

**FROM COPPER
TO TOUCHSTONE**

FROM COPPER TO TOUCHSTONE

Favorite
Selections
from the
Caitanya-caritāmṛta

SATSVARŪPA DĀSA GOSWAMI

Persons interested in the subject matter of this book are invited to correspond with our secretary:

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INTRODUCTION

THE PURPOSE OF THIS BOOK

This book is not intended as an overview of the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, but as a collection of selected readings. I have divided it into four sections: the first four essays cover the first four chapters of the *Ādi-lilā* and give a basic, but comprehensive, understanding of Lord Caitanya's identity. The next section consists of selections from my favorite chapters of the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* and will give us a taste of Śrīla Prabhupāda's purports. The next section consists of Lord Caitanya's talks with Rāmānanda Rāya, and the last section consists of a glimpse into the personal nature of ISKCON as Lord Caitanya's movement, of Lord Caitanya Himself, and of Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī.

I have compiled this book to stimulate interest in the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*. I don't have to justify studying *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*—it is one of the main books in the Gauḍīya line and

certainly one of the cornerstones for ISKCON readers. Devotees are encouraged to read the scriptures systematically, starting with the *Bhagavad-gītā*, the ABCs of spiritual life, then progressing to the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, then to the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*.

WE ARE QUALIFIED TO READ CAITANYA-CARITĀMṚTA

The *Bhagavad-gītā* ends with surrender to Kṛṣṇa. The *Bhāgavatam* then gives us information about Kṛṣṇa's name, form, pastimes, and qualities. By reading the *Bhāgavatam*, we can see Kṛṣṇa face to face. Prabhupāda states: "One can derive from the study of the *Bhāgavatam* all benefits that are possible to be derived from the personal presence of the Lord. It carries with it all the transcendental blessings of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa that we can expect from His personal contact." (*Bhāg.* 1.3.40, purport)

After reading the *Bhāgavatam*, we can then approach the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*. Prabhupāda writes in *Teachings of Lord Caitanya*: "Actually, *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* is not intended for the novice, but it is the post-graduate study of spiritual knowledge. Ideally, one begins with *Bhagavad-gītā*, and advances through *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* to the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*. Although all these great scriptures are on the same, absolute level, for the sake of comparative study, *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* is considered to be on the highest platform."

Then what is our qualification to study such a book? Our qualification is our strict practice of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Śrīla Prabhupāda creates our further qualification by referencing

this advanced subject to our more basic philosophical understanding. Prabhupāda did not insist that we avoid the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* until we had read his other books. Instead, he allowed us to taste Kṛṣṇa's sweetness from wherever we were inclined to enter.

In presenting this book, I am assuming that the reader has read, or is in the process of reading, *Bhagavad-gītā*, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, and *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*. We should always be in the process of reading the four main books Śrīla Prabhupāda has presented, including *The Nectar of Devotion*. Thus we can progress from *Bhagavad-gītā* all the way to the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* and back to *Bhagavad-gītā* again. There is no end or satiation in the life of devotional service and *kṛṣṇa-kathā*.

All glories to *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* and eternal thanks to Śrīla Prabhupāda both for rendering it into English and for giving us his Bhaktivedanta purports by which we can understand it.

TATTVA



THE SPIRITUAL MASTERS

THE SIX ITEMS OF THE ABSOLUTE TRUTH

The first fourteen verses of the first chapter of *Ādi-lilā* have no purports, but they set the tone for the entire work. These verses actually describe the architecture of the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* as well as the subject matters discussed in later *Ādi-lilā* chapters.

In the first verse, Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī begins by stating six subjects:

*vande gurūn īśa-bhaktān
īśam īśāvatārakān
tat-prakāśānś ca tac-chaktiḥ
kṛṣṇa-caitanya-saṁjñakam*

I offer my respectful obeisances unto the spiritual masters, the devotees of the Lord, the Lord's incarnations, His plenary portions, His energies, and the primeval Lord Himself, Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya.

These six subjects comprise the Absolute Truth, as it will be taught in *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*. Śrīla Prabhupāda calls this chapter “The Spiritual Masters” because of the six items listed, the first chapter discussing the truth of *guru-tattva*.

WHY GURU BEFORE GOD?

One may ask, “If Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī is writing a book about Lord Caitanya’s character and pastimes, why does he start by discussing *guru-tattva*?”

In spiritual life, everything comes from the blessings of the guru. There is no way to approach Lord Caitanya except through the spiritual master’s instruction.

Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī’s discussion on *guru-tattva* is based on epistemology, the principle of acquiring knowledge. When someone presents an argument, others have a right to know the source of his knowledge. Kṛṣṇa conscious knowledge is obtained by *brahma-śabda*. That is, it descends from the authority of the *paramparā* and ultimately has its origin in God Himself. Therefore, we first offer our obeisances to the guru. This is the first step in understanding Lord Caitanya.

THE INVOCATION

Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī describes the general requirements of an invocation in *Ādi* 1.22: “The invocation involves three processes: defining the objective, offering benedictions and offering obeisances.”

These three matters can be applied to the discussion of the guru. The objective of *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* is to discuss the character and pastimes of Lord Caitanya, but that is no small objective. Lord Caitanya is no ordinary *sādhū*; He is the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Therefore, He cannot be understood without reference to the guru. “In the beginning of this narration, simply by remembering the spiritual master, the devotees of the Lord, and the Personality of Godhead, I have invoked their benedictions.” (*Ādi* 1.20) The spiritual master must offer blessings, and to attain those blessings, the disciple must offer obeisances. Therefore, the invocation begins with *vande gurūn*, obeisances to the spiritual masters.

Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī also offers the readers blessings. He prays that Nītāi-Gaura may be manifest in our hearts and he blesses us that attraction for the transcendental Lord Gopinātha, who plays the flute and attracts the *gopīs*, may awaken in us. Then he offers obeisances to his gurus and others.

GURŪN IS PLURAL

Śrīla Prabhupāda writes, “*Gurūn* is plural in number because anyone who gives spiritual instructions based on the revealed scriptures is accepted as a spiritual master.” (*Ādi* 1.34, purport) Also:

In the beginning of *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī writes, “I offer my respects to my spiritual masters.” He uses the plural here to indicate the disciplic succession. It is not that he offers obeisances to his spiritual master alone but

to the whole *paramparā*, the chain of disciplic succession beginning with Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself. Thus the guru is addressed in the plural to show the author's highest respect for all the Vaiṣṇavas.

—Cc., Introduction, p. 4

It is absolutely necessary to accept a spiritual master. No one can understand the meaning of Lord Caitanya's appearance and activities without first receiving the guru's mercy. In his purport to *Ādi* 1.35, Prabhupāda states:

One should always remember that a person who is reluctant to accept a spiritual master and be initiated is sure to be baffled in his endeavor to go back to Godhead. One who is not properly initiated may present himself as a great devotee, but in fact he is sure to encounter many stumbling blocks on his path of progress toward spiritual realization, with the result that he must continue his term of material existence without relief. Such a helpless person is compared to a ship without a rudder.

Guru-tattva takes comprehensive study. *Gurūn* can be understood as all the gurus in disciplic succession, and it can also refer to the various types of gurus—*śikṣā*, *dikṣā*, and *caitya*. Kṛṣṇa is the original guru, and His relationship with the *jīva* is similar to the Vaiṣṇava guru's relationship with the disciple.

Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī then tells us that his instructing (*śikṣā*) spiritual masters are the Six Gosvāmīs of Vṛndāvana. Not only are they *his* gurus, but the Six Gosvāmīs are the instructing spiritual masters of *all* Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas. Prabhupāda adds, "By accepting the Six Gosvāmīs as his instructing

spiritual masters, the author specifically makes it clear that one should not be recognized as a Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava if he is not obedient to them.” (*Ādi* 1.37, purport)

THE GURU IS AS GOOD AS GOD

“Although I know that my spiritual master is a servitor of Śrī Caitanya, I know him also as a plenary manifestation of the Lord.” (*Ādi* 1.44)

Although it appears contradictory that the spiritual master is described both as a *jīva* and as a plenary manifestation of Kṛṣṇa, these two concepts are actually harmonious. Prabhupāda explains that the guru is to be worshiped as good as God, but like all other *jīvas*, he is eternally *kṛṣṇa-dāsa*. If the *jīva* accepting the duties of the spiritual master is not in the mood of serving Kṛṣṇa, then he cannot be guru. This is especially true of the Māyāvādī. Anyone who thinks that everyone is equal to God is disqualified from being guru. Such a person must first become fixed in the realization and practice of serving the Vaiṣṇavas, the spiritual masters, and Kṛṣṇa.

The Vaiṣṇava guru should be honored as good as God.

*ācāryam mām vijāniyān
nāvamanyeta karhicit
na martya-buddhyāsūyeta
sarva-deva-mayo guruḥ*

One should know the *ācārya* as Myself and never disrespect him in any way. One should not envy him, thinking him an ordinary man, for he is the representative of all the demigods.

—*Bhāg.* 11.17.27, cited in *Ādi* 1.46

The spiritual master is not the enjoyer of facilities offered by his disciples. “He is like a parent, a transcendental professor of spiritual science. He accepts charge of disciples, teaches them the Vedic knowledge with all its intricacies, and gives them their second birth. After this, the spiritual master actually begins to teach the disciple about the *Vedas*.” (*Ādi* 1.46, purport)

The functions of *dikṣā* and *śikṣā* are implied here. The spiritual master does not only give the disciple second birth (*dikṣā*), but he instructs the disciple in Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

In his purports to this section, Śrīla Prabhupāda tells us that a devotee can have only one initiating spiritual master, although he can have unlimited instructing spiritual masters. “Generally, a spiritual master who constantly instructs a disciple in spiritual science becomes an initiating spiritual master later on.” (*Ādi* 1.35, purport)

KṚṢṆA AS GURU

The *dikṣā*- and *śikṣā-gurus* are representatives of Kṛṣṇa. That is why they are accepted as bona fide. John Lennon once asked Śrīla Prabhupāda, “I accept Kṛṣṇa, but who is the guru?” Prabhupāda responded, “Whoever represents Kṛṣṇa is guru.” Kṛṣṇa is the original guru, even before the spiritual masters, who are *jīvas*.

But there are other manifestations. Prabhupāda writes:

Śrīla Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmi states that the instructing spiritual master is a bona fide representative of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself teaches us as the instructing spiritual master

from within and without. From within He teaches as Param-ātmā, our constant companion, and from without He teaches from *Bhagavad-gītā* as the instructing spiritual master.

—Ādi 1.47, purport

The *caitya-guru* is described in Bg. 10.10. In his purport to that verse, Prabhupāda writes that for those who have a spiritual master and who belong to a bona fide spiritual movement, but who somehow or other still cannot understand transcendental knowledge, Kṛṣṇa helps them directly in the heart. In the purport to Bg. 10.11 Prabhupāda states, “. . . those who are engaged in pure devotional service, even though they be without sufficient education and even without sufficient knowledge of the Vedic principles, are still helped by the Supreme God, as stated in this verse.” I, dwelling within their hearts, destroy the ignorance with the torchlight of knowledge. I help them come to Me.

In Bg. 10.10, Kṛṣṇa says, “To those who are constantly devoted to serving Me with love, I give the understanding by which they can come to Me.” Kṛṣṇa says *priti-pūrvakam*, which Prabhupāda translates as “in loving ecstasy.” Devotees often wonder, therefore, whether we are qualified to receive Kṛṣṇa’s help from within our hearts. Kṛṣṇa says to *those* devotees He gives the intelligence to come to Him. What about devotees who are not serving constantly “in loving ecstasy”?

Although there is a more esoteric understanding of this verse—where Kṛṣṇa helps a devotee come to Him who is experiencing separation from Him—in his purport, Prabhupāda describes a neophyte devotee. Although such a devotee has a spiritual master, he cannot understand Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Prabhupāda says Kṛṣṇa helps that devotee. This verse does not only apply to confidential devotees, but to all devotees, regardless of their spiritual status. Kṛṣṇa helps His devotees at every stage.

Prabhupāda always encouraged the devotees to continue following his instructions and that Kṛṣṇa would help them. “You are sincere. Kṛṣṇa will help you.” We hear that phrase repeated often in his letters. Kṛṣṇa is in our hearts. When we are sincere, He will lead us to the guru. Actually, Kṛṣṇa helps the *jīva* even to carry out his material functions. Intelligence, memory, and forgetfulness come from Him. But for someone engaged in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, Kṛṣṇa offers direct help within his heart.

WHO IS THAT KṚṢṆA IN THE HEART?

Sometimes devotees ask, “What do we have to do with Paramātmā, the four-armed form of the Lord?” In the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, there is an illustration of this verse. We see a picture of a guru and his disciple, and in both their hearts Paramātmā, four-armed Viṣṇu. Are we worshiping four-armed Viṣṇu? Don’t we concentrate only on the original form of Kṛṣṇa in Vṛndāvana?

There is evidence that when we say Kṛṣṇa in the heart, it means original Vṛndāvana Kṛṣṇa. In the *Bhagavad-gītā*, it states:

*samo ’haṁ sarva-bhūteṣu
na me dveṣyo ’sti na priyaḥ*

*ye bhajanti tu mām bhaktyā
mayi te teṣu cāpy aham*

I envy no one, nor am I partial to anyone. I am equal to all. But whoever renders service unto Me in devotion is a friend, is in Me, and I am also a friend to him.

—Bg. 9.29

Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura comments, “According to this statement of the Supreme Lord, the devotees are situated in the Lord in accordance with the particular mood for which they have attachment. He also resides in them in that form for which they have attachment.”

WE HAVE TO INTERNALIZE OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH THE GURU

Another question that sometimes arises is how much we can internalize our relationship with the guru. When Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī refers to the Vaiṣṇava guru as “external,” he is referring to persons other than Kṛṣṇa Himself, who is situated in the heart. We refer to Kṛṣṇa in the heart as *caitya-guru*. In addition to *caitya-guru*, we need a Vaiṣṇava guru. Referring to the Vaiṣṇava guru as “external” does not mean that the spiritual master cannot also be in the heart. The spiritual master is in the heart of the disciple. Prabhupāda writes, “According to Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura and other unalloyed Vaiṣṇavas, the spiritual master is always considered either one of the confidential associates of

Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī or a manifested representation of Śrīla Nityānanda Prabhu.” (*Ādi* 1.46, purport)

To the degree that the spiritual master is realized in this way, and to the degree that the disciple is qualified to understand it, the disciple will be able to see the spiritual master as Kṛṣṇa’s representative and keep his instructions in his heart.

GURU-TATTVA IN ISKCON

ISKCON is nothing but Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava philosophy, yet Prabhupāda made unique applications of the philosophy to facilitate his worldwide preaching. Because ISKCON is a relatively new movement, and because of these particular preaching adjustments, we cannot simply examine the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava examples and paste them into ISKCON. ISKCON is still evolving in many ways. Therefore, we have to consider the conclusions of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism and apply them sensitively to our own case.

For example, a dictionary is composed of words and their definitions, but those stated definitions are not absolute. Words are defined by usage. Therefore, definitions may change over time. Language rules submit to usage. The ISKCON usage, of course, has to follow *paramparā*. If ISKCON comes to a different conclusion, its usage should be adjusted.

One adjustment we have had to face is how ISKCON understands and applies the concept of *dikṣā* and *śikṣā* relationships. This particular issue has been more of a sociological discussion than a technical, śāstric one. For example, during Prabhupāda’s presence and in the years that followed, the *dikṣā-guru*

was considered the only guru. Nowadays, we have broadened our acceptance and recognition of the *śikṣā* relationship within ISKCON.

Śrīla Prabhupāda taught that a *śikṣā-guru* does not teach differently than one's *dikṣā-guru*, but supports his specific conclusions and one's faith in him. Therefore, when we consider someone a *śikṣā-guru*, we seek to be enlightened in Śrīla Prabhupāda's *śikṣā* (instructions).

I do not intend in this book to analyze ISKCON's history, but at least I would like to say that I am not embarrassed by ISKCON's sometimes groping attempts to understand and properly apply the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava *siddhānta*.

The *śikṣā* relationship is a natural relationship. This first chapter of *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* is crucial to our understanding of exactly what this relationship is. The guru-disciple relationship is an esoteric exchange. Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī tells us that Sanātana Gosvāmī is the symbolic representation of the *dikṣā-guru* and Rūpa Gosvāmī is the symbolic representation of the *śikṣā-guru*. To understand their respective positions requires deep study. Even if we understand it theoretically, we still have to think out the implication of these two relationships in ISKCON. What does it mean for ISKCON to say that *śikṣā*- and *dikṣā-gurus* are equal? And what does it mean when ISKCON sometimes places more emphasis on one than the other?

Gurūn is plural in number because anyone who gives spiritual instructions based on the revealed scriptures is accepted as a spiritual master. Although others give help in showing the way to beginners, the guru who first initiates one with the *mahā-mantra* is known as the initiator, and the saints who give

instructions for progressive advancement in Kṛṣṇa consciousness are called instructing spiritual masters. The initiating and instructing spiritual masters are equal and identical manifestations of Kṛṣṇa, although they have different dealings.

—*Ādi* 1.34, purport

The *siddhānta* states that one guru should not be seen as more important than the other. It would be offensive to think that Sanātana Gosvāmī is more important than Rūpa Gosvāmī, or vice versa. Prabhupāda writes, “Their function is to guide the conditioned souls back to home, back to Godhead.”

CHOOSING A GURU

Another change in ISKCON since Prabhupāda’s disappearance is how the candidate for initiation chooses a guru. When Prabhupāda was physically present, everyone who came to Kṛṣṇa consciousness, of course, automatically became his disciple. After his disappearance, ISKCON went through its zonal-*ācārya* days where gurus and disciples were assigned to each other based on geographical considerations. Nowadays, the candidate has more responsibility to find a guru who inspires him.

Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī doesn’t discuss much how to choose a guru, but Prabhupāda gives an instruction in his purport to *Ādi* 1.35:

It is imperative that a serious person accept a bona fide spiritual master in terms of the sāstric injunctions. Śrī Jiva Gosvāmī advises that one not accept a spiritual master in terms of

hereditary or customary social and ecclesiastical conventions. One should simply try to find a genuinely qualified spiritual master for actual advancement in spiritual understanding.

From this purport, we can understand that the spiritual master should not simply be assigned to the prospective disciple. Prabhupāda says the disciple should seek out a qualified guru and then accept him. It is a personal decision between guru and disciple. In other places, Prabhupāda also says a prospective disciple should study the scriptures in order to learn about the qualifications of a bona fide spiritual master.

In ISKCON, we have established safeguards to protect devotees from accepting unqualified gurus, but *śikṣā* and *dikṣā* relationships are a matter of the heart.

Sometimes devotees wonder whether the devotees who have become gurus after Prabhupāda's disappearance are regular gurus, and whether Prabhupāda is the only eternal guru. Śrīla Prabhupāda is the spiritual master of everyone in ISKCON, but he is the *dikṣā-guru* only of those he directly initiated before leaving this world. Those who have come to ISKCON after Prabhupāda's disappearance cannot become Śrīla Prabhupāda's initiated disciples, although they can accept him as their instructing spiritual master and as the founder-*ācārya* of ISKCON. Śrīla Prabhupāda did not teach us to abandon the *paramparā*'s laws of disciplic succession.

THE REMAINING FIVE PRINCIPLES

The second principle mentioned by Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī is *īśa-bhaktān*, the devotees. Prabhupāda writes, “*Īśa-bhaktān* refers to the devotees of the Lord like Śrī Śrīvāsa and all other such followers, who are the energy of the Lord and are qualitatively nondifferent from Him.” (*Ādi* 1.34, purport)

Then Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī quotes verses from various *sāstras* about the glories of the Vaiṣṇavas, such as:

The spiritually powerful message of Godhead can be properly discussed only in a society of devotees, and it is greatly pleasing to hear in that association. If one hears from devotees, the way of transcendental experience quickly opens to him, and gradually he attains a taste in knowledge that in due course develops into attraction and devotion.

—*Bhāg.* 3.25.25, cited in *Ādi* 1.60

The definition of a Vaiṣṇava is one who does not associate with nondevotees. *Asat-saṅga-tyāga,—ei vaiṣṇava-ācāra, ‘strī-saṅgī’—eka asādhu, ‘kṛṣṇābhakta’ āra.* (*Madhya* 22.87) By associating with Vaiṣṇavas, the meaning of the scriptures becomes revealed. Therefore, the association of Vaiṣṇavas is essential for understanding *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, or Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu. Thus the Vaiṣṇavas are listed as one of the *tattvas* or truths by Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī in his first verse of the *Ādi-līlā*. Lord Caitanya includes His associates. It is not possible to study Lord Caitanya separate from His associates. Also, it is significant that the Vaiṣṇavas are mentioned immediately after the guru. Every Vaiṣṇava is our master and teacher.

The next principle is *tat-prakāśām*, or the plenary manifestations of the Lord, such as Lord Nityānanda. Along with this principle is the fifth principle, *tac-śaktiḥ* Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's spiritual energies. Gadādhara Paṇḍita is listed as the foremost.

All these categories will be elaborately discussed in the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, especially in Lord Caitanya's teachings to Sanātana Gosvāmī about the Lord's *śaktis* and *avatāras*.

The sixth principle is the Lord Himself. Prabhupāda writes, "To offer prayers to the Lord, one first offers prayers to His devotees and associates." (*Ādi* 22.87) This is why Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī composed his first verse on that principle and mentioned the Lord only generally.

The second verse praises the Lord in His particular form as Gaura-Nitāi: *vande śrī-kṛṣṇa-caitanya, nityānandau sahoditau, gauḍodaye puṣpavantau, citrau śandau tamo-nudau*. "I offer my respectful obeisances unto Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya and Lord Nityānanda, who are like the sun and moon. They have arisen simultaneously on the horizon of Gauḍa to dissipate the darkness of ignorance and thus wonderfully bestow benediction upon all."

Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī develops in the reader the wonder that these two brothers appear together—like the sun and the moon—and that They have come to perform a mission. They will dissipate the darkness of Kali-yuga, the cheating tendency described in *Bhāg.* 1.1.2 (*dharmah projjhita-kaitavo*), and drive out ignorance from the heart. Gaura-Nitāi are our worshipable Deities, and we can meditate on Them through this verse as we study *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*.

Śrīla Prabhupāda was very attached to Gaura-Nitāi worship. When Prabhupāda toured the world in 1975, he went to three

consecutive temples where Gaura-Nitāi Deities were installed. First he went to Caracas, Venezuela and was moved to ecstasy upon seeing the Deities. He sang “Śrī Śrī Gaura-Nityānander Dayā” without any instrumental accompaniment. As he sang, he began to cry. Then he described the kindness of Lord Caitanya and Nityānanda and how the devotees were so fortunate.

Immediately after that, he went to Miami where they have beautiful, tall Gaura-Nitāi. Prabhupāda encouraged the devotees by saying, “It is a great fortune for you that you are worshipping Gaura-Nitāi. Even if you do not establish Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa later, it does not matter. Caitanya Mahāprabhu is sufficient; He is a combination of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa.”

