the Vedas. For instance:

The Master said: "recite the verse
that conveys the goal of practice."³⁴

In other words, "I am not interested in hearing about any imagined goal according to your own wishes. Recite the verse—the scriptural statement by which you determine the goal of practice." This is the meaning of the Bengali verse. In this way, too, when he infused Śrīla Rūpa and Sanātana with the power to reveal all the books of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava teaching, he gave them the instruction to support them all with statements from scripture. For instance:

Everywhere you should provide
proof from Purāṇic statements.³⁵

Previously, the scriptural conclusion that Purāṇas and Itihāsas are Veda has been shown.³⁶ Therefore, the religion of love spread by Mahāprabhu is completely based on scripture—this can be known from many other places of this sort. What more can be said, if the worship of Hari in an exclusive way were not approved by the scriptures, then wherever that has been forbidden is, also, connected with the basis in scripture of Śrī Gaurāṅga's promotion of the religion of love. What further doubt can there be? For instance:

Without [following] the rules
of revealed scripture, tradition,
ancient lore, and the received texts,
exclusive *bhakti* for Hari

³⁴Cc. 2.8.54: প্রভু কহে পড় শ্লোক সাধ্যের নির্ণয়

³⁵Cc., 2..24.255: সর্বত্র প্রমাণ দিবে পুরাণ-বচন |

³⁶Bhāg., 1.4.20: The history (*itihāsa*) and ancient lore (*purāṇa*) are said to be the fifth Veda: इतिहासः पुराणा च पञ्चमो वेद उच्यते ।

results in calamity.³⁷

Thus, the guidance of the eternal sacred (*dharma*) scriptures or the scriptural means of knowing are the best means of determining goal and method in matters of the supreme truth, or of ascertaining the object and form of worship. Dwelling on this topic any further is fruitless.

Any religious view that neglects the statements of scripture does nothing more than provoke waywardness in society. In scripture this topic is clearly mentioned. By cultivating one's own invented religion without relying on scripture, instead of attaining the highest goal only misfortune occurs. For instance:

One who wants the best should here perform
with great care actions ordained by
revelation, sacred tradition,
and the practices of the good,
which are everlasting and are
one's own respective duties.
People who delude others
with scriptures that they've themselves made
with their own intellects will go
to hell for twenty-seven ages.³⁸

Therefore, after accepting the instructions of scripture as the means of knowledge for or the pointer towards the path to the supreme truth and after, according to that, determining what is to be done and what is not to be done, if one is able to perform practices according to one's qualification, then it is possible to establish firmly the highest well-being of human society and peace and orderliness for the world. As such, in order to warn us about

³⁷Cited in Rūpa Gosvāmin, *Ocean of the Nectar of Devotion (Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu)*, 1.2.101, from the *Brahma-yāmala*:

श्रुतिस्मृतिपुराणादिपञ्चरात्रविधिं विना ।
ऐकान्तिकीं हरेर्भक्तिरुत्पाताय कल्पते ॥

³⁸*Padma Purāṇa, Uttarakhaṇḍa*, chap. 17:

श्रुतिस्मृतिसदाचारविहितं कर्म शाश्वतम् ।
स्वं स्वं धरं प्रयत्नेन श्रेयोऽपीह समाचरेत् ॥
स्वबुद्धिरचितैः शास्त्रैः मोहयित्वा जनं नराः ।
तेन ते नरकं यान्ति युगानां सप्तविंशतिः ॥

waywardness, what the Lord himself, addressing his dear friend Arjuna in the form of his own Gītā-statements, has echoed—as deep as the rumbling of a rain cloud purifying the sky of India—is a suitable pointer for Hindus who have lost their way in the darkness of bad days of the present:

One who gives up scriptural rules
and acts according to desire
does not achieve well-being,
nor happiness, nor the supreme goal.
Therefore, knowing scripture to be
the means of discriminating
between what is to be done and
what is not to be done, you should
perform acts enjoined by scripture.³⁹

That being so, we have understood that sense knowledge (*pratyakṣa*) and inference (*anumāna*) born of our material, dull senses and intellects cannot be considered sources of valid knowledge for all the non-material, unthinkable consciousness objects, because for material senses there is no possibility of experiencing non-material reality. Until non-material, consciousness-based senses suitable for the perception of the supreme lord and all the non-material things connected with him appear, the only source of valid knowledge or “eyes” for the description of other-worldly, unthinkable objects are the scriptures that are the words of the supreme lord. In worldly or otherworldly objects, specifically in connection with the consciousness-based world, if the sense perceptions [and inferences, etc.] of our dull senses are the opposite of the statements of scripture, or if what we see or understand is said in scripture not to be the way we see it or understand it, then in those cases our perceptions are faulty—we are mistaken in our seeing and understanding—and the declaration of scripture is inerrant. This should be made firm and certain.

Now, we are engaged in ascertaining the essential nature of the name of the lord. Since his name is not different from the lord himself, the name of

³⁹Bg., 16.23-24:

यः शास्त्रविधिमुत्सृज्य वर्तते कामचारतः ।
न स सिद्धिमवाप्नोति न सुखं न परां गतिम् ॥
तस्माच्छास्त्रं प्रमाणं ते कार्याकार्यव्यवस्थितौ ।
ज्ञात्वा शास्त्रविधानोक्तं कर्म कर्तुमर्हसि ॥

the lord is a reality that is being, consciousness, and bliss, and non-material. Therefore, since the essential nature of the name is also unthinkable, in ascertaining it, one has to accept the means of valid knowledge that is scripture as the best of all forms of evidence.

From here on—after begging for merciful blessings of Śrī Kṛṣṇacaitanya, the supreme lord himself who descended to purify the Age of Kali, and of the eternal honey bees serving the nectar of his lotus-like feet—we will try to make known the essential nature of the holy name of the lord by means of only the evidence of scripture and argumentation in agreement with scripture. Finally, I make a humble submission: this is not the topic for those who have not yet accumulated the good fortune of accepting the evidence of scripture as the best means of valid knowledge on this subject. Mentioning this subject any further is unnecessary.

Chapter Two: The Name and the Named