Then he went to Atlanta, Georgia. About three hundred devotees gathered to be with him from various book distribution parties and temples around America. When he saw their Gaura-Nitāi Deities, he was overwhelmed. He spoke for only a few minutes. He said, “He is so kind.” Then his voice broke and he began to cry. His voice became high and all he could say was, “So take shelter of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and be happy.” He cried out, “Thank you very much.” That evening, Prabhupāda came down and taught the devotees how to sing “Śrī Śrī Gaura-Nityānander Dayā”: *parama koraṇa pahū dui jana, nitāi gauracandra . . .*

ŚRĪ CAITANYA MAHĀPRABHU, THE SUPREME PERSONALITY OF GODHEAD

LORD CAITANYA IS GOD

The second chapter of *Ādi-līlā* is titled, “Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, the Supreme Personality of Godhead.” It contains Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī’s arguments to prove that Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu is God. At the end of this chapter, Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī says that it is important not to avoid these philosophical discussions because they “strengthen our minds and fix them on Kṛṣṇa.”

The first chapter of *Ādi-līlā* is an elaboration on the first two verses of *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*. This second chapter elaborates on *Ādi* 1.3.

*yad advaitaṁ brahmopaniṣadi tad apy asya tanu-bhā
ya ātmāntaryāmī puruṣa iti so 'syāṁśa-vibhavaḥ
ṣaḍ-aiśvaryaiḥ pūrṇo ya iha bhāgavān sa svayam ayaṁ
na caitanyāt kṛṣṇāj jagati para-tattvaṁ param iha*

What the *Upaniṣads* describe as the impersonal Brahman is but the effulgence of His body, and the Lord known as the Super-soul is but His localized plenary portion. He is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa Himself, full with six opulences. He is the Absolute Truth, and no other truth is greater than or equal to Him.

Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī makes this bold assertion early in the book. Often when we think of presenting our arguments in an essay or debate, we are told by experts not to offer the strongest arguments first, but to build up to our assertion. Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī, however, does not waste time. He declares immediately that Lord Caitanya is God, Bhagavān, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and that the other aspects of the Absolute Truth are subordinate to Him.

Such an assertion will have to be supported by scripture and logic. This chapter supports his assertion in a step by step series of arguments.

Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī's general method in establishing his arguments is to briefly describe one feature of the Absolute Truth and then to quote śāstric references to prove his point.

THE ABSOLUTE TRUTH IN THREE FEATURES

His first step is to define the Absolute Truth in three features, and he quotes from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* to do that:

*vadanti tat tattva-vidas
tattvaṁ yaj jñānam advayam*

*brahmeti paramātmēti
bhāgavān iti śabdyate*

Learned transcendentalists who know the Absolute Truth call this nondual substance Brahman, Paramātmā or Bhāgavān.

—*Bhāg.* 1.2.11

These three features of the Absolute Truth are all one, but there is also an implication that Bhāgavān is superior to the other two features. Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī will describe that truth later.

LOGIC AND ŚĀSTRA

Someone may ask, “Why should we hear Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī’s arguments with submission?” We hear from him because he is our guru. Therefore, his words are as good as *śāstra*. By hearing submissively and faithfully from the spiritual master, all the imports of the *Vedas* can be understood.

At the same time, we will accept his words impartially. In *Ādi* 8.15, he encourages—challenges—the intelligent readers: “If you are indeed interested in logic and argument, kindly apply it to the mercy of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. If you do so, you will find it to be strikingly wonderful.”* We are not required to hear

* From Śrīla Prabhupāda’s purport: “Logic and argument are very poor in spiritual strength and always imperfect when applied to spiritual understanding. By putting forward mundane logic one frequently comes to the wrong conclusion regarding the Absolute Truth, and as a result of such a conclusion one may fall down to accept a body like that of a jackal. Despite all this, those who are actually inquisitive to understand the philo-

Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī's arguments only with submission, but with intelligence. His presentation is based on *śāstra*.

Another question may be raised, "But this isn't *śāstra*, is it? This is logic. Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī is building his own argument. Can we arrive at the truth by logic?"

No, the truth of spiritual life cannot be asserted by good arguments. Prabhupāda often quoted the *Vedānta-sūtra* aphorism, *tarkāpratiṣṭhānāt*, "Transcendental topics cannot be understood by argument or logic." To attempt to know the truth by logic would depend on being a good logician, but our whole argument could be later defeated by a better logician. We don't rest on logic alone.

I once wrote to Prabhupāda about this question of logic and its relationship to *śāstra*. When I was traveling around America on the library party, I used to preach to the professors to convince them to take a standing order of Prabhupāda's books. I met one professor who said, "You're using all these analogies. You can't establish the truth by analogy." It seemed true to me—we always break into analogy to explain our points: "The Absolute Truth is like the three forms of the sun: the sunshine, the sun planet, and the sun rays." This professor pointed out that analogy cannot establish truth. He added, "That's what you always do in Indian philosophy."

I was concerned—and maybe even confused—by his argument, so I wrote to Śrīla Prabhupāda: "It appears that our

sophy of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu through logic and argument are welcome. Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī addresses them, 'Please put Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's mercy to your crucial test, and if you are actually a logician you will come to the right conclusion that there is no personality more merciful than Lord Caitanya.'

Kṛṣṇa conscious philosophy is a combination of *śāstra* and logic." What follows is an excerpt from Prabhupāda's reply.

"Our authority is *śāstra*. We give analogy for the general mass of people who have no faith in *śāstra*. Analogy is not proof; *śāstra* is proof. We don't use a combination of logic and authority. We use authority. Logic we use to convince someone who doesn't accept the authority. The basic principle is authority." (Letter from Śrīla Prabhupāda, October 21, 1975)

Prabhupāda went on to give the example that the *Vedas* say cow dung is pure, although they also say that animal stool is impure. If we juxtapose the two statements, they don't make logical sense, but because we accept Vedic authority, we accept both the contradiction and the absolute correctness of both statements.

Based on Śrīla Prabhupāda's letter, we can conclude that logic is secondary to, and meant to be supportive of, *śāstra*. As Prabhupāda explains, we use logic to preach to uninitiated or faithless persons. Ultimately, however, we cannot arrive at truth by logic exercised independently of *śāstra*.

After stating this, I would like to point out an interesting exception which occurs in *Madhya* 9.49. When Lord Caitanya met some Buddhists while on His tour of South India, Kṛṣṇa-dāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmi writes, "The scriptures of the Buddhist cult are chiefly based on argument and logic, and they contain nine chief principles. Because Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu defeated them in their argument, they could not establish their cult."

In his purport, Prabhupāda discusses how Lord Caitanya defeated the Buddhists:

No one can attain the Absolute Truth by argument. One may be very expert in logic, and another person may be even more expert in the art of argument. Because there is so much word jugglery in logic, one can never come to the real conclusion about the Absolute Truth by argument. The followers of Vedic principles understand this. However, it is seen here that Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu defeated the Buddhist philosophy by argument. Those who are preachers in ISKCON will certainly meet many people who believe in intellectual arguments. Most of these people do not believe in the authority of the *Vedas*. Nevertheless, they accept intellectual speculation and argument. Therefore the preachers of Kṛṣṇa consciousness should be prepared to defeat others by argument, just as Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu did.

How can we reconcile this apparent contradiction? We can reconcile it by asserting that we use logic for those who do not accept *śāstra*. The most effective preaching method must be determined by analyzing time, place, and person. The success of our preaching based on logic will be that our audience ultimately comes to accept śāstric authority. Through logic, we should establish that all other knowledge-acquiring processes, especially knowledge acquired through sense perception and speculation, are inferior and misleading. The only way to contact absolute knowledge is to accept śāstric authority.

BRAHMAN

Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī mentions each feature of the Absolute, describes it briefly, and quotes a śāstric reference to establish it. The first feature of the Absolute Truth is impersonal Brahman. To establish Brahman he quotes from the *Brahma-saṁhitā*: “I worship Govinda, the primeval Lord, who is endowed with great power. The glowing effulgence of his transcendental form is the impersonal Brahman, which is absolute, complete and unlimited and which displays the varieties of countless planets, with their different opulences, in millions and millions of universes.” (BS 5.40) The Brahman is Kṛṣṇa’s bodily effulgence.

When we quote *śāstra* as evidence, we have to give the direct meaning, and not the indirect. This is a rule in establishing the Absolute Truth. Another good evidence to establish Brahman: *brahmaṇo hi pratiṣṭhāham*—“And I am the basis of the impersonal Brahman . . .” (Bg. 14.27)

In the first chapter of *Ādi-līlā*, Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī says that “true eloquence is essential truth spoken concisely.” He exemplifies that policy in this chapter as he quickly moves from one point to the next.

PARAMĀTMĀ

The second aspect of the Absolute Truth is Paramātmā, the Supersoul, and Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī uses the same method to establish his point—a brief description and an essential śāstric reference. This time he quotes *Bhagavad-gītā*

10.42. “But what need is there, Arjuna, for all this detailed knowledge? With a single fragment of Myself, I pervade and support this entire universe.”

This is a reference to the all-pervading Supersoul, “which is only a fragment of Myself. In this way, I am all over the world.” He also quotes Bhiṣmadeva speaking at the end of his life (*Bhāg.* 1.9.42) to Kṛṣṇa, who is standing before him in His original form: “As the one sun appears differently situated to different seers, so also do You, the unborn, appear differently represented as Paramātmā in every living being. . . . Thus I am now able to comprehend Your eternal forms, knowing well the Paramātmā to be only Your plenary portion.”

Prabhupāda also liked to use the sun as an analogy to describe Paramātmā. The one sun appears differently situated according to the seer’s vision. Prabhupāda used to say, “You stand somewhere and you see the sun over your head, and one hundred miles away you ask another man where is the sun. He says, ‘I see it just over my head.’ One sun.” Similarly, the one Supersoul is expanded into everyone’s heart. He is a manifestation of Kṛṣṇa—a plenary portion.*

* The words “plenary portion” mean “fully powerful manifestation.” In a lecture on the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* given in 1966 in New York, Prabhupāda describes plenary portion as follows: “I have several times mentioned in this room that the original lamp . . . this is original lamp. You kindle another candle from that, another from that, another from that . . . Thousands and millions of candles you can light up, but the original is called the original.”

BHAGAVĀN

Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī writes: “That Govinda personally appears as Caitanya Gosāṇi. No other Lord is as merciful in delivering the fallen souls.” (Ādi 2.22) Then he states, “The Personality of Godhead is He who is described as the Absolute Whole in the *Vedas*, *Bhāgavatam*, *Upaniṣads* and other transcendental literatures. No one is equal to Him.” (Ādi 2.24)

In his purport to that verse, Prabhupāda quotes the *Rk-saṁhitā*: “The Personality of Godhead Viṣṇu is the Absolute Truth, whose lotus feet all the demigods are always eager to see. Like the sun-god, He pervades everything by the rays of His energy. He appears impersonal to imperfect eyes.”

There are many, many verses throughout Vedic literature that establish Bhagavān as the supreme Absolute Truth. The *Bhāgavatam* (1.2.24, 26) describes that firewood comes from the earth, but better than the raw wood is smoke produced from the wood. Better than smoke is fire, because with fire we can heat and cook. Similarly, one mode of nature is superior to the preceding mode. In the same way, Lord Viṣṇu is superior to Brahmā and Śiva. In verse 26, Sūta Gosvāmī goes on to say that Bhagavān, Viṣṇu, is superior to all the different forms of the demigods, who are subservient to Him.

**VIṢṆU IS BUT A PLENARY PORTION OF KṚṢṆA:
BRAHMĀ’S PROOFS**

Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī has now taken us to the stage of accepting *viṣṇu-tattva*, or the many forms of the Supreme

Lord, as the topmost expression of the Absolute Truth. The next step is to establish Kṛṣṇa as the origin of the Viṣṇus.

For this he begins with statements made by Lord Brahmā after he stole Kṛṣṇa's cows and calves. (*Bhāg.* 10.14) This particular dialogue given by Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī is sweet, and it doesn't appear in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

Lord Brahmā is in the mood of accepting Kṛṣṇa as the Supreme Truth. He says:

“O Lord of lords, You are the seer of all creation. You are indeed everyone's dearest life. Are You not, therefore, my father, Nārāyaṇa?” He goes on to say that Kṛṣṇa is the source of Nārāyaṇa. (*Ādi* 2.30)

Lord Brahmā is the direct son of Lord Nārāyaṇa, having been born atop the lotus flower that came from His navel. In Vedic culture, Nārāyaṇa is widely accepted as Bhagavān. It would seem to be a good advance in our argument to understand that Brahmā is saying that Kṛṣṇa is the source of Nārāyaṇa. That same Nārāyaṇa is standing before him as Kṛṣṇa in His Vṛndāvana feature. Therefore, this becomes a playful exchange between Brahmā and Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa replies: “O Brahmā, your father is Nārāyaṇa. I am but a cowherd boy. How can you be My son?” (*Ādi* 2.34) Then Brahmā states his proofs.

Kṛṣṇa's “protest” that He cannot be Brahmā's father because He is a cowherd boy can be taken as His joking with Brahmā. How can such a young boy be Lord Brahmā's father? His “protest,” however, can also be taken in another way. What Kṛṣṇa says is true: He *is* a cowherd boy, and in that sense, He is *not* Nārāyaṇa. The Vrajavāsīs certainly do not know Him as Nārāyaṇa. Mother Yaśodā, the *gopas*, and the *gopīs* know Him

only as their darling Kṛṣṇa. In fact, it is Kṛṣṇa's Vṛndāvana feature that bewildered Brahmā in the first place. Kṛṣṇa is therefore showing Brahmā that he cannot understand His Vṛndāvana form. Instead, Brahmā is examining this cowherd boy, searching out His features as Lord Nārāyaṇa.

However, Brahmā's statement is important and correct, so he states his three proofs despite what Kṛṣṇa says. His first proof is that Kṛṣṇa's first expansion is Saṅkarṣaṇa, the cause of the *jīvas*. "All the living beings within the material and spiritual worlds are ultimately born of You, for You are the Supersoul of them all." (*Ādi* 2.36) Because Saṅkarṣaṇa is the source of the *jīvas*, He is the ultimate shelter of all living beings. "The word '*nāra*' refers to the aggregate of all the living beings, and the word '*ayaṇa*' refers to the refuge of them all." (*Ādi* 2.38) Therefore, Brahmā says, Kṛṣṇa is the original Nārāyaṇa.

The second proof is that Kṛṣṇa is the source and maintainer of the *puruṣa-avatāras*, Karaṇodakaśāyī Viṣṇu, Garbhodakaśāyī Viṣṇu, and Kṣīrodakaśāyī Viṣṇu. These three Viṣṇus give shelter to everyone in the universe. "Since You protect those who are the shelters of all living beings, You are the original Nārāyaṇa." (*Ādi* 2.42)

The third proof is that as the Paramātmā feature, Kṛṣṇa witnesses the deeds and oversees the wanderings of all living entities. "All the worlds exist because You oversee them. None can live, move or have their being without Your supervision. You oversee the wanderings of all living beings. For this reason also, You are the primeval Lord Nārāyaṇa." (*Ādi* 2.45–6)

Kṛṣṇa again replies in a playful way: "Brahmā, I cannot understand what you are saying. Lord Nārāyaṇa is He who sits in the hearts of all living beings and lies down in the waters of

the Kāraṇa ocean.” (*Ādi* 2.47) We can understand this statement in the same way we understood the previous statement—that in His original, Vṛndāvana feature, Kṛṣṇa has no connection with the creation. But Lord Brahmā replies, “What I have said is true. The same Lord Nārāyaṇa who lives on the waters and in the hearts of all living beings is but a plenary portion of You.” (*Ādi* 2.48)

KṚṢṆADĀSA KAVIRĀJA GOŚVĀMĪ IS TO BE ACCEPTED AS AN AUTHORITY

Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gośvāmī always establishes his points with scripture, although sometimes he advances the argument by his own reasoning. At this point in the discussion, he distinguishes Kṛṣṇa from the Viṣṇus by saying that the Viṣṇus have some connection with matter whereas Kṛṣṇa does not.

We shouldn’t think that Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gośvāmī’s own statements do not carry the same weight as *śāstra*. He is our guru; therefore his statements are as good as *śāstra*. If a reader should happen not to accept Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gośvāmī as an authority, then he has also presented śāstric proof, but the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas accept his authority. Therefore, Prabhupāda translated his *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, even though he was asked to translate the *Caitanya-bhāgavatā*. Prabhupāda said that the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* was more philosophical. It is considered the post-graduate study, not only because it contains so many quotes from the *Bhāgavatam*, but because Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gośvāmī has presented Lord Caitanya and the Kṛṣṇa consciousness philosophy expertly, following the conclusions of the six Gośvāmīs and the previous *ācāryas*.

THE MAHĀ-VĀKYA OF ŚRĪMAD-BHĀGAVATAM

The three features of the Absolute Truth have been described. Bhagavān has been established as supreme. Now Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī will prove that Bhagavān is Kṛṣṇa.

At this point in his argument, he again quotes *vadanti tattva-vidas*, but this time he is in a better position to show why Bhagavān is supreme, although the three features are manifestations of the same Absolute Truth. Śrīla Prabhupāda writes, “. . . The principle word, *bhagavān*, indicates the Personality of Godhead, and Brahman and Paramātmā are concomitants deducted from the Absolute Personality, as a government and its ministers are deductions from the executive head.” (*Ādi* 2.65, purport)

Then he presents the *mahā-vākya* of the *Bhāgavatam*. A *mahā-vākya* is the principal verse in a scripture (or a chapter of scripture) that explains the predominant conclusion. The *mahā-vākya* of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is contained in verse 1.3.28:

*ete cāṁśa-kalāḥ puṁsaḥ
kṛṣṇas tu bhagavān svayam
indrāri-vyākulaṁ lokam
mṛdayanti yuge yuge*

All these incarnations of Godhead are either plenary portions or parts of the plenary portions of the *puruṣa-avatāras*. But Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Personality of Godhead Himself. In every age He protects the world through His different features when the world is disturbed by the enemies of Indra.

This verse establishes Kṛṣṇa as the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Since many schools of thought would want to claim this verse to support their own philosophies, Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī wants to guard it against misinterpretation.

Therefore he uses the method in which commentary is often written; he presents the *pūrva-pakṣa*, the opposing view. Commentators often present their assertion, specify it, then present the counter-arguments and defeat them.

In the *Bhāgavatam*, the symptoms and activities of the various incarnations are described. Because Lord Kṛṣṇa was counted among them, Sūta Gosvāmī was apprehensive that people would misunderstand Kṛṣṇa's supreme position. Thus at the end of the list, the verse says, "All of these (*etc*) *avatāras* are plenary parts of the Supreme, but Kṛṣṇa is Bhagavān Himself."

What is the *pūrva-pakṣa* opposing this direct conclusion? Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī, personifying the opposition, says that the verse actually means Nārāyaṇa is the Supreme and that He is the source of Kṛṣṇa. "An opponent may say: 'This is your interpretation, but actually the Supreme Lord is Nārāyaṇa, who is in the transcendental realm.'" (*Ādi* 2.71) Then he attacks that position.

First, he says the opposing argument has fallacious logic (*kutarkānumāna*). "An interpretation is never accepted as evidence if it opposes the principles of scripture (*śāstra-viruddhārtha*)."

He gives his first argument based on grammar. "One should not state a predicate before its subject, for it cannot thus stand without proper support.' If I do not state a subject, I do not state a predicate. First I speak the former and then I speak the

latter.” (*Ādi* 2.74–5) The subject should be stated first because it introduces the known. The predicate follows with more information about the subject. For example, in the sentence, “This *vipra* is learned,” the *vipra* is the subject, but we don’t know anything about him until we read the predicate, “is learned.”

In *Bhāg.* 1.3.28, the subject is clearly stated with the predicate following. *Ete*, “these incarnations,” is the subject. *Cāmsā-kalāḥ pumsaḥ*, “They are plenary portions or parts of the plenary portions” of the Absolute Truth, is the predicate. Then *kṛṣṇas*, Kṛṣṇa, is the subject, but we don’t have any information about Kṛṣṇa. It is important to follow his reasoning here because so far, all we *do* know about Kṛṣṇa is that He is listed as one of the incarnations. This verse is the key to understanding Kṛṣṇa’s actual position because it distinguishes Kṛṣṇa from the other incarnations: *kṛṣṇas tu bhagavān svayam*. The predicate to that sentence is *tu bhagavān svayam*—but Kṛṣṇa is Himself Bhagavān, the supreme, original Personality of Godhead. “Only the Personality of Godhead, the source of all other Divinities, is eligible to be designated *svayam bhagavān*, or the primeval Lord.” (*Ādi* 2.88)

In his purport to *Bhāg.* 1.3.28, Prabhupāda writes, “Although in other places the incarnations are described as *bhagavān* because of their specific functions, nowhere are they declared to be the Supreme Personality. In this stanza the word *svayam* signifies the supremacy as the *summum bonum*. The *summum bonum* Kṛṣṇa is one without a second.”

Therefore this *pūrva-pakṣa* that “Nārāyaṇa is *bhagavān svayam*” is defeated. If the verse meant that Nārāyaṇa was supreme, the order of the words would have been changed. “Thus he would have said, ‘Nārāyaṇa, the source of all

incarnations, is the original Personality of Godhead. He has appeared as Śrī Kṛṣṇa.” (*Ādi* 2.85) No one can twist that meaning out of the grammatical structure of this verse. Therefore, the verse has to be taken literally.

Another opposing argument could accuse Vyāsadeva of making a mistake in his rhetorical presentation. Of course, that is a ridiculous argument. Vyāsadeva is never wrong because he is an empowered incarnation of the Lord. He is above making mistakes.

Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī calls this verse the *pari-baśa sūtra*, the “emperor verse” of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. No other verse will contradict it. When the emperor speaks, everyone follows. If someone wants to oppose the emperor’s authority, he will be forced to submit by the emperor’s greater show of power. This verse is so powerful and influential that everything else agrees with its meaning: Kṛṣṇa is the source of all the Viṣṇu incarnations.

Next, Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī quotes *Bhāg.* 2.10.1–2 to describe the ten subject matters of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. The tenth subject is the *āśraya*, the shelter of the rest. It is the topmost understanding of Kṛṣṇa and it occurs as the Tenth Canto. By reading the other nine subjects, we approach the *āśraya* subject and thus we understand that Kṛṣṇa is the shelter of all the other manifestations and subject matters of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

ŚRĪ KṚṢṆA HAS DESCENDED AS CAITANYA MAHĀPRABHU

Having made such conclusive arguments, Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmi reprimands his opponents: “You know all the conclusions of the scriptures very well. You create these logical arguments just to agitate me.” (*Ādi* 2.108) Then he makes his final point: “The conclusion is that Lord Caitanya is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa, the son of the King of Vraja.” (*Ādi* 2.120)

It is surprising that after making such a statement, Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmi offers no śāstric proof. He closes his argument and the chapter. In *Ādi-lilā*, Chapter Three, he will provide many proofs of Lord Caitanya’s identity. For now, the final step in his argument is his conclusion that the same Lord Kṛṣṇa, the fountainhead of all incarnations, is known as the son of the King of Vraja. He has descended personally as Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

WHY WE STUDY THESE PROOFS

Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmi has presented rigorous arguments for our study. Then he writes: “A sincere student should not neglect the discussion of such conclusions, considering them controversial, for such discussions strengthen the mind. Thus one’s mind becomes attached to Śrī Kṛṣṇa.” (*Ādi* 2.117)

He is not referring to the work of studying the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava philosophy, but to avoiding controversial topics. And it is a controversial topic in the world: “Is Kṛṣṇa God?” We

should not avoid these kinds of controversies. We should understand his arguments and be prepared to present them in our preaching in order to establish the truth.

Prabhupāda criticized the *sahajiyās* who say that they are great devotees of Kṛṣṇa, but that they don't like to study philosophy. *Sahajiyās* often consider study an activity for *jñānis*. Prabhupāda teaches that this is not a Vaiṣṇava conclusion. We should study *these* books and that is part of being a devotee. In fact, this is the only way to establish the truth about Lord Caitanya.

However, we shouldn't misuse this verse and think that we have to confront all controversy. It doesn't mean we should indulge in speculative, logical arguments. In an institution such as ISKCON, there are so many controversial issues. This verse does not condone controversial talk, malicious debate, wrangling, and so on. If we debate about too many controversies of a lower nature, our minds will be distracted from the study of pure philosophy. Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmi says that studying the philosophy will strengthen the mind and fix it on Kṛṣṇa. Genuine challenges to the *paramparā* should be answered, as long as the discussion is based on guru, *sāstra*, and *sādhū*, and is conducted in a gentlemanly way.

WHAT IS ACCEPTABLE FOR DEBATE?

How do we know whether a controversy is of a lower nature or a higher nature? Won't all debating distract us?

One answer is to set ground rules for debate. First, we can determine the receptivity of the opposition. If a person is

willing to hear from us, then it may be worthwhile; otherwise, it may not. For example, we may meet a fanatical, born-again Christian. He doesn't agree that Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Although the subject matter is worthy of debate, the person may not be receptive to the discussion. Devotees should not preach the Lord's glories to the faithless.

We also have to determine whether the subject matter is worthy of debate, and to determine that, we should take guidance from the guru and the Vaiṣṇavas. In the early days, devotees used to write and ask Prabhupāda whether we should go to the Transcendental Meditation meetings and argue with the followers. Prabhupāda would always tell us what to do. Enthusiastic preachers might want to debate with everyone and timid devotees might not, but we should always choose our debates with the guru's guidance.

Also, we can tell if the subject matter is worthy by its fruits. Our debating should generate enthusiasm for devotional service and faith in ISKCON and *sādhū-saṅga*. We certainly do not want to enter debates that result in *vaiṣṇava-aparādha*. When we are debating with nondevotees, we have to keep our vision that our opponent is a spirit soul in ignorance. When we are debating with other devotees, we have to be scholarly and well-behaved. Not everyone who disagrees with us is an enemy. If we fail to understand this point, we may become offensive in our attack on another devotee's point of view. Lord Caitanya condemned Vallabhācārya's rejection of Śrīdhara Svāmī's commentary on the *Bhāgavatam*. The Lord even called him a prostitute. All this was said, however, between scholars and

devotees. Despite the Lord's criticism, Vallabha continued to invite the Lord to lunch and the Lord continued to accept his invitations. They were arguing above the platform of offense.

GAUGING THE INTENT OF A QUESTION

Preachers also have to gauge the intent of a question. Often questioners are loud or uncultured in their questioning—sometimes they even appear angry—but they sincerely want their doubts dispelled. Although they appear unsubmissive, they are prepared to submit if we can convince them.

Śrīla Prabhupāda was expert at seeing into a questioner's heart. So many people came to him in ISKCON's early years and inquired in loud, aggressive, or insulting ways. Behind their aggression was often a crying need to know the meaning of their lives. Sometimes they simply wanted to know, "Who is Kṛṣṇa? Who is the girl with Kṛṣṇa?" but they didn't have the training or the faith to ask submissively. Their questioning could be disturbing, but Prabhupāda expertly handled them all. It was always thrilling to watch Prabhupāda answer those people. He would see their mentalities and deal with them accordingly. If he saw a devious mentality, he responded differently than he would when presented with a sincere inquiry. He knew how to address what was on people's minds, not only what was in their words.

As preachers, we have to become expert. We also have to become honest. It may be that we are not always expert enough to handle a loud-mannered questioner. We should be careful and prepared to handle anyone, but if we are unable,

we should refer them to someone who can. Or we should pacify them with hospitality and *prasādam*. The more expert at preaching we become, the more we will be able to see into others' hearts. The face is the index of the mind, and if we add that to seeing the soul instead of the body, we will be able to give them what they need to help them progress in spiritual life.

Being expert includes being able to detect when someone is being offensive. Sometimes people purposely try to disturb our meetings. We don't always have to think that somehow or other we have to satisfy such people. We have to learn to answer in such a way that the audience remains favorable to our Kṛṣṇa conscious presentation.

One time in Melbourne, Prabhupāda disarmed an audience by his expert handling of a Melbourne hippie. The man was called The Wizard because he had rejected his role as a professor and instead went around dressed in a black cape and leotard. Many of his followers were present in the audience. Prabhupāda gave a lecture, then as soon as he asked for questions, The Wizard stood up. At first he spoke respectfully: "Excuse me, Your Divine Grace. I've been listening to your lecture, but I have one thing I would like to say in this regard. I believe that I am God. I am the center of the universe. And I will prove sometime next year that I am the center of the universe."

Although Śrīla Prabhupāda could have said so many things, he replied simply, "That's all right. Everybody is thinking like that. What makes you different?" In this way, Prabhupāda exposed The Wizard as just another materialistic fool. Everyone laughed and clapped.

In this regard, preachers should remember to make their points with humility, not with condescension. Although we may not convince our immediate opponent, others who hear our arguments may become convinced. We should not be arrogant. We are not arguing for the sake of arguing. We simply have to be detached and pure in our presentation, and in that way serve the *paramparā*.

THE CAUSES FOR THE DESCENT OF LORD CAITANYA MAHĀPRABHU

THE MEANING OF THE ANARPITA-CARĪM CIRĀT VERSE

The third chapter of *Ādi-lilā* explains the reasons for Lord Caitanya's descent. Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī begins by quoting *Ādi* 1.4 after stating that he has already explained the meaning of the third verse (in the second chapter). I would like to note that there is a difference in Śrīla Prabhupāda's translation of *Ādi* 1.4 as it occurs in the first chapter of *Ādi-lilā* and as it occurs again in the third.

anarpita-carim cirāt karuṇayāvatirṇaḥ kalau
samarpayitum unnatojjvala-rasāṁ sva-bhakti-śriyam
hariḥ puraṭa-sundara-dyuti-kadamba-sandipitaḥ
sadā hṛdaya-kandare sphuratu vaḥ śaci-nandanah

May that Lord, who is known as the son of Śrīmatī Śacidevī, be transcendently situated in the innermost core of your heart. Resplendent with the radiance of molten gold, He has descended in the age of Kali by His causeless mercy to bestow what no incarnation has ever offered before: the most elevated mellow of devotional service, the mellow of conjugal love.

The only change in the translation is in the last phrase (which occurs as the second line in the Sanskrit): *samarpayitum unnatojjvala-rasām sva-bhakti-śriyam*. In the fourth verse of the first chapter, Prabhupāda translates it, “the most sublime and radiant spiritual knowledge of the mellow taste of His service,” although in the synonyms, he gives “conjugal mellow” for *ujjvala-rasām*. Why doesn’t Prabhupāda use the phrase “conjugal mellow” in the translation? It’s almost as if at the beginning of the book he did not want to disclose the confidential meaning. Now in the third chapter of *Ādi-līlā*, he has revealed it more.

This verse states that Lord Caitanya has come to deliver a special form of love of God that was never given before. Rūpa Gosvāmī also states that in his verse:

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

Lord Caitanya is the most magnanimous incarnation because He is bestowing love of God freely. *Kṛṣṇa-prema* has never before been given by any other incarnation.

Actually, this *anarpita-carim cirāt* verse was not composed by Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī but by Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī. It is significant to note that Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī has placed it at the beginning of his book in an attempt to explain the reason for Lord Caitanya's descent. This is a sign of his humility.

Although this chapter begins by expressing the reason for Lord Caitanya's appearance, it does not describe Lord Caitanya's more confidential reasons and His relationship with *ujjala-rasa*. Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī describes those concepts more fully in the fourth chapter. This third chapter is taken up with the external reasons for Lord Caitanya's appearance and the proofs that Lord Caitanya is Kṛṣṇa. However, from this verse we learn that Lord Caitanya came to taste *ujjala-rasa* in the mood of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī. This is not something that can be taught to others. No one else is capable of tasting Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī's love for Kṛṣṇa. Therefore, this verse emphasizes that Caitanya Mahāprabhu came to give conjugal love, but He did not come to bestow Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī's love for Kṛṣṇa. The phrase *sva-bhakti-śriyam* refers to Lord Caitanya's tasting the mood of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, but also tells us that He came to teach us *bhakti* and to offer the living entities the opportunity to engage in service. The most beautiful form of devotional service, which is taught by Lord Caitanya and enunciated by Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, is service to Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī. This meaning is there in seed-form in this verse.

THE SCHEDULE OF INCARNATIONS

Ādi-līlā, Chapter Three, is divided into three main sections. Verses 1–34 discuss the reasons for and schedule of the Lord's descent. Lord Kṛṣṇa lives eternally in Goloka Vṛndāvana, but on His own schedule, He appears in the material world and manifests His transcendental pastimes.

There are four *yugas*, Satya, Tretā, Dvāparā, and Kali. The cycle of four *yugas* together is called one *divya-yuga*. One *divya-yuga* equals 4,320,000 solar years. Lord Kṛṣṇa appears in the twenty-eighth *divya-yuga*, at the end of Dvāparā-yuga, with His full paraphernalia, to perform His pastimes in Vṛndāvana.

Technically, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu is called a *yuga-avatāra*. This is described in the chapter, "Teachings to Sanātana Gosvāmi." In that chapter, Lord Caitanya presents to Sanātana Gosvāmi the definitions and descriptions of a *yuga-avatāra*. Sanātana Gosvāmi correctly ascertains that Lord Caitanya is the *yuga-avatāra* for Kali-yuga, but Lord Caitanya appears in the Kali-yuga immediately following Lord Kṛṣṇa's appearance at the end of Dvāparā-yuga. We have already been told that Lord Kṛṣṇa appears only once in a day of Brahmā, so it is interesting to note that Lord Caitanya appears so soon after Kṛṣṇa.

Why does Lord Caitanya appear so soon after Lord Kṛṣṇa?

Absorbed in such transcendental love, Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa enjoys in Vraja with His devoted servants, friends, parents and conjugal lovers. Lord Kṛṣṇa enjoys His transcendental pastimes as long as He wishes, and then He disappears. After disappearing, however, He thinks thus: "For a long time I have not bestowed

unalloyed loving service to Me upon the inhabitants of the world. Without such loving attachment, the existence of the material world is useless. Everywhere in the world people worship Me according to scriptural injunctions. But simply by following such regulative principles one cannot attain the loving sentiments of the devotees in Vrajabhūmi. . . . I shall accept the role of a devotee, and I shall teach devotional service by practicing it Myself. Unless one practices devotional service himself, he cannot teach it to others.

—Ādi 3.12-15, 20-21

Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmi explains that Lord Caitanya comes immediately after Kṛṣṇa to explain the meaning of Kṛṣṇa's pastimes in the material world. Kṛṣṇa did not explain His own pastimes. Instead, Kṛṣṇa performed His pastimes. He did not teach humanity how to understand or practice pure love of Kṛṣṇa. When Kṛṣṇa appeared, He was loved by all the residents of Vṛndāvana and He reciprocated that love, but we are not Kṛṣṇa nor the residents of Vṛndāvana. How can we develop *kṛṣṇa-prema*? Only when Kṛṣṇa appears as Lord Caitanya and accepts the form of a pure devotee does He directly teach us how to practice *bhakti-yoga*.

Prabhupāda expresses it in a different way. He says that when Kṛṣṇa performed His pastimes and then later taught the *Bhagavad-gītā* and said, "Surrender to Me," people misunderstood. They thought He was demanding too much. Also, people forgot Kṛṣṇa's pastimes and the places where they were performed. These are some of the reasons why Lord Caitanya comes immediately after Kṛṣṇa's appearance.

KṚṢṆADĀSA KAVIRĀJA GOSVĀMĪ'S QUALIFICATIONS

How can we trust Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī to tell us what Kṛṣṇa was thinking? We have already stated that we accept Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī's words as *śāstra* because he is such a highly qualified devotee. In his internal identity, he is one of the principal *gopī-maṅjaris*. In his *sādhaka* appearance, he is a direct disciple of Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī. Although he did not personally meet Lord Caitanya, his spiritual master revealed the inner heart of the Lord's pastimes to him. Therefore, he is our worshipable *ācārya* and we should not question that he knows Kṛṣṇa's mind.

Kṛṣṇa begins, "For a long time I have not bestowed unalloyed service to Me upon the inhabitants of the world. Without such loving attachment, the existence of the material world is useless."

Reading this section gives us some "inside" information. Although Kṛṣṇa had given us the official manuals in the form of the *Vedas* on how to worship Him in this world, and although we have access to all the codes and rules, Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī reveals Kṛṣṇa's concern for all the *jīvas* rotting in the material world.

DEVOTION MADE FEEBLE BY REVERENCE DOES NOT ATTRACT KṚṢṆA

In *Ādi* 3.16, Kṛṣṇa says, "Knowing My opulences, the whole world looks upon Me with awe and veneration. But devotion made feeble by such reverence does not attract Me." Prabhu-

pāda writes a wonderful purport explaining this situation. He explains that *vaidhi-bhakti*, regulative devotional service, will not give us love of Kṛṣṇa in eternal Vṛndāvana. Devotional service performed under the pressure of scriptural injunctions, without spontaneous love, will lead us, if we perfect it, to Vaikuṇṭha. That regulative love is always imbued with seeing the Lord in *aiśvarya* (awe and reverence). That is how Lord Viṣṇu's devotees worship Him. Something more will be needed if we want to serve Kṛṣṇa in His original, Vṛndāvana form.

“By following scriptural injunctions one may enhance his appreciation for the glories of the Lord, but there is no chance for one to enter personal dealings with Him. Giving too much attention to understanding the exalted glories of the Lord reduces the chance of one's entering personal loving affairs with the Lord. To teach the principles of such loving dealings, the Lord decided to appear as Lord Caitanya.”

According to this chapter, Caitanya Mahāprabhu came to teach the four mellows found in Vraja: *dāsyā* (although this *dāsyā* is more intimate than the *dāsyā* in Vaikuṇṭha), *sakhya*, *vātsalya*, and *mādhurya*. Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī explains that Caitanya Mahāprabhu taught these mellows in relation to the *yuga-dharma*, *harināma-saṅkīrtana*. That is, the holy name is nondifferent from Kṛṣṇa Himself. By chanting the holy name, the living entity can uncover his eternal seed *rasa* and associate with Kṛṣṇa according to his eternal constitutional relationship with the Lord.

After hearing this, we may wonder how we can approach spontaneous love for Kṛṣṇa. Can we make our present services more spontaneous? It is important for us to ask ourselves this question, but we should also be aware that *vaidhi-bhakti*, when

performed under the guidance of the spiritual master in Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī's line, will lead us to *rāgānugā-bhakti*. We cannot jump over our present level of realization. *Vaidhi-bhakti* is part of the devotional path. At the same time, we should aspire for the higher goal of spontaneous devotional service and hear about it from authorized sources. Even from our present position, we should try to infuse our services with love and devotion so that spontaneous feelings can arise. Service has to come from the heart.

THE FOUR KINDS OF VAIṢṆAVA LIBERATION REJECTED

Lord Kṛṣṇa continues: "By performing such regulated devotional service in awe and veneration, one may go to Vaikuṇṭha and attain the four kinds of liberation." Kṛṣṇa does not mention *sāyujya*, merging with Him, a form of liberation no Vaiṣṇava would accept. The four Vaiṣṇava liberations are *sāmīpya* (living as the Lord's personal associate), *sārṣṭi* (having the same opulence as the Lord), *sālokya* (living on the same planet as the Lord), and *sārūpya* (having the same form as the Lord). According to this verse, a *rūpānuga* rejects these Vaiṣṇava liberations because they are Vaikuṇṭha perfections. The *rūpānuga* is interested only in unalloyed devotional service.

THE INAUGURATION OF SAṅKĪRTANA

Then Kṛṣṇa says, “I shall personally inaugurate the religion of the age—*nāma-saṅkīrtana*, the congregational chanting of the holy name. I shall make the world dance in ecstasy, realizing the four mellows of loving devotional service.” This is Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu’s mission. Kṛṣṇa will not appear as Bhagavān to inaugurate the *saṅkīrtana* movement, but as His pure devotee.

“I shall accept the role of a devotee, and I shall teach devotional service by practicing it Myself.” Lord Caitanya appears rarely in Kali-yuga, although *saṅkīrtana* is the *yuga-dharma* for every Kali-yuga. Therefore, we can assume that Lord Caitanya’s appearance is not required to inaugurate *nāma-saṅkīrtana*. When Caitanya Mahāprabhu comes to distribute the four mellows of love of Kṛṣṇa in Vṛndāvana, however, He gives *harināma* at the same time. “My plenary portions can establish the principles of religion for each age. No one but Me, however, can bestow the kind of loving service performed by the residents of Vraja. . . . Thinking thus, the Personality of Godhead, Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself, descended at Nadia early in the age of Kali.” (*Ādi* 3.26, 29)

Chanting the holy name is the easiest method for developing pure, spontaneous love of Kṛṣṇa, and the *harināma* distribution by Lord Caitanya has special potency. We read in *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* that just by hearing or seeing Lord Caitanya, someone—a Muslim, a governor, some ordinary person—immediately began to chant, “Kṛṣṇa! Kṛṣṇa!” and display all the bodily ecstasies of spontaneous love. Those people would then return to their villages and chant, and whoever saw or

heard them would also become overwhelmed with ecstasy. This would not be a show of momentary ecstasy, but these people would become pure lovers of Kṛṣṇa. Therefore, Lord Caitanya's distribution of *harināma* leads to *prema-bhakti* as no other distribution of *harināma* can do.*

PROOFS THAT LORD CAITANYA IS KṚṢṆAS TU BHAGAVĀN SVAYAM

Now that Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī has concluded his reasoning as to why Lord Caitanya descends, he takes up where he left off at the end of Chapter 2 and proves that Caitanya Mahāprabhu is Kṛṣṇa, Bhagavān. He ended the second chapter with only one verse of his own composition: "The conclusion is that Lord Caitanya is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa, the son of the King of Vraja." It is a bold assertion, considering he did not offer any scriptural support. Now in this chapter, he supports that assertion with sāstric proof.

Prabhupāda often said that only ignorant people accept an incarnation without proof. An incarnation of Kṛṣṇa has to perform extraordinary activities and those activities must be described in scripture. The *Bhāgavatam* and other scriptures give detailed information about the appearances of Buddha, Kalki, and others, including the names of the town where they

* Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja presents more detail about how Caitanya Mahāprabhu teaches service to Kṛṣṇa in Vṛndāvana mainly in the *Antya-līlā*. There, He especially concentrates not on all four *rasas*, but on *ujjala-rasa*, *mādhurya-rasa*.

would appear, their parents' names, etc. A learned person never accepts anyone as an incarnation unless the details match the śāstric descriptions.

In the case of Lord Caitanya, there is no ample, direct evidence about His appearance because He is a covered incarnation. He does not appear as God, but as God's pure devotee. Nevertheless, His confidential devotees have found numerous references to His appearance and activities.

One important proof comes from the Tenth Canto of the *Bhāgavatam*. It is spoken at Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma's name-giving ceremony by Gargamuni: "Knowing Him [Lord Caitanya] to be the incarnation for the Kali-yuga, Gargamuni, during the naming ceremony of Kṛṣṇa, predicted His appearance. 'This boy [Kṛṣṇa] has three other colors—white, red and yellow—as He appears in different ages. Now He has appeared in a transcendental blackish color.'" (*Ādi* 3.35–6) This verse is accepted as a proof for both Lord Caitanya's appearance and His status as Bhagavān.

Then Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī gives a description of Lord Caitanya's extraordinary bodily features:

The luster of His expansive body resembles molten gold. The deep sound of His voice conquers the thundering of newly assembled clouds. One who measures four cubits in height and in breadth by his own hand is celebrated as a great personality. . . . His arms are long enough to reach His knees, His eyes are just like lotus flowers, His nose is like a sesame flower, and His face is as beautiful as the moon.

—*Ādi* 3.41–2, 44

Then he quotes a verse from the *Mahābhārata*, which Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa writes in his commentary “asserts that Lord Caitanya is the Supreme Personality of Godhead according to the evidence of the *Upaniṣads*.”

THE MAHĀ-VĀKYA PROOF

Then comes the *mahā-vākya* verse on this point from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*:

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

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

—*Bhāg.* 11.5.32

Lord Caitanya is in the category of Kṛṣṇa (*kṛṣṇa-varṇam*). He is Kṛṣṇa, but not “blackish.” Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī states, “If someone tries to describe Him as being of blackish complexion, the next adjective [*tviṣā akṛṣṇam*] immediately restricts him. His complexion is certainly not blackish. Indeed, His not being blackish indicates that His complexion is yellow.” (*Ādi* 3.56–7)

Someone could argue, “How does not black suggest yellow?” Then we turn to Gargamuni’s statement that when Kṛṣṇa is

not black, He will appear with different bodily hues in different *yugas*. In Satya-yuga He accepts a white color, in Tretā-yuga a red color. Kṛṣṇa appeared as Śyāmasundara in Dvāparā-yuga. Since Kali-yuga follows Dvāparā-yuga, it can be assumed that the next incarnation will be yellow.*

This verse states that Lord Caitanya appears in Kali-yuga and that He chants Hare Kṛṣṇa. It also states that He appears with His *aṅgas* (limbs), His stalwart associates such as Lord Nityānanda and Advaita Ācārya. The Lord's *upaṅgas* (secondary associates) are all His other great associates.

Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī explains that *kṛṣṇa-varṇam* means Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya. . . . The name Kṛṣṇa appears with both Lord Kṛṣṇa and Lord Caitanya Kṛṣṇa. Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, but He always engages in describing Kṛṣṇa and thus enjoying transcendental bliss by chanting and remembering His name and form. . . . *Varṇayati* means “utters” or “describes.” Lord Caitanya always chants the holy name of Kṛṣṇa and describes it also, and because He is Kṛṣṇa Himself, whoever meets Him will automatically chant the holy name of Kṛṣṇa and later describe it to others. He injects one with transcendental Kṛṣṇa consciousness, which merges the chanter in transcendental bliss. In all respects, therefore, He appears before everyone as Kṛṣṇa, either by personality or by sound.

—Ādi 3.52, purport

* In Vedic astronomy, there are two kinds of fortnights, *kṛṣṇa-pakṣya* and *gaura-pakṣya*. In that sense, *gaura* (golden) is the opposite of *kṛṣṇa* (black).

All of these statements are predictive, definitive proof of Lord Caitanya's advent in Kali-yuga.

Both Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī and Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī comment on this verse. Jīva Gosvāmī writes: "I take shelter of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Mahāprabhu who is outwardly of a fair complexion, but is inwardly Kṛṣṇa Himself. In this age of Kali, He displays His expansions, His *aṅgas* and *upaṅgas*, by performing congregational chanting of the holy name of the Lord." (*Ādi* 3.81)

Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī's verse appears in his *Stava-mālā*: "By performing the sacrifice of congregational chanting of the holy name, learned scholars in the age of Kali worship Lord Kṛṣṇa, who is now non-blackish because of the great upsurge of the feelings of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī. May that Supreme Personality of Godhead, Lord Caitanya, show us His causeless mercy." This is Rūpa Gosvāmī's explanation of why Lord Kṛṣṇa accepts a yellowish form rather than a blackish form.

Therefore, "Those who are intelligent will worship the Lord in this form when He appears."

WE SHOULD WORSHIP THE LORD IN THE MOOD IN WHICH HE APPEARS

We want to worship Lord Caitanya in the way He desires to be approached. I once asked Śrīla Prabhupāda a question about this. I was gathering information on Lord Rāmacandra because I was going to write an essay for *Back to Godhead* magazine. I wondered why He was sometimes compared to the demigods—

He is as powerful as Indra, etc. If Lord Rāma is the Supreme Lord, why is it favorable to compare Him to Indra?

Prabhupāda said that Lord Rāma appeared as a perfect human being and a perfect king. Therefore, to compare Him to the demigods is compatible. He said we have to understand the Lord's mood. Lord Rāmacandra wants people to relate to Him as a human being and as a king.

Similarly, Lord Caitanya has a particular mood. If we approach Him in the wrong way, He will not be pleased. If we say to Lord Rāma, "Why should You listen to Your father's promise? You are God. Why don't You just assume the kingship. You don't have to follow Your father's order. You are religion personified. Why should You have to obey religion?" that would not please Lord Rāma.

These comparative studies in the life of Kṛṣṇa and Rāmacandra are very intricate, but the basic principle is that Rāmacandra appeared as an ideal king, and Kṛṣṇa appeared as the Supreme Personality of Godhead. A similar example is Lord Caitanya. He appeared as a devotee and not as the Supreme Personality of Godhead, although He is Kṛṣṇa Himself. So we should accept the Lord's mood in particular appearances, and we should worship Him in that mood. Sometimes Lord Caitanya, because He is Kṛṣṇa Himself, somebody worships Him in the same manner of Kṛṣṇa. But Kṛṣṇa was in the role of enjoyer, and Lord Caitanya was in the role of being enjoyed. So the party known as *gaurāṅga-nāgari*, they're considered to be deviated from pure devotional service on account of Lord Caitanya given the same facility of Kṛṣṇa, which He did not like. Our service mood should be compatible to the attitude of the Lord, not that we should overlap the attitude of Kṛṣṇa to Lord Caitanya, or Lord Caitanya to Kṛṣṇa, or Kṛṣṇa to

Rāmacandra. Therefore in the *śāstras*, specific injunctions are there, just as to worship Lord Caitanya, it is done by the method of chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa. When we chant Hare Kṛṣṇa and when we spread Hare Kṛṣṇa movement, we are worshipping Lord Caitanya.

—Letter from Śrīla Prabhupāda, June 16, 1968

THE UNFORTUNATE OWLS

After giving this evidence, Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī is aware that a certain class of people will not accept his arguments. He compares such atheists to owls who do not see the sun's rays although they are clearly evident. He places a prayer by Yamunācārya in the text, as verse 87: "O my Lord, those influenced by demoniac principles cannot realize You, although You are clearly the Supreme by dint of Your exalted activities, forms, character and uncommon power, which are confirmed by all the revealed scriptures in the quality of goodness and the celebrated transcendentalists in the divine nature."

How unfortunate it is that despite such a kind and full presentation of Lord Caitanya, these rascals remain in the position of owls. Prabhupāda would say, "You cannot give a thief good instruction."

Aside from the demoniac persons who do not accept the *śāstric* evidence, Lord Caitanya is a covered incarnation. He tries to hide His appearance, although His pure devotees know Him as He is.

ADVAITA ĀCĀRYA CALLS THE LORD TO APPEAR

The last section in this chapter deals with Advaita Ācārya's calling the Lord to descend. Throughout the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī moves freely from one topic to another, even within individual chapters. Many of the chapters are long, but they deal with a number of subjects which do not always appear connected. These particular topics are connected, but it is wonderful to see how he flows from one topic to another in his composition.

In this section, Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī gives an important and moving portrait both of the world, and of Navadvipa in particular, before Lord Caitanya's appearance, and of Advaita Ācārya's response to it. "Advaita Ācārya having appeared, He found the world devoid of devotional service to Śrī Kṛṣṇa because people were engrossed in material affairs. Everyone was engaged in material enjoyment, whether sinfully or virtuously. No one was interested in the transcendental service of the Lord, which can give total relief from the repetition of birth and death. Seeing the activities of the world, the Ācārya felt compassion and began to ponder how He could act for the people's benefit." (*Ādi* 3.96–8) A Vaiṣṇava always feels compassion for the materialists and wants to help them become free from the cycle of birth and death.

Now Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī gives us Advaita Ācārya's thoughts: "If Śrī Kṛṣṇa were to appear as an incarnation, He Himself could preach by His personal example."

Advaita Ācārya appeared in the world to prepare for Lord Caitanya's appearance. Other personalities also appeared,

such as Mādhavendra Purī, Īśvara Purī, Śācīmātā, and Jagan-nātha Miśra—Lord Caitanya’s elders.

“In this age of Kali there is no religion other than the chanting of the holy name of the Lord, but how in this age will the Lord appear as an incarnation?

“I shall worship Kṛṣṇa in a purified stated of mind. I shall constantly petition Him in humbleness.”

Advaita Ācārya has an ambitious desire to call the Lord down. Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī says He called the Lord with “loud cries.” But who is so powerful that they can call Kṛṣṇa into this world? How can they make Him come? Then Advaita Ācārya remembers a verse from *śāstra*:

“Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who is very affectionate toward His devotees, sells Himself to a devotee who offers merely a *tulasī* leaf and a palmful of water.” Kṛṣṇa is so indebted to the pure devotion offered to Him by someone who sincerely offers a *tulasī* leaf and water that He thinks there is nothing He can offer in response. Therefore, the Lord is forced to respond to the devotee by giving Himself. Advaita Ācārya considers the meaning of this verse and decides that by offering a palmful of Ganges water and *tulasī* leaves, the Lord will be indebted to Him and have to fulfill His desire, which is that the Lord appear. “The Lord will liquidate His debt to Me in that way.”

Advaita Ācārya offers *tulasī* and Ganges water and appeals to Kṛṣṇa with loud cries. In this way, it has been said that the principal reason for Śrī Caitanya’s descent is Advaita Ācārya’s appeal. We know that Lord Caitanya descended to distribute Vraja-prema and to inaugurate the *yuga-dharma*, but His descent was caused by Advaita Ācārya.

Sometimes devotees wonder how, on the one hand, it appears that Lord Caitanya descended due to the appeals of a devotee, and how He can simultaneously be a scheduled incarnation. However, we cannot calculate these things from our limited perspective. Kṛṣṇa achieves many purposes with each action. Lord Caitanya had His own reasons for appearing, yet He wanted to respond to Advaita Ācārya's devotion. He is the reconciliation for all contradictions. We can only accept it as His inconceivable will, as His *lilā*.

Queen Kuntī prays, "Some say that the Unborn is born for the glorification of pious kings, and others say that He is born to please King Yadu . . . Others say that since both Vasudeva and Devakī prayed for You, You have taken Your birth as their son. Undoubtedly You are unborn, yet You take Your birth for their welfare and to kill those who are envious of the demigods. Others say that the world, being overburdened like a boat at sea, is much aggrieved, and that Brahmā, who is Your son, prayed for You, and so You have appeared to diminish the trouble. And yet others say that You appeared to rejuvenate the devotional service of hearing, remembering, worshiping and so on in order that the conditioned souls suffering from material pangs might take advantage and gain liberation." (*Bhāg.* 1.8.32–5)

All these reasons are partially true. Some are more internal and some are more external, but Kṛṣṇa appears for all those reasons. Because being obliged to one person usually means neglecting practically everyone else, and following one rule often means breaking another, we look at Kṛṣṇa's pastimes as

full of contradictions. Kṛṣṇa is not, however, bound by material limits or considerations. He can fulfill many purposes with a single action.

4

THE CONFIDENTIAL REASONS FOR THE APPEARANCE OF LORD CAITANYA

INTRODUCTION

The first three chapters of this book have provided an overview for the first three chapters of the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*. In this chapter, I will depart from that approach. Instead, I will answer questions raised by the fourth chapter of the *Ādi-līlā* by referring to the text.

In Chapter 4, the author continues addressing in order the first fourteen verses from the first chapter and discussing them in detail. Chapter 4 is an explanation of *Ādi* 1.5–6.

In the previous chapter, we learned that Lord Caitanya came into the world to distribute Vraja-prema and the four *rasas* that are exchanged there. He also appeared to distribute *harināma-saṅkīrtana*. As we begin this fourth chapter, Kṛṣṇa-dāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī immediately tells us that although he has already described the secondary reasons for the Lord's

descent, he will now describe the more confidential reason for His appearance.

Verses 5 and 6 were both composed by Śrīla Svarūpa Dāmodara Gosvāmi:

*rādhā kṛṣṇa-praṇaya-vikṛtir hlādinī śaktir asmād
ekātmānāv api bhuvi purā deha-bhedam gatau tau
caitanyākhyam prakāṣam adhunā tad-dvayam caikyam āptam
rādhā-bhāva-dyuti-suvalitam naumi kṛṣṇa-svarūpam*

The loving affairs of Śrī Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa are transcendental manifestations of the Lord's internal pleasure-giving potency. Although Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa are one in Their identity, They separated Themselves eternally. Now these two transcendental identities have again united in the form of Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya. I bow down to Him, who has manifested Himself with the sentiment and complexion of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī although He is Kṛṣṇa Himself.

—Ādi 1.5

ARE WE QUALIFIED TO READ THESE CONFIDENTIAL TOPICS?

I remember the first time I read this chapter. It was the early 1970s and the *Ādi-līlā* had just come out. I had two impressions. First, these topics amazed me; Śrīla Prabhupāda had never discussed these things with us. Second, I was afraid that I wasn't qualified to read them; they felt too intimate.

We can still raise this question today: are we fit to hear these topics? Some devotees insist that we should not read the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* until we have completed our studies of

Bhagavad-gītā and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. (It could be said that we shouldn't read the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* until we become liberated.) Others say that since Śrīla Prabhupāda gave us the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, we can and should read it along with his other books.

Both views can be supported. For example, Prabhupāda says in one purport in *Madhya* 8, that unless one is on the liberated platform, he should not read these topics. *Mādhurya-rasa* is not for conditioned souls. In other places, however, he expresses the opposite view. At the end of Chapter 32 of the *Kṛṣṇa* book ("Description of the *Rāsa* Dance"), he writes that hearing about the *rāsa* dance will cleanse the heart of material lust.

We can reconcile these two viewpoints by aspiring to understand these pastimes, but not presuming that we are beyond our present level of practice and realization. We should not imagine that we are taking part in Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa's intimate pastimes, nor should we think that we have reached a stage where we are able to relish them with *bhāva*. It is not, however, forbidden to see entrance into those pastimes as the goal or to reach out to them for inspiration.

When Śrīla Prabhupāda first published his *Kṛṣṇa* book, he wanted it widely distributed. He once said that every home should have a *Kṛṣṇa* book. *Kṛṣṇa* book contains *all* of Kṛṣṇa's pastimes, including His pastimes performed in the conjugal *rasa*. Why, then, would he want every home to have *Kṛṣṇa* book? Śrīla Prabhupāda made *Kṛṣṇa* book—and all of his other books—"safe" for us by accompanying the verses with elaborate purports. His purports enable us to read the confidential sections in his books even before we are liberated. If we are

hearing from the right source, and if we are practicing Kṛṣṇa consciousness, then we can read, protected by Prabhupāda.

In another purport in Chapter 8, Prabhupāda criticizes materialists, mundane scholars, and poets who approach these topics with abominable attitudes. He says they are forbidden to hear. But a practicing devotee who is hearing from the right source and following the rules and regulations is in a different category.

Prabhupāda writes, “But above all these Vaikuṇṭha planets is Goloka, or Kṛṣṇaloka, where the original Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa, fully manifests His pleasure potency in free loving affairs. Since the devotees in the material world know almost nothing about these affairs, the Lord desires to show these affairs to them.” (*Ādi* 4.30, purport) This indicates that this information about Kṛṣṇa is to be distributed. Then he writes, “The reason the Lord displays the *rāsa-līlā* is essentially to induce all the fallen souls to give up their diseased morality and religiosity, and to attract them to the kingdom of God to enjoy the reality. A person who actually understands what the *rāsa-līlā* is will certainly hate to indulge in mundane sex life.”

From this purport, we can understand that the *rāsa-līlā* is not a forbidden topic. It is the most pure topic. But because we are conditioned, we have to hear of it carefully, protected by Śrīla Prabhupāda’s purports. Prabhupāda affirms in his purport to “*Vibhāvarī Śeṣa*” that “these topics should be heard from pure devotees of the Lord, otherwise they should be avoided.”

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 10.29.16 states: “You [Mahārāja Parikṣit] should not be so astonished by Kṛṣṇa, the unborn master of all masters of mystic power, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. After all, it is the Lord who liberates this world.”

Hṛdayānanda Mahārāja writes in his purport: “Parikṣit Mahārāja should not have been so astonished that Lord Kṛṣṇa’s so-called romantic affairs are in fact meant to liberate the entire universe. After all, that is the Lord’s purpose—to bring all conditioned souls back home, back to Godhead, for an eternal life of bliss and knowledge. The Lord’s conjugal affairs with the *gopīs* fit in very nicely with that program, because we who are actually lusty in material consciousness can be purified and liberated by hearing of them.”

This is the meaning of Kṛṣṇa’s pastimes—He wants us to become attracted to them and to give up the material world for His service. This is also the connection between the Lord’s desires for preaching and His confidential pastimes.

KṚṢṆA LIKES TO BECOME SUBORDINATE TO HIS DEVOTEES

The chapter opens with Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī giving us the background that leads to the discussion of *mādhurya-rasa*. He explains that Kṛṣṇa is more pleased when a devotee takes a predominant role in his relationship with Him. Although Kṛṣṇa is everyone’s master, Śrīla Prabhupāda says He gets tired of the lack of intimacy. He likes His devotees to exchange with Him in love that overcomes reverence. That intimacy may take different forms according to the *rasa* being exchanged: His mother nourishes and protects Him, “thinking Me utterly helpless.” His friends climb on His shoulders and say, “What kind of big man are You? You and I are equal.” When His consort reproaches Him in a sulky mood, “that steals

My mind from the reverent hymns of the *Vedas*.” Prabhupāda writes, “Only out of pure love does the subordinate lover of the Supreme Personality of Godhead chide Him. The Lord, enjoying this chiding, takes it very nicely.”

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN RĀGĀNUGĀ-BHAKTI AND VAIDHI-BHAKTI

There is an important verse in this section about *rāgānugā-bhakti*: “The Lord’s desire to appear was born from two reasons: He wanted to taste the sweet essence of the mellows of love of God, and He wanted to propagate devotional service in the world on the platform of spontaneous attraction. Thus He is known as supremely jubilant and as the most merciful of all.” (*Ādi* 4.15-16)

Śrīla Prabhupāda writes, “Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa wants to make known to all the conditioned souls that He is more attracted by *rāga-bhakti* than *vidhi-bhakti*, or devotional service under scheduled regulations. . . . He is also causelessly merciful, and He wants to bestow upon us this privilege of *rāga-bhakti*.”

Lord Caitanya did not appear only to teach the regulative principles of religion. He came to teach spontaneous Vraja-prema and to taste it Himself. If it is true that Kṛṣṇa is interested in *rāgānugā-bhakti* and not in *vaidhi-bhakti*, why don’t we practice *rāgānugā-bhakti*?

The scriptures assure us that without performing *vaidhi-bhakti*, we cannot attain the qualification for *rāgānugā-bhakti*. The only qualification for spontaneous love is *laulyam*, the

transcendental greed to attain it. If we try to practice it without that qualification, we will fall down.

We have to be mature to practice Kṛṣṇa consciousness. An immature person always wants the best thing right away, without considering its price. Śrīla Prabhupāda, in his explanation of Rāmānanda Rāya's verse (quoted in *Padyāvali*) explains this point: "If you hear that *kṛṣṇa-prema* is for sale in the market, you should go right away and purchase it." That is an urgent invitation. But there is a price to pay. That price is your desire to achieve it. Someone may say that they have the desire, but Rāmānanda Rāya warns, "No, this *laulyam* is not possible for *koṭi-janma*, millions of births."

Both are true: *rāgānugā-bhakti* is the highest expression of love of God, and we need the requisite greed before we will be able to attain it. Therefore, we have to practice Kṛṣṇa consciousness under regulation. At the same time, we can aspire for the higher platform and take the opportunity to hear about it and receive our guru's mercy.

The more we understand about Lord Caitanya's identity and pastimes, the more we will see that He is inextricably connected to Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa's *lilā*. The fourth chapter of *Ādi-lilā* enters deeply into both these sets of pastimes. This chapter also contains an explanation of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī's identity and position. Unless we understand Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī's mood, we will not be able to understand Lord Caitanya's identity. Therefore, the Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa discussion is appropriate and essential.

PARAKĪYA-RASA IS THE TOPMOST

The Vṛndāvana pastimes take place under *yoga-māyā*'s influence. *Yoga-māyā* covers the devotees' remembrance that Kṛṣṇa is Bhagavān in order to facilitate a deeper intimacy with the Lord. Prabhupāda explains, "In the spiritual loving sentiment induced by the *yoga-māyā* potency, both Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa and the damsels of Vraja forget themselves in spiritual rapture."

Śrīla Prabhupāda mentions another function of *yoga-māyā*: "... *yoga-māyā* acts to cover the Lord and His pastimes from the eyes of mundaners, as confirmed in *Bhagavad-gītā*, where the Lord says He reserves the right of not being exposed to everyone."

Rūpa Gosvāmī describes *yoga-māyā* by comparing it to Kṛṣṇa coming home in the evening from the pastures. The dust raised from the cows' hooves obscures Him from vision. Similarly, Kṛṣṇa's pastimes are covered from the mundane scholars. *Yoga-māyā* keeps the unqualified persons out and also orchestrates the Vṛndāvana pastimes.

Again in this chapter, Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī allows us to hear Kṛṣṇa's inner thoughts as He expresses that He prefers to be subordinate to His devotees. Although He exchanges with His devotees in four different *rasas*, the Lord says *mādhurya-rasa* is the highest expression of love. There are two divisions in *mādhurya-rasa*: *parakiya* (paramour love) and *svakiya* (married love). Of the two, *parakiya-rasa* is higher. *Parakiya-rasa* refers to the *gopīs*; *svakiya-rasa* refers to Kṛṣṇa's queens in Dvārakā. "There is a great increase of mellow in the un-

wedded conjugal mood. Such love is found nowhere but in Vraja.”

In his purport to verse 50, Prabhupāda explains why *parakīya-rasa* is better than being Kṛṣṇa’s wife: “The risks involved in such love of Godhead make this emotion superior to the relationship in which such risk is not involved. The validity of such risk, however, is possible only in the transcendental realm. *Svakiya* and *parakīya* conjugal love of Godhead have no existence in the material world, and *parakīya* is not exhibited anywhere in Vaikuṇṭha, but only in the portion of Goloka Vṛndāvana known as Vraja.”

The *gopīs* do not own anything—they have no children, no houses where Kṛṣṇa lives as their Lord and husband. They are not even sure of their relationship with Him because at any moment, they may be separated from Him. They exist only for Kṛṣṇa’s pleasure. Lord Caitanya says, “You may handle Me roughly in Your embrace or make Me brokenhearted by not being present before Me.” The queens, however, have a sense of possession along with their relationship with Kṛṣṇa.

Parakīya-rasa has no material counterpart, but we can appreciate the *gopīs*’ attitude of having nothing but their love for Kṛṣṇa. They have given everything to Kṛṣṇa.

PRAKṚTA-SAHAJİYĀS AND GAURĀṄGA-NĀGARĪS

One of the main dangers of which we always hear when discussing confidential topics is the danger of becoming *prakṛta-sahajiyā*. The *sahajiyā* mentality usually takes one of two forms. The *sahajiyā* either takes Kṛṣṇa’s pastimes cheaply or

he imagines that he can imitate them. Prabhupāda uses the word “*sahajiyā*” in his purport: “A class of so-called devotees known as *sahajiyās* try to imitate the Lord’s pastimes, although they have no understanding of the amorous love and His expansions of pleasure potency. Their superficial imitation can create havoc on the path of one’s spiritual relationship with the Lord.” (Ādi 4.34, purport) The *sahajiyās*’ activities become quite perverse, even to the point of indulging in material sex in the name of *rāsa-lilā*. Also, they imagine their own participation in Kṛṣṇa’s pastimes without first having attained the qualification to enter them. In other words, the *prakṛta-sahajiyās* take Kṛṣṇa’s pastimes as material.

An example of another possible misconception described in this chapter is the *gaurāṅga-nāgarī* party. The *gaurāṅga-nāgarīs* think that Lord Caitanya is in the mood of Kṛṣṇa rather than in the mood of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī. Lord Caitanya is Kṛṣṇa, but if we do not understand His mood properly, we will worship Him in a way that is not pleasing to Him. The *gaura-nāgarī* party offers Lord Caitanya the same facility as Kṛṣṇa, as the Supreme Enjoyer, but Lord Caitanya does not want to be understood as the enjoyer. He is only disturbed when anyone approaches Him in that mood. Prabhupāda writes, “A class of so-called devotees called the *nadiyā-nāgarī* or *gaura-nāgarī* pretend that they have the sentiment of *gopīs* toward Lord Caitanya, but they do not realize that He placed Himself not as the enjoyer, Kṛṣṇa, but as the enjoyed, the devotee of Kṛṣṇa . . . they are not approved by Lord Caitanya. . . . The doctrine of transcendental enjoyment by Kṛṣṇa cannot be mixed up with the doctrine of transcendental feeling of separation from Kṛṣṇa in the role of Rādhārāṇī.” (Ādi 4. 41, purport)

PREACHING AND BHAJANA

In ISKCON we have been encouraged that preaching is the highest expression of service, but it appears that for Lord Caitanya, the distribution of *harināma* was secondary to His tasting of *Rādhā-bhāva*. How can we understand this apparent contradiction?

One way to understand it is to remember that Lord Caitanya is God. Although Lord Caitanya's distribution of *harināma* was a secondary consideration for Him, we cannot sit and relish such *bhakti-rasa* at our stage of advancement. By preaching, however, we will become dear to Kṛṣṇa and attain His mercy. An immature devotee wants to have what he is not yet qualified for. Therefore, we should try to honestly understand our position and set our priorities accordingly. We cannot skip over the preaching mission and simply perform *bhajana*.

It is also true that a vigorous preaching life does not negate our concentration or internal meditation on Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. Preaching and *bhajana* are not packed in two separate, airtight compartments; they are connected. By preaching, we qualify ourselves to practice *bhajana*, and by practicing *bhajana* at whatever level we are able, we feel inspired to serve our spiritual master by preaching.

Rather than ask a question about the importance of preaching, some devotees ask about the importance of hearing about Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa's *līlā*. Such a question implies that *only* preaching is important, even though it is the secondary reason for Lord Caitanya's appearance. What does Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī's mood of separation have to do with book distribution?

We have two motives in preaching. One is to save the conditioned souls and the other is to purify ourselves. By hearing and chanting about Lord Caitanya and Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, we become purified. By becoming more purified, our preaching will be more effective. Śrīla Prabhupāda was always in Vṛndāvana consciousness. That should also be our goal. It is difficult to remember Vraja when we are preaching in the West, but by hearing of Kṛṣṇa's Vṛndāvana pastimes, we will become more Kṛṣṇa conscious. The more we become fixed in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, the more we will be able to persevere in the preaching field, and the more we will develop real compassion for the conditioned souls.

Prabhupāda is such a good example of maintaining his inner mood while physically residing outside Vṛndāvana. We can see both moods expressed in his writings aboard the Jaladuta.

Today the ship is plying very smoothly. I feel today better. But I am feeling separation from Sri Vrindaban and my Lords Sri Govinda, Gopinath, Radha Damodar. My only solace is Sri Chaitanya Charitamrita in which I am tasting the nectarine of Lord Chaitanya's lila. I have left Bharatabhumi just to execute the order of Sri Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati in pursuance of Lord Chaitanya's order. I have no qualification, but have taken up the risk just to carry out the order of His Divine Grace. I depend fully on Their mercy, so far away from Vrindaban.

—Jaladuta diary, September 10, 1965

In another entry, he wrote about his desire to wander in Vraja's fields with Kṛṣṇa. We cannot say that Prabhupāda's preaching mood was something less than his internal medi-

tation on Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa in Vṛndāvana. Prabhupāda took Vṛndāvana and distributed it.

Some of Prabhupāda's Godbrothers even minimized Prabhupāda's preaching achievements, saying that he was a good businessman, but that he had no spiritual realization. When Prabhupāda heard this criticism, he responded, "They do not understand what is preaching. Do they think to spread the holy name and make devotees is material?" We cannot understand the implications of Prabhupāda's realizations, but we can have faith in him and the mixed process of *bhajana* and preaching that he gave us.

Our main form of *bhajana* in ISKCON is chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa. Śrīla Prabhupāda always wanted us to serve Kṛṣṇa in a mood of loving affection, and when he spoke about chanting, he said we should chant with *prīti*, with love. Therefore, we can understand that it is relevant for us to aspire for the stage of loving service. Our aspiration must take the form of service to the guru. When we become recipients of our spiritual master's mercy, we will become lovers of God, Kṛṣṇa. *Yasya prasādād bhagavat-prasādo, yasyāprasādān na gatiḥ kuto 'pi*. By pleasing the spiritual master, we receive Kṛṣṇa's mercy. If we do not please the spiritual master, our destination is unknown. Prabhupāda is pleased when we engage in his preaching mission. Similarly, to understand Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, we have to get Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī's mercy. The mercy has to descend before we can attain Vraja consciousness. The only way to attain Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī's mercy is by *guru-sevā*. Her mercy comes through the spiritual master. Therefore, preaching is not an indirect method to attain Kṛṣṇa consciousness, although superficially we may misconstrue it as such.

A preacher should be awakening his own attraction for Kṛṣṇa in His topmost feature. Prabhupāda says we should be “captivated by this information.” From his purport to *Bhagavad-gītā* 18.65: “These words stress that one should concentrate his mind upon Kṛṣṇa—the very form with two hands carrying a flute, the bluish boy with a beautiful face and peacock feathers in His hair. There are descriptions of Kṛṣṇa found in the *Brahma-saṁhitā* and other literatures. One should fix his mind on this original form of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa. One should not even divert his attention to other forms of the Lord. . . . Concentration of the mind on the form of Kṛṣṇa constitutes the most confidential part of knowledge . . .” To be captivated by Kṛṣṇa in His topmost feature makes for a fixed devotee who can preach or work in the mission.

IS AUDARYA-RASA HIGHER THAN MĀDHURYA?

We have heard of the existence of *audarya-dhāma*, the eternal abode of Lord Caitanya, in the spiritual world. Is that abode superior to the *mādhurya-dhāma* of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa in Vṛndāvana?

Within Goloka, there is a department or quarter known as Śvetadvīpa where Lord Caitanya’s pastimes are going on eternally. From the purport to text 5 of the *Brahma-saṁhitā*:

These divine forms of Godhead are surrounded there with attendants of their respective natures. Śvetadvīpa in Goloka is their place of abode. Hence Śrīla Ṭhākura Vṛndāvana, the manifest Vyāsa of *caitanya-līlā*, has described the village of Navadvīpa as bearing the name of Śvetadvīpa. In this Śveta-

dvīpa, the concluding portions of the pastimes of Gokula exist eternally as the pastimes of Navadvīpa. Hence, the region of Navadvīpa, Vraja and the realm of Goloka are one and the same indivisible entity; the difference only lies in the manifestations of the infinite variety of sentiments, corresponding to the diverse nature of their devotional love.

We may say that *audarya-dhāma* (Navadvīpa) is superior to *mādhurya-dhāma* (Vṛndāvana) because in Kali-yuga, the only way to enter Vṛndāvana is through the mercy of Lord Caitanya. On the absolute plane, however, there is no difference between them. Thinking Vṛndāvana is superior to Navadvīpa is an offense against the holy *dhāma*.

Lord Kṛṣṇa is *rasa-śekhara*, a taster of *rasa*. As Lord Caitanya, He distributed that *rasa*. We should be careful not to create a dichotomy between Lord Kṛṣṇa and Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. When Lord Kṛṣṇa wants to taste Vraja-prema, He appears in His original Vṛndāvana form. When He wants to distribute those pastimes, He appears as Lord Caitanya. At that time, Vṛndāvana becomes Navadvīpa. The *Brahma-saṁhitā* uses the phrase, “concluding portions of the pastimes of Gokula exist eternally as the pastimes of Navadvīpa.” Sometimes *caitanya-līlā* is called “the appendix to *kṛṣṇa-līlā*.”

The *Brahma-saṁhitā* purport continues: “The devotees who are imbued with all love, and who walk in the footsteps of the spiritual maids of Vraja, alone attain to the realm of Goloka. The different locations of the devotees in Goloka, according to their respective differences and the nature of their *rasa*, are settled by the inconceivable power of Kṛṣṇa. The pure devotees following the devotees of Vraja and those following the pure

devotees of Navadvīpa are located in the realm of Kṛṣṇa and Gaura respectively.”

Someone may be an eternal, pure devotee of Lord Caitanya. That person will go to His Navadvīpa. Or, if someone is following in the footsteps of the *gopīs*, they will go to Vraja-dhāma. Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura explains in *Jaiva Dharma* that there are also devotees who exist in both *līlās* simultaneously. They go to both *dhāmas* simultaneously, by expansion.

“The identical devotees of Vraja and Navadvīpa simultaneously obtain to the pleasures of service in the realm of Kṛṣṇa and Gaura. Goloka as Śvetadvīpa is eternally manifested because the pleasures of enjoyment of the *rasa* could not be had in its entirety in the pastimes of Kṛṣṇa in Vraja.” What is it that Kṛṣṇa could not entirely enjoy in Vṛndāvana and for which He manifested the spiritual world of Navadvīpa [Svetadvīpa]? Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī answers this question in his fourth chapter of *Ādi-līlā*.

ĀDI-LĪLĀ 1.6

Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī now discusses the sixth verse of the first chapter of *Ādi-līlā*, which describes the three specific reasons for Lord Caitanya’s appearance:

*śrī-rādhāyāḥ praṇaya-mahimā kidṛśo vānayaivā-
svādyo yenādbhuta-madhurimā kidṛśo vā madiyaḥ
saukhyam cāsyā mad-anubhavataḥ kidṛśam veti lobhāt
tad-bhāvādhyāḥ samajani śaci-garbha-sindhau harinduh*

Desiring to understand the glory of Rādhārāṇī's love, the wonderful qualities in Him that She alone relishes through Her love, and the happiness She feels when She realizes the sweetness of His love, the Supreme Lord Hari, richly endowed with Her emotions, appears from the womb of Śrīmatī Śacīdevī, as the moon appears from the ocean.

This verse explains that Lord Kṛṣṇa wanted to take the position of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī. This is what the *Brahma-saṁhitā* purport was referring to when it said that “the pleasures of enjoyment of the *rasa* could not be had in its entirety in the pastimes of Kṛṣṇa in Vraja.” Therefore, Kṛṣṇa accepts the emotion and effulgence of Śrī Rādhikā and creates an eternal pastime for the enjoyment of *kṛṣṇa-rasa* in Navadvīpa. “Śrī Kṛṣṇacandra, coveting to taste the following pleasures, viz., to realize (1) the nature of the greatness of the love of Śrī Rādhā; (2) the nature of the wonderful sweetness of His love of which Rādhikā has got the taste; (3) the nature of the exquisite joy that accrues to Śrī Rādhā by Her realization of the sweetness of His love, took His birth, like the moon in the ocean of the womb of Śrī Śacīdevī.” That section of the purport is a paraphrase of this *Ādi-līlā* verse.

SAMBHOGA AND VIPRALAMBHA

As Lord Caitanya, Kṛṣṇa experiences Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī's position in the mood of separation (*vipralambha*). Therefore to understand His mood, we have to understand *vipralambha*. There are two ways to associate with Kṛṣṇa: through union

(*sambhoga*) and separation. Both *sambhoga* and *vipralambha* produce different states of ecstasy.

Often we hear that *vipralambha* is higher than *sambhoga*, but what does that actually mean? Śrīla Prabhupāda explains this nicely in his purport to *Ādi* 4.106: “From the life of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, an intelligent person engaged in pure devotional service can understand that He always felt separation from Kṛṣṇa within Himself. In that separation He sometimes felt that He had found Kṛṣṇa and was enjoying the meeting. The significance of this separation and meeting is very specific.”

From this we can understand that separation and union are interdependent in Kṛṣṇa’s pastimes. We cannot think of separation without also having the concept of meeting. Prabhupāda explains that although Lord Caitanya was experiencing separation, sometimes He felt He had found Kṛṣṇa. Therefore, the inner meaning of separation is union. If there was separation without union, then what would be the meaning of that separation and where would the transcendental ecstasy be?

Generally, we say that Lord Caitanya and His followers favor *vipralambha* over *sambhoga*. In fact, Prabhupāda writes, “If someone tries to understand the exalted position of Lord Caitanya without knowing this, he is sure to misunderstand it. . . . Otherwise he may misidentify the Lord as *nāgara*, or the enjoyer of the damsels of Vraja. . . .”

We can also state it in its reverse: how deep can the ecstasy of meeting be if there is no danger of separation? When Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa are enjoying Their pastimes, Rādhārāṇī is fearful that at any moment She may lose Kṛṣṇa. This is referred to as *prema-vaicitra*.

In the purport to *Ādi* 4.108, Prabhupāda writes, “Those under the shelter of the lotus feet of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu can understand that His mode of worship of the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa in separation is the real worship of the Lord. When the feelings of separation become very intense, one attains the stage of meeting Śrī Kṛṣṇa.”

Prabhupāda would often give examples of the absolute nature of separation and union. When the *gopīs* cry for Kṛṣṇa in separation, that is as good as their meeting with Him, and the symptom of the absolute nature of separation is their ecstatic condition. The conditioned souls analyze the *gopīs*’ separation as material. We think they are sad because Kṛṣṇa is not there. However, the *gopīs* are not serving Kṛṣṇa in the mood of sense gratification. Their pain and pleasure are all based on ecstasy.

“So-called devotees like the *sahajiyās* cheaply imagine they are meeting Kṛṣṇa in Vṛndāvana. Such thinking may be useful, but actually meeting Kṛṣṇa is possible through the attitude of separation taught by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.”

WHY DOES LORD CAITANYA HAVE TO COME TO THE MATERIAL WORLD TO TASTE SEPARATION?

If Lord Caitanya’s pastimes are going on eternally in the spiritual world, what need does He have to come to this world to taste Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī’s position? Prabhupāda comments: “Even Lord Kṛṣṇa, the abode of all mellows, had previously, in this way, chewed the essence of the mellows of love. Still He was unable to fulfill three desires, although He made efforts to

taste them.” (*Ādi* 4.119–120) We could also ask the same question about Kṛṣṇa’s pastimes. Why should Kṛṣṇa come here if He is already enjoying His pastimes in the spiritual world?

It is the Lord’s desire to enact His pastimes in the material world for the welfare of the conditioned souls. It is not enough for people to wake up and realize that they are suffering; they need to become attracted to the spiritual energy. In order to attract the conditioned souls to His lotus feet, Kṛṣṇa descends into this world.

Recently, a woman who was married to a devotee wrote me a letter. She had been hearing the philosophy from her husband, although she herself was not a devotee. She wrote and asked a challenging question: “If Kṛṣṇa is God, why wasn’t He able to understand the position of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī? Why did He have to appear as Lord Caitanya to understand this?” She thought it suggested that Kṛṣṇa was not all-powerful.

I answered her by saying that it is not a question of ability or inability. Kṛṣṇa *did* taste Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī’s mood, and to do that, He appeared as Caitanya Mahāprabhu. We should not think that Kṛṣṇa was forced to appear as Lord Caitanya, and neither should we think that He was unable to fulfill His desire. Actually, Kṛṣṇa fulfilled His desire in such a wonderful way.

This concept is one meaning to the statement that Lord Caitanya’s *lilā* is the appendix to Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa *lilā*. Kṛṣṇa savored again His own relationship with His most beloved devotee and tasted Her love for Him in separation.

ĀŚRAYA AND VIŚAYA

The *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* describes two categories: Kṛṣṇa is the *āśraya*, the shelter, and the living entities are the *āśrita*, or the sheltered. Now Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī explains *āśraya* and *viśaya* in the context of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa's exchange of love. Here, *āśraya* means "the shelter, or the abode of." In discussing *prema*, the *gopīs* and especially Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī are the abodes of love. Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī is the *āśraya* and Kṛṣṇa is the *viśaya*, or object, of that love.

Kṛṣṇa feels (as Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī expresses it) that He has been missing out on the taste of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī's love. "Śrī Rādhikā is the highest abode of that love, and I am its only object. I taste the bliss to which the object of love is entitled. But the pleasure of Rādhā, the abode of that love, is ten million times greater. My mind races to taste the pleasure experienced by the abode, but I cannot taste it, even by My best efforts. How may I taste it? If sometime I can be the abode of that love, only then may I taste its joy." (*Ādi* 4.132–35)

Prabhupāda explained this once in a simple, sweet, and direct way. He was talking with Hayagrīva dāsa in 1967, giving him ideas for a play about Lord Caitanya. The play he was suggesting had different scenes. As he tried to explain the inner meaning of Lord Caitanya to Hayagrīva, he gave this example: "You are my disciple and you are serving me in so many different ways. If I want to know what it is like to be you, to be the disciple, I cannot know that because I am the master. If I wanted to know that, I would have to somehow take your position."

Another name for Kṛṣṇa is Rasa-śekhara. He is the chief taster of *rasa*. Kṛṣṇa did not want to taste Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī's love simply to gratify His senses, but because He is greedy for *prema*—for any devotee's *prema*. Kṛṣṇa always wants to exchange *prema* with a devotee. In the case of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, Her love attracted Him so much that He was no longer satisfied to be the *viṣaya* of that *prema*; He wanted to understand Her love, which is so much greater than the love He has for Her. “What is that sweetness in Me that She finds so attractive?”

Prabhupāda explains in a purport that during the devas-tation, Kṛṣṇa floats on a leaf and sucks His toe because He likes to taste His own sweetness. Another time he said that Kṛṣṇa did this when He appeared as Lord Caitanya. He compared those two appearances of Kṛṣṇa. As the topmost taster of *rasa*, He wants to taste His own sweetness.

THE GOPIS' LOVE

This chapter of the *Ādi-līlā* contains many wonderful discussions. Since this book is not intended as an overview of the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, I will mention only one more topic here.

Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī explains the difference between lust (*kāma*) and love (*prema*) by discussing the nature of the *gopis'* *prema* for Kṛṣṇa. “Lust and love have different characteristics, just as iron and gold have different natures. The desire to gratify one's own senses is *kāma* [lust] but the desire to please the senses of Lord Kṛṣṇa is *prema* [love].” (*Ādi* 4.164–5)

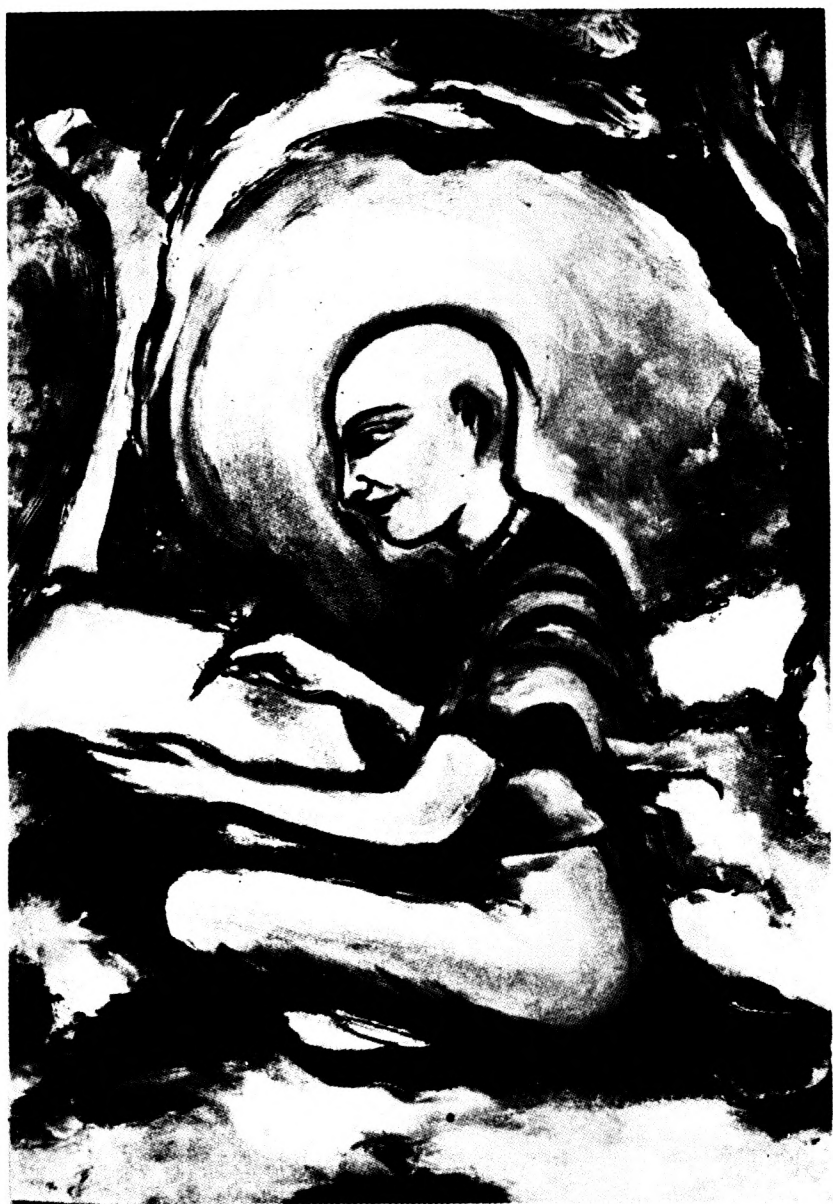
The *gopis*' love for Kṛṣṇa is devoid of selfishness. They are not even hankering for ecstasy or possession of Kṛṣṇa. Whatever Kṛṣṇa desires, even if it causes them pain, they consider a pleasure. Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmi writes, "The *gopis* have no inclination for their own enjoyment, and yet their joy increases. That is indeed a contradiction." How is it that the *gopis* are feeling so much ecstasy in serving Kṛṣṇa? It is because they are happy only by seeing Kṛṣṇa happy. They have no other motivation. When Kṛṣṇa becomes happy, they become happier, and when Kṛṣṇa sees their happiness, He in turn becomes happier. Thus a transcendental competition in happiness is established between them. Śrīla Prabhupāda writes, "By looking at the beautiful *gopis* Kṛṣṇa becomes enlivened, and this enlivens the *gopis*, whose youthful faces and bodies blossom. This competition of increasing beauty between the *gopis* and Kṛṣṇa, which is without limitations, is so delicate that sometimes mundane moralists mistake these dealings to be purely amorous. But these affairs are not at all mundane, because the *gopis*' intense desire to satisfy Kṛṣṇa surcharges the entire scene with pure love of Godhead, with not a spot of sexual indulgence." (*Ādi* 4.195, purport)

THE CUCKOO BIRD-LIKE DEVOTEES AND THE CAMEL-LIKE NONDEVOTEES

Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmi writes, "All these conclusions are unfit to disclose in public. But if they are not disclosed, no one will understand them." (*Ādi* 4.231) This is the author's dilemma. Then he decides that the devotees who are qualified,

like cuckoo birds, will relish the taste of the mango buds of Lord Caitanya's pastimes, while the camel-like nondevotees will not even be interested. Therefore he continues to describe *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*.

FAVORITE SELECTIONS



5

SELECTED VERSES FROM CAITANYA-CARITĀMṚTA

WHY STUDY VERSES FROM CAITANYA-CARITĀMṚTA

I compiled a list of *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* verses most often quoted by Śrīla Prabhupāda or the previous *ācāryas* to help us appreciate the philosophical range and depth of *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*. Studying these verses will help us gain an overview of the entire work and help us to appreciate the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* as an authoritative *śāstra*, equal to *Bhagavad-gītā* and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

Although we can quote these verses in our preaching, we should be aware that the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* is not as widely accepted by the other *sampradāyas* or by religionists in general. This is because Caitanya Mahāprabhu is a covered incarnation and not widely known. Even Sārvabhauma Bhaṭṭācārya, the greatest logician of his time, was unfamiliar with the verses proving Lord Caitanya's appearance and divinity.

From time to time, the Gauḍīya-sampradāya has had to reassert its authority. In the centuries after Lord Caitanya, there was a debate whether the Gauḍīya-sampradāya was bona fide at all. To be considered authorized, a *sampradāya* must produce a commentary on the *Vedānta-sūtra*. Therefore, Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa prepared a commentary after being inspired by Govindadeva, his worshipable Deity.

Although Lord Caitanya—and the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*—are not widely known or appreciated, it is our duty as preachers in Śrīla Prabhupāda’s mission to spread Lord Caitanya’s fame and to establish the authority of *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*.

One way to establish Lord Caitanya’s authority is to show how Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī draws his authority from the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. Jiva Gosvāmī proved in his *Tattva-sandarbhā* that *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is the ultimate evidence for Vedic discussion. *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* is based on that evidence.

We can also show how all the authorities in the Gauḍīya line have accepted *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*’s authority. It was Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī’s favorite scripture. It may be true, however, that as Rādhā-kuṇḍa is appreciated only by the members of the Gauḍīya-sampradāya and not others, so the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* will not be appreciated outside this *sampradāya*. Regardless, we should not be afraid to preach from the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*. Śrīla Prabhupāda often quoted from the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* in his Western preaching. (Most of the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* verses he quoted were composed by Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī.)

Gathering *śloka*s and reciting them always reminds us of the importance of śāstric proof in our preaching. Our presentation

is not whimsical; it must be based on scripture. Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī himself quotes many scriptures to demonstrate his points. Even Lord Kṛṣṇa stresses that His words are upheld by the Vedic scriptures when He speaks the thirteenth chapter of *Bhagavad-gītā*.

ĀDI 5.142

*ekale īśvara kṛṣṇa āra saba bhr̥tya
yāre yaiche nācāya, se taiche kare nṛtya*

Lord Kṛṣṇa alone is the supreme controller, and all others are His servants. They dance as He makes them do so.

After his full description of Lord Nityānanda's glories, Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī concludes that even Lord Nityānanda is Kṛṣṇa's servant. In fact, every living entity is a servant of Kṛṣṇa. Therefore, Prabhupāda quoted this verse frequently, especially the first line, to establish Kṛṣṇa's supremacy over the *jīvas*. This verse is concise and informative: Kṛṣṇa is the only controller and everyone else is His servant. This is the quality of a verse that a preacher turns to often.

It is sometimes good when quoting a verse to speak of its essence both in a general sense and with more specific analysis. This is how Śrīla Prabhupāda lectured. Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī also specifically analyzed various verses from the *Bhāgavatam* to establish his points. For example, he analyzed the word definitions in *ete caṁsa kalaḥ puṁsaḥ* and in *kṛṣṇa-varṇam tvīṣa-kṛṣṇam*.

ĀDI-LĪLĀ, CHAPTER 7

This chapter has been titled “Lord Caitanya in Five Features.” It is the only chapter of *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* that Śrīla Prabhupāda printed as a separate book, and it contains many important verses.

Here are verses 20–21:

*sei pañca-tattva mili' pr̥thivī āsiyā
pūrva-premabhāṇḍāreṇa mudrā ughāḍiyā
pāñce mili' luṭe prema, kare āsvādana
yata yata piye, tṛṣṇā bādhe anukṣaṇa*

The characteristics of Kṛṣṇa are understood to be a storehouse of transcendental love. Although that storehouse of love certainly came with Kṛṣṇa when He was present, it was sealed. But when Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu came with His other associates of the Pañca-tattva, they broke the seal and plundered the storehouse to taste transcendental love of Kṛṣṇa. The more they tasted it, the more their thirst for it grew.

Then: “In distributing love of Godhead, Caitanya Mahāprabhu and His associates did not consider who was a fit candidate and who was not, nor where such distribution should or should not take place. They made no conditions. Wherever they got the opportunity the members of the Pañca-tattva distributed love of Godhead.” (*Ādi* 7.23)

These verses are important evidence for the preaching tactics Śrīla Prabhupāda followed. Don't discriminate or deny

any section of the population based on their bodily identity. “Without discrimination,” distribute books, *harināma*, and *prasādam*.

ĀDI 7.72

*mūrkhā tumi, tomāra nāhika vedāntādhikāra
‘kṛṣṇa-mantra’ japa sadā,—ei mantra-sāra*

This verse occurs in the meeting between Lord Caitanya and Prakāśānanda Sarasvatī in Vārāṇasī. Prakāśānanda Sarasvatī has just asked Lord Caitanya why, although he is a *san-nyāsī* and belonging to “our Śāṅkara-sampradāya,” He chooses not to study *Vedānta-sūtra*, but instead chant and dance like a madman. Lord Caitanya responds with this verse: [My spiritual master told Me:] “‘You are a fool,’ he said. ‘You are not qualified to study *Vedānta* philosophy, and therefore You must always chant the holy name of Kṛṣṇa. This is the essence of all mantras or Vedic hymns.’”

Śrīla Prabhupāda would often quote the first phrase of this verse—*mūrkhā tumi*—you are a fool, and explain that Lord Caitanya took this position in order to teach us by His own example that no one should think they are wise or competent to study *Vedānta* in this age while neglecting the holy name.

Then Lord Caitanya told Prakāśānanda that His spiritual master had praised the glories of the holy name with the following verse, which He should keep within His throat:

*harer nāma harer nāma harer nāmaiva kevalam
kalau nāsty eva nāsty eva nāsty eva gatir anyathā*

In this age of Kali there is no alternative, there is no alternative, there is no alternative for spiritual progress than the holy name, the holy name, the holy name of the Lord.

This is one of my favorite sections of *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*. In it, Lord Caitanya tells how He chanted Hare Kṛṣṇa under His spiritual master's order and how He felt great bliss. He thought He was going mad. His spiritual master assured Him, however, that He was actually experiencing love of God.

"It is very good, my dear child, that You have attained the supreme goal of life by developing love of Godhead. Thus You have pleased me very much, and I am very much obliged to You. My dear child, continue dancing, chanting and performing *saṅkīrtana* in association with devotees. Furthermore, go out and preach the value of chanting *kṛṣṇa-nāma*, for by this process You will be able to deliver all fallen souls." (*Ādi* 7. 91-2)

We can form our own decisions on the relationship between *bhajana* and preaching, but here is a śāstric reference to support both. In his purport to these two verses, Śrīla Prabhupāda makes significant statements about the importance of preaching in the life of a devotee. Īśvara Purī told Lord Caitanya to practice His personal chanting, but also to preach. Prabhupāda writes, "One who is not very expert in preaching may chant in a secluded place, avoiding bad association, but for one who is actually advanced, preaching and meeting people who are not engaged in devotional service are not disadvantages." This purport lifts the discussion of balancing *bhajana* and preaching off the relative plane and onto the level of *śāstra*. The only

question that may arise now is how to understand this verse and purport. Śrīla Prabhupāda makes it clear, however, that we should both practice our *sādhana* and go out and preach.

Ādi 7.107

Chapter 7 of the *Ādi-līlā* also contains one of the most important sections for learning how to defeat the Māyāvādi doctrine. Ravindra-svarūpa Prabhu used this section extensively when he taught his course on defeating Māyāvādi philosophy.

One verse from this section was often quoted by Śrīla Prabhupāda. It occurs when Lord Caitanya stresses that *Vedānta* has to be understood by its direct meaning and that there can never be mistakes in *sāstra*:

bhrama, pramāda, vipralipsā, karaṇāpāṭava
īśvarera vākye nāhi doṣa ei saba

The material defects of mistakes, illusions, cheating and sensory inefficiency do not exist in the words of the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

This verse is the source of the teaching that the *jīva* has four defects: he has imperfect senses, and he has the tendency to make mistakes, to be illusioned, and to cheat.

Then Lord Caitanya sums up the purpose of *Vedānta* in another important verse:

“One’s relationship with the Supreme Personality of Godhead, activities in terms of that relationship, and the ultimate

goal of life [to develop love of God]—these three subjects are explained in every code of the *Vedānta-sūtra*, for they form the culmination of the entire *Vedānta* philosophy.” (*Ādi* 7.146)

We want to remember this verse because everything, again, is stated concisely and completely. If we are speaking philosophically, hearers have the right to ask for a scriptural reference. Certainly the topic of *sambandha*, *abhidheya*, and *prayojana* is important.

We can also remember from this verse that whatever we read in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* or the *Bhāgavad-gītā* is meant to lead us toward *sambandha*, *abhidheya*, and *prayojana*, even if it appears to describe something else.

Ādi 8.15

*śrī-kṛṣṇa-caitanya-dayā karaha vicāra
vicāra karile citte pābe camatkāra*

If you are indeed interested in logic and argument, kindly apply it to the mercy of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. If you do so you will find it to be strikingly wonderful.

Śrīla Prabhupāda titles the eighth chapter of the *Ādi-līlā*, “The Author’s Receiving the Orders of the Authorities, Kṛṣṇa and Guru.” This particular verse is an important one and Prabhupāda often paraphrased it in his lectures.

Prabhupāda explained that this verse forms an invitation to people who claim they don’t want to accept God in a sentimental way. To them we say, “Come on, then, apply your logic and compare Lord Caitanya to any other personality. When

you study Him by objective analysis, you will find that He is very wonderful.” He also said that it was the duty of preachers and scholars to hear others’ points of view and then elevate them to an understanding of Caitanya Mahāprabhu as the culmination of everything they are seeking in the name of truth and spirituality. This verse also stresses the mercy and magnanimity of Lord Caitanya as that which is “strikingly wonderful.”

Ādi 9.41

Ādi 9.41 is one of Prabhupāda’s most frequently quoted preaching verses from *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*:

*bhārata-bhūmite haila manuṣya-janma yāra
janma sārthaka kari’ kara para-upakāra*

One who has taken his birth as a human being in the land of India [Bhārata-varṣa] should make his life successful and work for the benefit of all other people.

Prabhupāda wrote a wonderful purport to this verse. It is full of his preaching ecstasy. Actually, this entire chapter is full of instructions for preachers in ISKCON—enough to inspire any marathon. Lord Caitanya is the gardener of the tree. He wants to distribute the fruits. Ādi 9.36 states: “Therefore I order every man within this universe to accept this Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement and distribute it everywhere.”

Ādi 9.41 is addressed particularly to Indians and Prabhupāda often quoted it in his preaching to them. Those who are born in

Bhārata-varṣa have a privilege and a duty to establish *sanātana-dharma* in the world. Indians are not meant to chase after material advancement, but to compassionately distribute Vedic knowledge. They are not meant to preach only to their own countrymen, but to the whole world. Their duty is to export Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Some years ago, I went to a big Hindu meeting in North Carolina. Some of our life members invited me to speak, although most of the speakers were Indian swamis. I planned to use this verse in my speech, so I memorized it and practiced it—it was a big audience and I didn't want to stumble. As soon as I finished reciting the Sanskrit of this verse, everyone began to applaud. It was a rally for Hinduism, and everyone there was speaking about how Hinduism is so wonderful and should be protected. This verse stirred their sentiments.

Although they were cheering, however, Prabhupāda goes on to say in his purport that unfortunately, only one Indian has followed the import of this verse. Prabhupāda writes, “Anyone who takes birth in the land of India (Bhārata-varṣa) has the special privilege of being able to take advantage of the instruction and guidance of the Vedic civilization. He automatically receives the basic principles of spiritual life, for 99.9% of the Indian people, even simple village farmers and others who are neither educated nor sophisticated, believe in the transmigration of the soul, believe in past and future lives, believe in God and naturally want to worship the Supreme Personality of Godhead or His representative.” Whenever there is a religious festival, Indians gather by the thousands. Now India is becoming more degraded. Lord Caitanya wanted this movement started from India. Therefore this is an important verse.

MADHYA 6.169

*jivera nistāra lāgi' sūtra kaila vyāsa
māyāvādi-bhāṣya śunile haya sarva-nāśa*

Śrīla Vyāsadeva presented the Vedānta philosophy for the deliverance of conditioned souls, but if one hears the commentary of Śaṅkarācārya, everything is spoiled.

This verse occurs in the chapter titled “The Liberation of Sārvabhauma Bhaṭṭācārya.” In this chapter, Lord Caitanya defeats Sārvabhauma’s Māyāvādi philosophy and criticizes Śaṅkarācārya’s *Vedānta* commentary. Śrīla Prabhupāda often quoted the phrase, *māyāvādi-bhāṣya śunile haya sarva-nāśa*, which means that if you hear Māyāvādi philosophy, your devotional service will become spoiled.

Later, Lord Caitanya was speaking to a *brāhmaṇa* who had defended Him in a discussion with Prakāśānanda Sarasvatī. The Lord says: “Māyāvādi impersonalists are great offenders unto Lord Kṛṣṇa; therefore they simply utter the words Brahman, *ātmā* and *caitanya*.” (*Madhya* 17.129) Prabhupāda particularly quoted this phrase, *māyāvādi kṛṣṇe aparādhī*.

At the end of the sixth chapter of the *Madhya-līlā* is another wonderful verse.

MADHYA 6.254

*vairāgya-vidyā-nija-bhakti-yoga
śikṣārtham ekaḥ puruṣaḥ purāṇaḥ*

śrī-kṛṣṇa-caitanya-śarīra-dhārī
kṛpāmbudhir yas tam ahaṁ prapadye

Let me take shelter of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who has descended in the form of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu to teach us real knowledge, His devotional service and detachment from whatever does not foster Kṛṣṇa consciousness. He has descended because He is an ocean of transcendental mercy. Let me surrender unto His lotus feet.

This verse was written by Sārvabhauma Bhaṭṭācārya and recorded in Kavi-karṇapura's *Caitanya-candrodaya-nāṭaka*. Prabhupāda quoted this verse to show that devotional service includes renunciation (*vairāgya*) as a component. We should not think that devotional service can be performed in ISKCON (or anywhere) without renunciation. This verse provides evidence for that point, although the main element is that *vairāgya* has to be accompanied by surrender.

I sometimes think how Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmi placed these verses from other sources in his *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, and how because of that, we have been given access to them along with Prabhupāda's explanations. I feel grateful to Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmi for giving us this access. They have become part of the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* for us.

MADHYA 7.128

This is one of the most famous verses in the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*:

*yāre dekha, tāre kaha 'kṛṣṇa'-upadeśa
āmāra ājñāya guru hañā tāra' ei deśa*

Instruct everyone to follow the orders of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa as they are given in *Bhagavad-gītā* and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. In this way become a spiritual master and try to liberate everyone in this land.

Prabhupāda quoted this verse to instruct people that they should all become spiritual masters and preach Kṛṣṇa consciousness. "Do not concoct anything," he said. The only qualifications a guru needs are firm faith in Kṛṣṇa's words and the willingness to repeat them.

From a lecture by Śrīla Prabhupāda (Los Angeles, 1973):

Kṛṣṇa-upadeśa. You become a spiritual master under my order, under His order. Don't manufacture yourself. Under the order of Caitanya Mahāprabhu. That is called *paramparā* system, one who is following in disciplic succession the order of Caitanya Mahāprabhu. And what is the order of Caitanya Mahāprabhu? *Yāre dekha, tāre kaha 'kṛṣṇa'-upadeśa*. Don't advise your rascaldom. *Kṛṣṇa-upadeśa*, what Kṛṣṇa has said, you just tell him. You become spiritual master. That's all. It does not become very difficult to become spiritual master. The rascals, they fail, because they do not say anything that Kṛṣṇa says. He manufactures something. He wants to take the place of Kṛṣṇa. This rascaldom will never make you happy. You have to follow as Caitanya Mahāprabhu says, *yāre dekha, tāre kaha 'kṛṣṇa'-upadeśa*. Then you become guru. To become guru is not at all difficult, provided you follow the right instruction of Caitanya Mahāprabhu. Then everyone can become—expand, expand.

You have learned something about Kṛṣṇa conscious-ness. Now you rightly distribute. Then you will increase your group. But if you want to manufacture something of your own concoction, that will not act.

MADHYA 4.197

The following verse is not for preaching, but for relishing. It was spoken by Śrī Mādhavendra Puri at the end of his life.

*ayi dina-dayādra nātha he
mathurā-nātha kadāvalokyase
hṛdayaṁ tvad-aloka-kātaraṁ
dayita bhrāmyati kiṁ karomy aham*

“O My Lord! O most merciful master! O master of Mathurā! When shall I see You again? Because of My not seeing You, My agitated heart has become unsteady. O most beloved one, what shall I do now?”

The previous verse states: “Mādhavendra Puri recited this verse again and again at the end of his material existence. Thus uttering this verse, he attained the ultimate goal of life.” Although I say this verse is to be relished, Prabhupāda writes that there are only three persons who can even understand its meaning.

This verse is quoted again in the *Antya-līlā* when Mādhavendra Puri’s disappearance is discussed in connection with his two disciples, Rāmacandra Puri and Īśvara Puri. Mādhavendra Puri was experiencing *vipralambha* in the mood of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī. This verse is the first expression of this mood in

our *sampradāya*. Caitanya Mahāprabhu loved this verse and it evoked ecstatic transformations in Him whenever He remembered it.

“It is stated that only three people know the meaning of this verse: Mādhavendra Puri, who spoke it, Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, because these are Her words, and Lord Kṛṣṇa. There is no fourth person.”

This is not a frequently quoted verse, but it is important for the advanced understanding of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

MADHYA 7.96

When Lord Caitanya was touring South India, he sang the following song:

kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa he!
kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa he!

This verse was also recorded by Kavi-karṇapura, but Kṛṣṇa-dāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī reveals it in this context. We can imagine the Lord walking alone all over South India singing this song. He was happy to live as a simple *sannyāsī* and pray for Kṛṣṇa’s protection. “Kṛṣṇa protect Me!” We can also sing this song. It will remind us that although we are always alone in this world, we don’t have to be afraid. Kṛṣṇa will protect us and maintain us.

MADHYA 19.151

*brahmāṇḍa bhramite kona bhāgyavān jiva
guru-kṛṣṇa-prasāde pāya bhakti-latā-bija*

According to their karma, all living entities are wandering throughout the entire universe. Some of them are being elevated to the upper planetary systems, and some are going down into the lower planetary systems. Out of many millions of wandering living entities, one who is very fortunate gets an opportunity to associate with a bona fide spiritual master by the grace of Kṛṣṇa. By the mercy of both Kṛṣṇa and the spiritual master, such a person receives the seed of the creeper of devotional service.

This verse is among the most frequently quoted *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* verses. It is a concise description of both the material and spiritual situations. The verse also explains karma, the *bhakti-latā-bija*, the role of guru and Kṛṣṇa, and the rarity of a devotee's association.

Lord Caitanya spoke this verse to explain the different gradations of living entities and the rareness of devotional service. We can appreciate this verse even more when we read it in context. Two verses earlier, Lord Caitanya said: "Because a devotee of Lord Kṛṣṇa is desireless, he is peaceful. Fruitive workers desire material enjoyment, *jñānīs* desire liberation, and *yogīs* desire material opulence; therefore they are all lusty and cannot be peaceful." A pure devotee is superior to all other persons.

ANTYA 5.131

Here is a verse instructing us how to approach the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. This verse was spoken by Svarūpa Dāmodara Gosvāmī after he criticized a Bengali poet who had misunderstood both Lord Jagannātha and Caitanya Mahāprabhu. Śrīla Prabhupāda would sometimes quote this verse in conjunction with *Bhāgavatam* 1.2.18, “By regular attendance in classes on the *Bhāgavatam* and by rendering of service to the pure devotee, all that is troublesome to the heart is almost completely destroyed, and loving service unto the Personality of Godhead, who is praised with transcendental songs, is established as an irrevocable fact.”

*yāha, bhāgavata paḍa vaiṣṇavera sthāne
ekānta āśraya kara caitanya-carāṇe*

“If you want to understand *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*,” he said, “you must approach a self-realized Vaiṣṇava and hear from him. You can do this when you have completely taken shelter of the lotus feet of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.”

ANTYA 7.11

*kali-kālera dharma—kṛṣṇa-nāma-saṅkīrtana
kṛṣṇa-śakti vinā nahe tāra pravartana*

The fundamental religious system in the age of Kali is the chanting of the holy name of Kṛṣṇa. Unless empowered by Kṛṣṇa, one cannot propagate the *saṅkīrtana* movement.

ISKCON devotees have a special attachment to this verse because it is our proof that Śrīla Prabhupāda is a *śaktyāveśa-avatāra*. This verse was originally spoken by Vallabhācārya to Lord Caitanya, but it has universal significance.

OTHER IMPORTANT VERSES

This chapter is meant to serve only as a taste. Here is a list of other verses the reader may find of interest:

Ādi 13.123, which is a verse on the absolute necessity to surrender to Lord Caitanya. There are other verses like this elsewhere in the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*. We should be aware of these verses and understand that Caitanya Mahāprabhu's cult is not sectarian. Those who profess Vaiṣṇavism but don't accept Lord Caitanya are making a serious mistake.

Ādi 14.1, "Things that are difficult to do become easy to execute if one somehow or other simply remembers Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu. But if one does not remember Him, even easy things become very difficult. To this Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu I offer my respectful obeisances." This verse is reassuring. It is a prayer—something to hold onto during the day. If things are becoming difficult, check yourself and see if you are remembering Lord Caitanya.

Madhya 19.152 explains what happens when a person receives the seed of devotional service: "If he waters the seed gradually by the process of *śravaṇa* and *kīrtana* [hearing and chanting], the seed will begin to sprout." This verse, and the one preceding it, teach an important doctrine. We often say

that love of Kṛṣṇa is dormant in everyone's heart. This verse proves that statement.

In *Antya* 6.236, Lord Caitanya gives concise instructions about the ideal behavior of one in the renounced order of life: "Do not talk like people in general or hear what they say. You should not eat very palatable food, nor should you dress very nicely."

Antya 20.28: "Wherever there is a relationship of love of Godhead, its natural symptom is that the devotee does not think himself a devotee. Instead, he always thinks that he has not even a drop of love for Kṛṣṇa."

6

SANĀTANA GOSVĀMĪ MEETS LORD CAITANYA

WHY I LIKE THIS SECTION

Madhya-lilā, Chapters 19 and 20 describe Rūpa and Sanātana's going to Lord Caitanya and His instructions to them. This is one of my favorite sections of the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*. It is a real-life adventure story, especially when Sanātana Gosvāmī escapes his captors and arrives at the Lord's lotus feet.

This was the first pastime Śrīla Prabhupāda ever shared with us when he introduced us to the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* in 1966. I still remember how he read the story in installments, always stopping at a dramatic point which only left us hankering for more. I wrote about this event in *Planting the Seed*. In the very beginning, Prabhupāda gave classes both morning and evening only on the *Bhagavad-gītā*. After a few months of regular attendance, he told us that "because you are a little advanced, I will speak from *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*." That was typical of Śrīla

Prabhupāda's leniency and generosity. How advanced could we have been after having attended his lectures for only a few months? Still, he shared the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, the "post-graduate study" of Kṛṣṇa consciousness with us. This is itself a good argument that we can read *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* even before having read all the other scriptures, under Śrīla Prabhupāda's protection.

What I like most about this story is Sanātana Gosvāmī's determined effort to free himself from material entanglement and to join Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. We all have such a story to tell. Almost all of us had to cross over the obstacles placed before us by our nondevotee friends and relatives in order to join this movement. Sanātana Gosvāmī's story ends with such success—it is the story of the spiritual seeker escaping the clutches of the material energy to reach his Lord.

SANĀTANA GOSVĀMĪ IS ARRESTED AND THEN ESCAPES FROM PRISON

Rūpa and Sanātana Gosvāmīs were ministers in the Muslim government. At the time this story opens, they had already met Lord Caitanya at Rāma-keli and decided to join Him, but had not yet determined how they would free themselves from the Nawab's service.

First they hired *brāhmaṇas* to perform a ritual *puraścaraṇa*, which Prabhupāda describes as a ritual "performed for the fulfillment of certain desires. One rises early in the morning, chants the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra, performs *arcana* by the *ārati* ceremony and worships the Deities." (*Madhya* 19.5, purport)

Rūpa and Sanātana were praying that they would be able to attain Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's lotus feet very soon.

Rūpa Gosvāmī then divided his money and prepared to meet Lord Caitanya. In the meantime, Sanātana Gosvāmī thought, "The Nawab is very pleased with me. I certainly have an obligation. Somehow or other, if the Nawab becomes angry with me, I shall be greatly relieved. That is my conclusion." (*Madhya* 19.13–14) Therefore, on the pretext of ill health, Sanātana Gosvāmī did not go and perform his duties in the court.

Then one day the Nawab came to see Sanātana and found him not ill, but studying the *Bhāgavatam* with learned *brāhmaṇas*. The Nawab personifies all those who become angry and threatened when a devotee takes to Kṛṣṇa consciousness. They charge us with being irresponsible or say that we are cheating, and they threaten to punish us in some way.

The Nawab and Sanātana had an intimate relationship, and this is revealed when the Nawab refers to himself as Sanātana's elder brother: "Your elder brother is acting just like a plunderer. By killing many living entities, your elder brother has destroyed all Bengal. Now here you are destroying all my plans."

Sanātana's plan was to make the Nawab so angry that he would relieve Sanātana of his government duties. Because of their familial relationship, Sanātana did not expect the Nawab to have him arrested, but that is what the Nawab did.

At that time, Rūpa Gosvāmī had successfully set out to meet Lord Caitanya. Later, Sanātana received an enigmatic letter from him: "Where has the Mathurā Purī of Yadupati gone?"

Where has the northern Kośalā of Raghupati gone? By reflection, make the mind steady, thinking, ‘This universe is not eternal.’”

The holy *dhāmas* are the most permanent places in the material world because they are eternal, but in time, even the *dhāmas* are obscured from vision. Rūpa Gosvāmī thus told his brother to remember the temporality of everything in the universe and to steady his mind by that remembrance.

All of us have had the experience of becoming overwhelmed by physical or mental pain or misfortune. Although theoretically we know that we are spiritual by nature and therefore not really affected by the misery, we choose to become absorbed in it and then lose our Kṛṣṇa consciousness. We fall into the illusion that we will be suffering forever. Then we lose our gravity.

This is the essence of Rūpa Gosvāmī’s encouragement to his brother: “The situation you are in is temporary because the entire universe is temporary. Think about that which is eternal and become steady and fixed.”

Sanātana felt joyful to receive this letter. He immediately called for the jailer and bribed him into letting him go free.

We could also use such an encouraging letter to help us through our own troubles—a letter from a dear, wise brother. Actually, Rūpa Gosvāmī and Śrīla Prabhupāda are just like our brothers. They write to us, or for us, in our desperation and save us from despair. They remind us of our deeper purpose and encourage us to act on the transcendental platform.

SANĀTANA GOES TO SEE THE LORD

After freeing himself from jail, Sanātana Gosvāmī stayed off the main roads and traveled through the jungle to meet Lord Caitanya. He who had been such a highly placed officer was now a homeless refugee, a criminal. This is how he renounced all social designation, wealth, and honor. It's thrilling to contemplate Sanātana's renunciation of the world in his desire to reach the truth.

Sanātana allowed one servant, Iśāna, to accompany him, but when he discovered that Iśāna was carrying money with him, he saw it as a death threat and sent Iśāna home and continued on alone.

This is an inspiring moment in the story. This one servant exemplifies the last vestige of comfort, the last trace of the obstacles that drag us from our spiritual resolve. Even material security, if it is unfavorable to our practice of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, should immediately be given up. The reward is obvious: "After departing from Iśāna, Sanātana Gosvāmī began traveling alone with a waterpot in his hand. Simply covered with a torn quilt, he thus lost all his anxiety."

Devotees like Sanātana Gosvāmī and Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī were so prominent in material life that they had to make drastic breaks to get away. We are insignificant, but we still experience a semblance of this drastic breaking away. In our case, few people cared what we did, but there was always somebody—a wife, a mother—who caused trouble. We could do nothing but endure their pressure and then pull ourselves out of their grasp, and it may be that we have to continue making the break.

Later, Sanātana stopped for the night in a remote part of the countryside. Nearby, another group had also set up camp, and the person in charge happened to be Sanātana's brother-in-law, Śrīkānta, who was out on an errand to buy horses for the emperor. Śrīkānta recognized Sanātana and tried to convince him to return to his material interests. But he came face to face with Sanātana's determination. In a last attempt, he asked him to at least stay for a couple of days and to "abandon these dirty garments." Sanātana rejected Śrīkānta's offer immediately. Instead, he replied, "I shall not stay here even for a moment. Please help me cross the Ganges. I shall leave immediately." His brother-in-law gave him an expensive woolen blanket and then helped him to cross the Ganges.

This exchange reveals Sanātana's single-mindedness. We *have* to be single-minded in order to escape all the well-meaning friends and relatives who try to detain us in the material world. If we are attentive to them, they can dull our sense of renunciation and devotion to Kṛṣṇa.

SANĀTANA GOŚVĀMĪ ARRIVES IN BENARES

A few days later, Sanātana arrived in Benares and heard that Lord Caitanya was staying at Candrasekhara's home. He immediately went to that house and sat outside the door. The omniscient Lord told Candrasekhara, "There is a devotee at your door. Please call him in."

Candrasekhara looked outside, but saw only what appeared to be a Muslim beggar or *daraveśa* (which Prabhupāda translates as "hippie"). Then Lord Caitanya sent Candrasekhara out

again and assured him that Sanātana was indeed a Vaiṣṇava despite his unshaven appearance.

One significant point to note here is that although Candrasēkhara is an eternal associate of Caitanya Mahāprabhu and was always receiving the Lord at his home in that alien city full of impersonalists, he failed to recognize a devotee at his door because of the devotee's external appearance. We should take a lesson from this: do not judge devotees. If even Candrasēkhara could not recognize a devotee as great as Sanātana Gosvāmī, what can we hope to understand about a devotee's nature?

SANĀTANA GOSVĀMĪ FINALLY FULFILLS HIS DESIRE TO MEET THE LORD

Candrasēkhara said, "O Muslim mendicant, please come in. The Lord is calling you."

"As soon as Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu saw Sanātana Gosvāmī in the courtyard, He immediately went up to him with great haste. After embracing him, the Lord was overwhelmed with ecstatic love. As soon as Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu touched Sanātana Gosvāmī, Sanātana was also overwhelmed with ecstatic love. In a faltering voice, he said, 'O my Lord, do not touch me.'"

We can imagine Sanātana Gosvāmī standing there, dirty, wearing ragged clothing but still carrying his expensive blanket, being embraced by Lord Caitanya.

THE POWER OF A VAIṢṆAVA

“When Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu began cleansing Sanātana Gosvāmī’s body with His own transcendental hand, Sanātana Gosvāmī said, ‘O my Lord, please do not touch me.’” Then Lord Caitanya glorified the power of a Vaiṣṇava.

The Lord said, “I am touching you just to purify Myself because by the force of your devotional service you can purify the whole universe.” Here, Lord Caitanya is behaving as a *sādhaka* and instructing us about the power of a pure Vaiṣṇava’s association. A pure devotee is the source of all benediction in spiritual life; he is a touchstone.

“Saints of your caliber are themselves places of pilgrimage. Because of their purity, they are constant companions of the Lord, and therefore they can purify even the places of pilgrimage.” Although Caitanya Mahāprabhu has just stated this point, he now quotes from *Bhāgavatam* 1.13.10 as śāstric proof. A Vaiṣṇava is the real dust of Vṛndāvana.

Lord Caitanya then quotes two verses, one from the *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa*, and one from Prahlāda Mahārāja’s teachings in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. The purport of these two verses is that the quality of a Vaiṣṇava is not determined by caste, birth, or even by scholarship in the *Vedas*. The only criterion is whether the person is a sincere devotee of the Lord who chants Hare Kṛṣṇa and serves the Vaiṣṇavas. If a person has all other qualifications, but isn’t a devotee, then he is not considered a Vaiṣṇava. If a person is lowborn, but is surrendered to Kṛṣṇa, then he is accepted as a Vaiṣṇava.

These are important verses for us since many of us come from low births. We cannot assume that we are the pure

devotee referred to in these verses, but we can increase our surrender to Kṛṣṇa by serving Śrīla Prabhupāda and taking shelter of this truth: that devotional service is not determined by the culture in which we were born or raised, by our brahminical or non-brahminical qualities, or by any other consideration other than the quality of surrender to Kṛṣṇa.

“My dear Vaiṣṇava, seeing a person like you is the perfection of one’s eyesight. Touching your lotus feet is the perfection of the sense of touch. Glorifying your good qualities is the tongue’s real activity, for in the material world it is very difficult to find a pure devotee of the Lord.” (*Madhya* 20.61)

“GO GET A SHAVE”

“ . . . Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu asked Sanātana to go get a shave.” (*Madhya* 20.68) This is a practical instruction. Prabhupāda takes the opportunity to write in his purport that Lord Caitanya’s followers should be shaven. “If anyone with long hair or a beard wants to join this Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement and live with us, he must similarly shave himself clean. The followers of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu consider long hair objectionable.” Prabhupāda sometimes used this incident in his preaching to disciples about shaving their beards and long hair.

SANĀTANA GOSVĀMĪ’S RENUNCIATION

Lord Caitanya also asked that Sanātana’s torn and dirty garments be replaced. When Tapana Miśra attempted to buy Sanātana new cloth, Sanātana refused, but instead asked for

old cloth. Then he tore the old *dhoti* into pieces to make two sets of outer cloth and underwear.

Later, Lord Caitanya introduced Sanātana to a Mahārāṣṭriya *brāhmaṇa*, who immediately invited Sanātana to take all his meals at his house. Sanātana replied, “I shall practice the process of *mādhukarī*. Why should I accept full meals in the house of a *brāhmaṇa*?”

“Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu felt unlimited happiness to observe Sanātana Gosvāmī’s strict following of the principles of *sannyāsa*. However, He repeatedly glanced at the woolen blanket Sanātana Gosvāmī was wearing.” (*Madhya* 20.82)

Sanātana could understand that Caitanya Mahāprabhu did not approve of his expensive blanket, so he went to the riverbank and traded it for a torn quilt owned by a Bengali mendicant. Upon seeing Sanātana Gosvāmī’s torn quilt, Lord Caitanya said, “I have already deliberately considered this matter. Since Lord Kṛṣṇa is very merciful, He has nullified your attachment for material things. Why should Kṛṣṇa allow you to maintain a last bit of material attachment? After vanquishing a disease, a good physician does not allow any of the disease to remain.”

SANĀTANA GOSVĀMĪ, THE IDEAL DISCIPLE

Sanātana Gosvāmī surrendered to Lord Caitanya as an ideal disciple and begged the Lord for instruction. “Being pleased with Sanātana Gosvāmī, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu bestowed His causeless mercy upon him. By the Lord’s mercy, Sanātana Gosvāmī received the spiritual strength to inquire from Him.”

When a spiritual master finds a very qualified disciple, he is happy to broadcast his message through him. When Śrīla Prabhupāda first met Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, our Prabhupāda said to a friend, “He is wonderful! Lord Caitanya’s mission is in expert hands.” Even the Supreme Lord is pleased to find a suitable instrument for His teachings: “Arjuna, declare it boldly, ‘My devotee will never perish.’” Actually, it is the Lord Himself who infuses spiritual strength into the disciple so that he may perfectly inquire, hear, and later repeat in his own words the sublime and urgent message of Godhead. The ability to inquire deeply is also an inspiration from God. It is something a devotee can qualify himself to do. Lord Caitanya wants many such inspired devotees to spread the holy name.

Lord Caitanya personally instructed Sanātana Gosvāmī about Kṛṣṇa’s identity, His conjugal love, and His personal opulences. He also instructed him in the mellows of devotional service.

“Putting a straw in his mouth and bowing down, Sanātana Gosvāmī clasped the lotus feet of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and humbly spoke as follows.”

*nica jāti, nica-saṅgi, patita adhama
kuiṣaya-kūpe paḍi’ gōṇāinu janama!*

Sanātana Gosvāmī said, “I was born in a low family, and my associates are all low-class men. I myself am fallen and am the lowest of men. Indeed, I have passed my whole life fallen in the well of sinful materialism.

—Madhya 20.99

Sanātana Gosvāmi is speaking out of intense humility. This verse is a description of an ideal disciple's attitude in approaching his spiritual master. The disciple needs the spiritual master's mercy. Therefore, he must give up all prestige and self-misconceptions and surrender at his guru's feet. Sanātana Gosvāmi continues, "I do not know what is beneficial for me and what is detrimental. Nonetheless, in ordinary dealings people consider me a learned scholar, and I am also thinking of myself as such."

Śrīla Prabhupāda would usually quote these two verses together. Often he would give a brief description of Sanātana Gosvāmi's credentials—he was fluent in several languages, including Arabic and Sanskrit, he was born in a Sārasvata *brāhmaṇa* family, and he had been a highly placed government official. Therefore, people would praise him for his learning and he would feel their praise was justified. When he surrendered to Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's feet, however, he asked, "*Ke āmi?*" Who am I? Why am I suffering? "If I do not know this, how can I be benefited?"

Śrīla Prabhupāda said that this question is the most important philosophical question that any human being can raise: "Who am I?" It takes intelligence to ask these questions, and it takes intelligence to accept the answers when they come to us.

LORD CAITANYA'S RESPONSE

jīvera 'svarūpa' haya—kṛṣṇera 'nitya-dāsa'
kṛṣṇera 'tatasthā-śakti', 'bhedābheda-prakāśa'

*sūryāṁśa-kiraṇa, yaiche agni-jvālā-caya
svābhāvika kṛṣṇera tina-prakāra 'śakti' haya*

It is the living entity's constitutional position to be an eternal servant of Kṛṣṇa because he is the marginal energy of Kṛṣṇa and a manifestation simultaneously one and different from the Lord, like a molecular particle of sunshine or fire. Kṛṣṇa has three varieties of energy.

—*Madhya* 20.108-9

Prabhupāda usually quoted only portions of this verse. Lord Caitanya tells Sanātana, "You are a living entity, part and parcel of Kṛṣṇa, His eternal servant, His marginal potency." Caitanya Mahāprabhu's answer is a *sūtra* on the identity of the living entity. Later, Lord Caitanya tells Sanātana that it is only due to forgetfulness of Kṛṣṇa that the living entity falls into *māyā*. Only by the causeless mercy of the Supreme Lord can such a conditioned living entity revive his original Kṛṣṇa consciousness. "Kṛṣṇa is compared to sunshine, and *māyā* is compared to darkness. Wherever there is sunshine, there cannot be darkness. As soon as one takes to Kṛṣṇa consciousness, the darkness of illusion (the influence of the external energy) will immediately vanish." (*Madhya* 22.31)

This verse appears, in its paraphrased form, as the epigram to *Back to Godhead* magazine.

I am not going to give an overview of Lord Caitanya's teachings to Sanātana Gosvāmī, but there are many famous verses in this section—verses praising the quality of a moment's association with a pure Vaiṣṇava, the power of faith, and the potency of hearing and chanting to establish *kṛṣṇa-prema* in the heart.

This section also has Lord Caitanya's classic definition of who is a Vaiṣṇava: "A Vaiṣṇava should always avoid the association of ordinary people. Common people are very much materially attached, especially to women. Vaiṣṇavas should also avoid the company of those who are not devotees of Lord Kṛṣṇa." (*Madhya* 22.87)

SANĀTANA GOSVĀMĪ TRAVELS TO JAGANNĀTHA PURĪ TO SEE THE LORD

Since we are discussing Sanātana Gosvāmī, let us turn to the fourth chapter of *Antya-līlā* for further adventures in the loving dealings between Lord Caitanya and Sanātana Gosvāmī.

This chapter contains a relevant theme for neophyte devotees because it deals with depression and disappointment that we experience in our service due to obstacles on the path.

Sanātana Gosvāmī, of course, is not a neophyte. He is an eternal associate of Lord Caitanya. Lord Caitanya offered him great respect. Although I am going to take the themes of disappointment and depression from this pastime, no one should think that Sanātana's expression of these moods is *māyā*. Sanātana was experiencing deep humility and feelings of unworthiness. Although he expressed these feelings in improper ways and was corrected by the Lord, we should understand that he is a very advanced devotee.

We can understand Sanātana Gosvāmī's improper expressions in the same way we understand Arjuna's bewilderment—that it was arranged by Lord Caitanya in order to instruct others through him.

Sanātana Gosvāmī was living in Vṛndāvana on Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's order. He was engaged in writing books and excavating the lost *tirthas* of Kṛṣṇa's pastimes. He traveled alone at this time to see Lord Caitanya at Jagannātha Puri. The *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* describes that due to bathing in bad water as he passed through the Jhārikaṇḍha forest, and due to not eating much while he was traveling, he contracted a disease that caused sores to erupt all over his body. These sores were secreting a foul moisture. As a result of this illness, he became so disappointed that he decided to give up his life.

POOR HEALTH CAN LEAD TO DISAPPOINTMENT

A neophyte's devotional service becomes interrupted when he becomes diseased. Vigorous service requires good health. We have to chant our rounds attentively and that takes physical strength as well as mental and spiritual stamina.

Often devotees experience trouble in their relationships with others when they become ill. Other devotees take over our services or don't understand our illness. All of these things can lead to disappointment.

"In disappointment, Sanātana Gosvāmī considered, 'I am of a low caste, and my body is useless for devotional service.'"

Sanātana Gosvāmī had two reasons to lament: he had oozing sores all over his body and he considered himself low and fallen because of his low caste. Of course, Sanātana was born a high-caste *brāhmaṇa*, but because he had taken service in the Muslim government and associated intimately with

Muslims, he considered that he had lost his high caste and was now a lowborn man.

Then, “When I go to Jagannātha Purī, I shall not be able to see Lord Jagannātha, nor shall I always be able to see Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.”

HUMILITY AND LOW SELF-ESTEEM

Is it possible to be too humble? No, we should think of ourselves as lower than the straw on the street. We are tiny spirit souls and that is the only accurate analysis of ourselves. That does not mean, however, that our bodies are useless for devotional service. Therefore, it is possible to exaggerate our low condition and to engage in what the psychologists call low self-esteem. Low self-esteem is not healthy. We can judge by the result whether we are experiencing humility or low self-esteem. Humility brings enlivenment and dependence on Kṛṣṇa; low self-esteem makes us feel so unqualified that we no longer perform service and we exclude ourselves from the society of devotees. Low self-esteem is a misconception about our actual position; it is a material estimation.

For example, Sanātana Gosvāmī said that he will not be able to see Lord Jagannātha because he could not enter the temple. Although most ISKCON devotees cannot go into the Jagannātha temple at Purī, Prabhupāda told us not to be disappointed. Sanātana says, “I have heard that the residential quarters of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu are near the temple of Jagannātha. But I shall not have the power to go near the temple.” Not only did he have to avoid the temple, but he could not go

near the temple in order to visit Lord Caitanya because “the servants of Lord Jagannātha generally move about tending to their duties, but if they touch me I shall be an offender.” All his feelings are compounded by the fact that he has an obnoxious disease.

SANĀTANA GOSVĀMĪ’S SOLUTION TO HIS DISAPPOINTMENT

“Therefore if I sacrifice this body in a good place, my unhappiness will be mitigated, and I shall attain an exalted destination.” Thus he plans to give up his body under the wheels of the Ratha cart. Lord Caitanya will correct this conclusion, but we can understand that if we think our own disqualifications are so great that we cannot engage in devotional service, then we do not have proper faith in the power of the holy name or the spiritual master. Guru and Kṛṣṇa can overcome everything because Kṛṣṇa is more powerful than *māyā*.

Neither should we think that our low condition is permanent. That would be like accepting the logic *naga-māṭṛka-nyāya*: because a woman ran naked as a baby, she must run naked now.

WE ARE BLESSED

Whenever Sanātana Gosvāmī visited Pūrī, he stayed at Siddha-bakula with Haridāsa Ṭhākura. The *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* tells us that Sanātana and Haridāsa were like-minded friends. Haridāsa, however, did not share Sanātana’s disappointment

about his lowly position—Haridāsa Ṭhākura was born in a Muslim family and also could not approach the Jagannātha Deity or constantly see Lord Caitanya—but he expressed only happiness in devotional service. Although Haridāsa Ṭhākura was lowborn according to Vedic estimation, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu used to visit him daily.

How fortunate he was. We should also count our blessings. We have received so many blessings in this life and we should not let setbacks hinder our appreciation of that fact. And how auspicious are these blessings! They are extraordinary. After millions and millions of births, we have finally attained a human body. By guru's grace, our human form is not being wasted by wallowing in sense gratification. Instead, we have been allowed to come in contact with Kṛṣṇa through Prabhu-pāda's movement. We are chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa. Why wouldn't this make us grateful and hopeful?

“GLORIOUS IS THAT MASTER . . .”

“Haridāsa said to Lord Caitanya, ‘Here is Sanātana Gosvāmī offering his obeisances.’ Seeing Sanātana Gosvāmī, the Lord was greatly surprised. When Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu came forward to embrace him, Sanātana backed away and spoke as follows. ‘My Lord, please do not touch me. I fall at Your lotus feet. I am the lowest of men, having been born of a low caste. Besides that, I have infections on my body.’ Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, however, embraced Sanātana Gosvāmī by force. Thus the moisture oozing from the itching sores touched the transcendental body of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu” and Sanātana Gosvāmī was mortified.

Then Sanātana and the Lord discussed some news. Lord Caitanya mentioned that He was aware of Anupama's death. Lord Caitanya went on to glorify Anupama because he remained faithful to his Raghunātha, even though Rūpa and Sanātana both tried to convert him to *kṛṣṇa-bhakti*. The Lord adds, "There was a similar incident concerning Murāri Gupta. Formerly I examined him, and his determination was similar. Glorious is that devotee who does not give up the shelter of his Lord and glorious is that Lord who does not abandon His servant. If by chance a servant falls down and goes somewhere else, glorious is that master who captures him and brings him back by the hair."

Lord Caitanya praised both the fidelity of the disciple and the love of the spiritual master who cares enough for his disciple to drag him back to the shelter of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Although this seems unrelated to the theme of this pastime, Lord Caitanya is about to exemplify his own love for Sanātana by correcting his misconception.

"My dear Sanātana, if I could attain Kṛṣṇa by committing suicide, I would certainly give up millions of bodies without a moment's hesitation. You should know that one cannot attain Kṛṣṇa simply by giving up the body. Kṛṣṇa is attainable by devotional service. There is no other means to attain Him."

We can understand this "giving up the body" in a milder form by comparing it to maintaining a negative attitude in the name of regret for our fallen condition. Or, we can understand that by behaving in a spiritually suicidal way—by breaking the regulative principles or by doing anything to deliberately ruin our spiritual lives—we cannot attain Kṛṣṇa. We have to be careful to perform our devotional service purely and without

deliberate stupidity or neglect. Don't commit suicide by committing *vaiṣṇava-aparādhā*, don't complacently engage in sense indulgence, don't neglect the guru's order. Kṛṣṇa is attained by intelligent devotional service, not by engaging in mode of ignorance activities. "Acts such as suicide are influenced by the mode of ignorance, and in ignorance and passion one cannot understand who Kṛṣṇa is. Unless one discharges devotional service, one cannot awaken one's dormant love for Kṛṣṇa. . . ."

This instruction is similar to the instruction Kṛṣṇa gives Arjuna at the beginning of the Battle of Kurukṣetra: "The Supreme Personality of Godhead said: My dear Arjuna, how have these impurities come upon you? They are not at all befitting a man who knows the value of life. They lead not to higher planets but to infamy." (Bg. 2.2)

As neophytes, we become so attached to and entangled in our wrong mentality that it is sometimes difficult to extricate ourselves from it. We think only of a material resolution or we become defeated. Kṛṣṇa and the *ācāryas* tell us exactly what to do: give it up. We have the power to give it up, but it takes humility and proper action.

Therefore, the *ācāryas* prescribe following our duty steadily as a means to overcome a wrong mentality. In this way, we will do what is favorable for our Kṛṣṇa consciousness and avoid what is unfavorable, even if we are attached to it.

ENTHUSIASM AND CONFIDENCE

In the *Nārada-bhakti-sūtra*, Śrīla Prabhupāda writes that we have to have both enthusiasm and confidence in order to execute devotional service. When one becomes disappointed in his service to the Supreme Lord, that disappointment must be rejected and replaced with confidence to attain to the ultimate goal, love of Godhead. Too much lack of confidence translates into a lack of trust in Kṛṣṇa and the process of devotional service.

If our friend reminds us of our many blessings—the spiritual master, the holy name, devotional service—and questions the value of our depression, and if we respond with so many reasons why these blessings do not counteract whatever inauspiciousness we are feeling, then it means not only that we lack self-confidence, but that we lack *śraddhā*. Of course, a devotee should always think of himself as fallen and that it is unlikely his *anarthas* will disappear overnight, but he should always maintain an abiding faith in the devotional process and stay fixed with determination on the goal.

PATIENCE AND HUMILITY

“The devotee should patiently follow the rules and regulations of devotional service so that the day will come when he will achieve, all of a sudden, all the perfection of devotional service. He should not lament for any loss or any reverse in his advancement in spiritual life. This patience is the third positive

item for advancing in devotional service.” (*Nārada-bhakti-sūtra*, Code 5, purport)

Patience means that we have to wait to attain something desirable. For example, we often cannot find instant relief from our suffering. We may have to live out our karma. At the same time, we know that that karma is diminishing simply by our living it out. We also know that our suffering can and should be a positive impetus in our Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Even suffering is not ultimately unfavorable for our devotional service. Therefore, devotees should tolerate with faith what appears to them to be misfortune; they should never do anything contrary to Vaiṣṇava principles.

Lord Caitanya speaks against Sanātana’s idea to commit suicide: “Give up all your nonsensical desires, for they are unfavorable for getting shelter at the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa. Engage yourself in chanting and hearing. Then you will soon achieve the shelter of Kṛṣṇa without a doubt.”

This is the transcendental solution: take shelter in chanting the holy name. Do not worry that you are unqualified. “A person born in a low family is not unfit for discharging devotional service to Lord Kṛṣṇa, nor is one fit . . . because he is born in an aristocratic family . . . ”

Lord Caitanya then glorifies the holy name and the humble attitude of a devotee: “Of the nine processes of devotional service, the most important is to always chant the holy name of the Lord. If one does so, avoiding the ten kinds of offenses, one very easily attains the most valuable love of Godhead.”

In his purport, Śrīla Prabhupāda quotes Jīva Gosvāmī’s *Bhakti-sandarbhā*: “Chanting the holy name is the chief means of attaining love of Godhead. This chanting or devotional

service does not depend on any paraphernalia, nor on one's having taken birth in a good family. By humility and meekness one attracts the attention of Kṛṣṇa . . . if one becomes very humble and meek, he can easily attain the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa in this age of Kali."

"YOUR BODY IS MY PROPERTY"

Sanātana Gosvāmi is certainly humble. Therefore, he immediately surrenders to Lord Caitanya's instruction. "After hearing this, Sanātana Gosvāmi was exceedingly astonished. He could understand, 'My decision to commit suicide has not been greatly appreciated by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. . . . My Lord, You are the omniscient, merciful, independent Supreme Lord. Exactly like an instrument of wood, I dance as You make me do so.'"

Then Lord Caitanya gives a second reason why Sanātana should not commit suicide: "Your body is My property. You have already surrendered to Me. Therefore you no longer have any claim to your body. Why should you want to destroy another's property? Can't you consider what is right and wrong?"

Similarly, if we have surrendered to our guru's order and to the devotional process—which we are supposed to have done at first initiation—then we have forfeited our rights. We no longer have the right to withdraw from devotional service or to choose a path other than what the spiritual master orders for us. Thus it is not in our hands to decide whether or not we are qualified to perform our services or to chant the holy name. We must simply act according to the dictates of the master.

The Lord tells Sanātana, “Your body is My principal instrument for executing many necessary functions. By your body I shall carry out many tasks.”

We may forget this principle in our self-absorption and disappointment. We have already sold ourselves at the lotus feet of the spiritual master, and in that way become the Lord’s instruments. In Sanātana Gosvāmī’s case, he went on to write many books, to excavate the lost places of Kṛṣṇa’s pastimes in Vṛndāvana, and to establish the Madana-mohana temple.

Sanātana Gosvāmī responds, “I will do it. No one can understand Your deep meaning.”

Then Lord Caitanya turns to Haridāsa Ṭhākura: “My dear Haridāsa, please hear Me. This gentleman wants to destroy another’s property . . . tell him not to do such an unlawful thing.” Haridāsa replies, “We are falsely proud of our capabilities. Actually we cannot understand Your deep intentions. Unless You inform us, we cannot understand what Your purpose is nor what You want to do through whom.”

I appreciate Haridāsa Ṭhākura’s statement affirming that a disciple must always be directed by the spiritual master. It reminds me of the time I heard someone ask Śrīla Prabhupāda whether it was better for a devotee to worship Gaura-Nitāi Deities than Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa. Prabhupāda replied, “It is not stereotyped. You have to ask the spiritual master and follow his instructions.”

Devotional service has to be personally applied. The guru may tell one devotee to worship Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa and another devotee Gaura-Nitāi. We cannot generalize. Therefore, we have to communicate with our spiritual master and confirm our practice with him.

SANĀTANA GOES TO SEE THE LORD

Sanātana Gosvāmī does not carry out his dreadful plan during the Ratha-yātrā, but the Lord again tests him. In the month of Jyaiṣṭha (May–June), the Lord called for Sanātana to visit Him. Jyaiṣṭha is an unbearably hot month. When the Lord called for Sanātana, he chose to walk along the beach. The blazing hot sand blistered his feet. “Overwhelmed by joy at being called by the Lord, Sanātana Gosvāmī did not feel that his feet were burning in the hot sand.”

Sanātana took the beach route rather than the road because he did not want to contaminate the *pūjārīs* who were going about their business on the main road. Lord Caitanya was pleased and He praised Sanātana for observing the Vaiṣṇava etiquette.

In his summary of the chapter, Śrīla Prabhupāda writes that Caitanya Mahāprabhu was pleased to hear of Sanātana Gosvāmī’s great respect for the temple of Lord Jagannātha. The *pūjārīs* must be clean when they go on the altar to serve the Lord. Therefore, Sanātana Gosvāmī was afraid that he might contaminate them both because his body was still full of oozing sores and because he considered himself low-born and abominable.

It is important to note that although Lord Caitanya encouraged him that he was not abominable, He approved of his humility in this incident.

PRABHU-DATTA-DEŚA

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu again embraced him and Sanātana became disturbed. He chose to walk along the beach in order to protect the *pūjāris* from his “contaminating” presence, but here the Supreme Personality of Godhead Himself embraced him. Although he forbade Lord Caitanya to touch him, the Lord forcibly embraced him and His body became smeared with the moisture oozing from the sores on Sanātana’s body. Sanātana was convinced that he was committing a great offense at the Lord’s feet, but he didn’t know what to do. The Lord had already forbidden him to commit suicide.

Finally, Sanātana spoke to Jagadānanda Paṇḍita. “I came here to diminish my unhappiness by seeing Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, but the Lord did not allow me to execute what was in my mind. Although I forbid Him to do so, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu nevertheless embraces me, and therefore His body becomes smeared with the discharges from my itching sores. In this way I am committing offenses at His lotus feet, for which I shall certainly not be delivered. At the same time, I cannot see Lord Jagannātha. This is my great unhappiness. I came here for my benefit, but now I see I am getting just the opposite.”

Sanātana Gosvāmī is a perfect devotee, but we can apply the lessons from this pastime to ourselves. There appears to be too much emphasis on his own self-interest. We cannot judge, however, what is ultimately beneficial for us by the fact that our plans do not bear fruit. The Lord may have another plan for us. Jagadānanda Paṇḍita suggested that Sanātana go to Vṛndāvana and Sanātana replied, “You have given me very

good advice. I shall certainly go there, for that is the place the Lord has given me for my residence.”

In this verse, the word *prabhu-datta-deśa* is used. It is not often used in Prabhupāda’s purports; in this purport he gives us the definition of that phrase. ISKCON is a worldwide mission. We have to take up our guru’s order to serve the mission somewhere in the world. Wherever that *deśa* (land) is, we accept it as the place where we are the *datta* (servant) of our *prabhu* (master).

“[Devotees in this Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement] should go everywhere, to all parts of the world, accepting those places as *prabhu-datta-deśa*, the places of residence given by the spiritual master or Lord Kṛṣṇa.” When we choose our *prabhu-datta-deśa*, we should feel that it is a good place to discharge our spiritual master’s order. Without that sense, it will be difficult to overcome the difficulties that inevitably arise. This is an important concept. Surrender to the *prabhu-datta-deśa* provides a way to satisfy Lord Caitanya.

REAL INTIMACY

Lord Caitanya again visited Sanātana and embraced him. Then Sanātana Gosvāmī told Him that since he is offending Lord Caitanya every time they meet, he has decided to return to Vṛndāvana, and he mentioned that he had consulted Jagadānanda Paṇḍita.

“Hearing this, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, in an angry mood, began to chastise Jagadānanda Paṇḍita. ‘Jagā [Jagadānanda Paṇḍita] is only a new boy, but he has become so proud that he

thinks himself competent to advise a person like you. In affairs of spiritual advancement and even in ordinary dealings, you are on the level of his spiritual master. Yet not knowing his own value, he dares to advise you. My dear Sanātana, you are on the level of My adviser, for you are an authorized person. But Jagā wants to advise you. This is but the impudence of a naughty boy.” (*Antya* 4.157–60)

When Jagadānanda’s name is mentioned, the Lord focuses only on him and does not address what Sanātana has proposed: that he return to Vṛndāvana. Lord Caitanya immediately refers to Jagadānanda by an informal nickname, Jagā. Seeing this, Sanātana Gosvāmi says: “I can now understand the fortunate position of Jagadānanda. I can also understand my misfortune. No one in this world is as fortunate as Jagadānanda. Sir, You are making Jagadānanda drink the nectar of affectionate relationships, whereas by offering me honorable prayers, You are making me drink the bitter juice of *nimba* and *niśindā*.”

Too much formality and honor offered in a relationship keeps a relationship distant. When Sanātana states this principle, the Lord becomes embarrassed.

“My dear Sanātana, please do not think that Jagadānanda is more dear to Me than you. However, I cannot tolerate transgressions of the standard etiquette.”

Disciples of the same spiritual master will naturally all have different relationships with him. We cannot intrude on anyone’s relationship with the guru, nor can we demand that our relationship be the same as the relationship he has with another person. We have to allow the spiritual master to express himself within a variety of relationships.

“Although one has affection for many persons, different types of ecstatic love awaken according to the nature of one’s personal relationships.” Therefore, we should be confident of the relationship we have with the spiritual master, the service that we have, and the way that we are recognized for our service. We should always protect the individuality of that relationship without comparing it to other relationships.

Perhaps Lord Caitanya did express His affection for Jagadānanda more intimately. In this incident, He treated Jagadānanda just like a son. Lord Caitanya and Jagadānanda had an extraordinary relationship. The honor Lord Caitanya sincerely offered to Sanātana Gosvāmī, however, and the emphasis He placed on Sanātana’s mission, is also glorious. Why should anyone think that one devotee is better than another? Everyone should be satisfied in his own relationship. Otherwise, a devotee will deny whatever relationship he has and reject it out of his desire to have something else. Thus the sincerity of the actual relationship can be lost.

THE LORD SATISFIES SANĀTANA

Lord Caitanya explained to Sanātana that his body was not abominable and should not be rejected because of his disease. Lord Caitanya says, “Since I am in the renounced order, My duty is to make no distinctions but instead be equipoised. My knowledge must be equally disposed toward sandalwood pulp and dirty mud. For this reason, I cannot reject you. If I hated you, I would deviate from My occupational duty.”

Haridāsa replied, “My dear Lord, what You have spoken deals with external formalities. I do not accept it. My Lord, we are all fallen, but You have accepted us due to Your attribute of being merciful to the fallen.”

Lord Caitanya smiled: “Listen, Haridāsa and Sanātana. Now I am speaking the truth about how My mind is attached to you. . . . I think of you as My little boys, to be maintained by Me.” The Lord then glorifies the transcendental nature of a devotee’s body. “Sanātana Gosvāmī is one of the associates of Kṛṣṇa. There could not be any bad odor from his body. On the first day I embraced him, I smelled the aroma of *catuḥsama* [a mixture of sandalwood pulp, camphor, aguru and musk].”

At the end of their meeting, the Lord asked Sanātana to remain at Jagannātha Puri for one year and then return to Vṛndāvana. Then He embraced Sanātana and all his sores disappeared.

7

RŪPA GOSVĀMĪ'S MEETING WITH THE LORD

RŪPA GOSVĀMĪ AS A TRANSCENDENTAL WRITER

Lord Caitanya ordered Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī to live in Vṛndāvana and to compose works delineating the Kṛṣṇa conscious path. This chapter gives us an inside view into the life and thinking of the great, transcendental writer, Rūpa Gosvāmī.

In Vṛndāvana, Rūpa Gosvāmī wrote a drama about Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa's pastimes. At the same time, he wanted to again have Lord Caitanya's personal *darśana* at Jagannātha Purī. He started out with his younger brother, Anupama. When they arrived in Bengal, they heard that the devotees had already left for their annual visit to see Lord Caitanya at Jagannātha Purī. Anupama died along the way and Rūpa Gosvāmī was detained.

"In the province of Orissa there is a place known as Satyabhāmā-pura. Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī rested for a night in that

village on his way to Jagannātha Puri.” At Satyabhāmā-pura, Rūpa Gosvāmī had a dream in which Satyabhāmā-devī appeared to him and said, “Write a separate drama about me . . . it will be extraordinarily beautiful.” Rūpa Gosvāmī was astonished that Satyabhāmā requested this special drama because he had originally planned one drama to cover the Lord’s pastimes in Vṛndāvana and Dvārakā. He had even begun taking notes. Rūpa Gosvāmī took the dream seriously, however, and thought, “I have brought together in one work all the pastimes performed by Lord Kṛṣṇa in Vṛndāvana and in Dvārakā. Now I shall have to divide them into two dramas.”

This is both significant and typical of a Vaiṣṇava author of Rūpa Gosvāmī’s stature—they usually receive their themes through divine revelation. Prabhupāda often mentions this when he discusses writing. And no Vaiṣṇava author would concoct. Even contemporary devotees write following this principle. A Vaiṣṇava author repeats exactly what he has heard from his spiritual master and the scriptures. No matter how great a writer may be, even if he is as great as a Shakespeare in his ability to portray human characteristics or use beautiful language, if he is not directly glorifying Kṛṣṇa, the devotees are not interested. When a Vaiṣṇava writes, however, even if the composition is faulty, his words will be appreciated by honest devotees.

Rūpa Gosvāmī is in the most elevated category of Vaiṣṇava writers. He is as good as Śrīla Vyāsadeva and his is equally authoritative literature. We should never think his dramas are fictitious. He is not concocting, but sharing what he has seen through revelation.

We often see paintings of Rūpa Gosvāmī sitting crouched under a tree and writing on a palm leaf. Prabhupāda sometimes mentioned how the Gosvāmīs had large *japa* quotas. Haridāsa Ṭhākura chanted 300,000 names a day. Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī chanted 100,000 names a day. Rūpa and Sanātana, however, kept smaller quotas because their instruction was to write.

We cannot even imagine what it must have been like for Rūpa Gosvāmī when Lord Caitanya, his worshipable Deity, approached and asked, "What kind of book are you writing?" Then the Lord held up a palm leaf, His mind pleased by Rūpa Gosvāmīs fine handwriting. The Lord said, "The handwriting of Rūpa Gosvāmī is just like a row of pearls." (*Antya* 1.97)

When Lord Caitanya read the verse Rūpa Gosvāmī had composed, He was overwhelmed with ecstatic love:

"I do not know how much nectar the two syllables 'Kṛṣṇa' have produced. When the holy name of Kṛṣṇa is chanted, it appears to dance within the mouth. We then desire many, many mouths. When that name enters the holes of the ears, we desire many millions of ears. And when the holy name dances in the courtyard of the heart, it conquers the activities of the mind, and therefore all the senses become inert." (*Antya* 1.99)

Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī instructs us that we must learn about "the beauty and transcendental position of the holy name of the Lord by hearing the revealed scriptures from the mouths of devotees. Nowhere else can we hear of the sweetness of the Lord's holy name." (*Antya* 1.101)

A transcendental author such as Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī is first a devotee. Then out of his devotional experience and ecstatic

moods, he writes. It is not enough to make literary expressions of the holy name's beauty without experiencing the holy name's beauty firsthand; such empty literary expressions will have little effect on the reader. Rūpa Gosvāmī's words, however, were able to move even Lord Caitanya to ecstasy.

RŪPA GOSVĀMĪ IS EMPOWERED TO DESCRIBE THE MELLOWS OF DEVOTIONAL SERVICE

“Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu told Advaita Ācārya and Nityānanda Prabhu, ‘You should both show Your mercy wholeheartedly to Rūpa Gosvāmī. May Rūpa Gosvāmī, by Your mercy, become so powerful that he will be able to describe the transcendental mellows of devotional service.’”

This verse reveals how a devotee becomes empowered to write transcendental literature. Although there are a number of similar verses in the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, this particular verse proves that Lord Caitanya wanted to specifically empower Rūpa Gosvāmī to write about Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa's pastimes. Therefore, sometimes He asked His associates to empower him and at other times He indicates that He had Himself empowered him. These references help us to understand Rūpa Gosvāmī's position. We pray, *śrī-caitanya-mano-bhiṣṭaṁ sthāpitaṁ yena bhū-tale, svayaṁ rūpaḥ kadā mahyaṁ dadāti svapadāntikam*. All Vaiṣṇavas after Rūpa Gosvāmī are therefore called *rūpānugas*.

An earlier reference to Rūpa Gosvāmī's empowerment occurs when Rūpa and Sanātana were still engaged in government service. They went to visit Lord Caitanya at Rāmakeli.

Lord Caitanya said, "You are actually My eternal servants." The Lord then placed His two hands on their heads and they took the Lord's lotus feet on their heads. The Lord embraced them and requested all the devotees present to give them their mercy. The devotees were happy to see the Lord's mercy upon the two brothers, and they began to chant, "Hari! Hari!" (It is also significant that none of the Vaiṣṇavas felt envious that the Lord bestowed His special mercy on Rūpa and Sanātana.)

"HOW COULD RŪPA GOSVĀMĪ UNDERSTAND MY MIND?"

In the second chapter of the *Madhya-lilā*, Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī writes, "In case I die before I complete *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, I must tell some things right away. Some of the later pastimes." There, he tells of another incident involving Rūpa Gosvāmī—the pastime in which Rūpa Gosvāmī wrote a verse on a palm leaf after attending the Ratha-yātrā. The Lord used to recite a particular verse over and over during the Ratha-yātrā festival:

"That very personality who stole my heart during my youth is now again my master. These are the same moonlit nights of the month of Caitra. The same fragrance of *mālatī* flowers is there, and the same sweet breezes are blowing from the *ka-damba* forest. In our intimate relationship, I am also the same lover, yet still my mind is not happy here. I am eager to go back to that place on the bank of the Revā under the Vetasi tree. That is my desire." (*Antya* 1.78)

No one could understand why the Lord recited this verse because it sounded like an ordinary song by a girl in love with a

boy. This verse was also not directly from *śāstra*, nor was it specifically about Kṛṣṇa. Why, then, did Lord Caitanya sing it? Svarūpa Dāmodara was the only one who could understand the Lord's mood in this regard. When Rūpa Gosvāmī heard it, however, he also understood. Then he composed another verse on the same subject, but which revealed the Lord's mood. He wrote that verse on a palm leaf and placed it between the thatches in the roof of his hut while he went to bathe. While Rūpa Gosvāmī was absent, Lord Caitanya found the verse in the thatches and upon reading it, fell into an ecstatic trance. The Lord asked, "How did Rūpa Gosvāmī know My mind?" When Rūpa Gosvāmī returned, Lord Caitanya gave him a slap of love, took him on His lap, and asked, "How could you know My confidential feelings?"

Svarūpa Dāmodara was present to witness this scene. He told Lord Caitanya that Rūpa Gosvāmī's ability to write this verse was direct proof that he was empowered by Lord Caitanya Himself.*

* Śrīla Prabhupāda tells of a similar incident about himself. In 1936, Prabhupāda wrote a Vyāsa-pūjā offering to his spiritual master which pleased Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura so much that when guests would come, he would show it to them. I told of this incident in the first volume of the *Śrīla Prabhupāda-līlāmṛta*: "One stanza specifically made Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī so happy that he made a point of showing it to all his guests. . . . Somehow, in this simple couplet Abhay had captured the essence of his spiritual master's preaching against the Māyāvādīs, and Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta took it as an indication of how well Abhay knew the mind of his Gurudeva. Abhay was delighted when he heard that the couplet was pleasing to his spiritual master. One of Abhay's Godbrothers compared this verse by Abhay to a verse in which Rūpa Gosvāmī had expressed the inner thinking of Caitanya Mahāprabhu and had thus moved Him to ecstasy." (*A Lifetime in Preparation*, p. 86)

The Lord replied, "I was so pleased with Rūpa Gosvāmī that I embraced him and bestowed upon him all necessary potencies for preaching the *bhakti* cult. I accept Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī as quite fit to understand the confidential mellows of devotional service and I recommend that you explain devotional service to him further."

In this way, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu offered not only His blessings to Rūpa Gosvāmī, but specific training. Śrīla Prabhu-pāda explains that "The special function of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī is to establish the feelings of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. These feelings are His desires that His special mercy be spread throughout the world . . ." (*Antya* 1.117, purport) Probably the best description of Rūpa Gosvāmī's mission and Lord Caitanya's empowerment of him occurs as the first verse of *Madhya-līlā*, Chapter 19:

"Before the creation of the cosmic manifestation, the Lord enlightened the heart of Lord Brahmā with the details of the creation and manifested the Vedic knowledge. In exactly the same way, the Lord, being anxious to revive the Vṛndāvana pastimes of Lord Kṛṣṇa, impregnated the heart of Rūpa Gosvāmī with spiritual potency. By this potency, Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī could revive the activities of Kṛṣṇa in Vṛndāvana, activities almost lost to memory. In this way, He spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness throughout the world."

Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī actually describes this pastime twice in the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, both times elaborately. It is an important pastime because it is the first indication we receive of Lord Caitanya's hidden mission and its relationship to Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa and Vṛndāvana.

ŚRĪLA PRABHUPĀDA IS A RŪPĀNUGA

As Rūpa Gosvāmī was able to understand Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's mind, so Śrīla Prabhupāda was able to understand Rūpa Gosvāmī's mind and was empowered to fulfill his mission. Prabhupāda writes in his purport to *Antya* 1.117, "Now again, by the mercy of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, the same feelings are being spread all over the world by the servants of the Gosvāmīs, and devotees who are pure and simple will appreciate this attempt."

Sometimes Prabhupāda said that the Six Gosvāmīs did not do any organized preaching. Instead, they practiced *bhajana* and wrote books. To fulfill Rūpa Gosvāmī's mission, Prabhupāda wrote summary studies of some of these books—*The Nectar of Devotion*, *The Nectar of Instruction*—along with his elaborate presentations in English of *Bhagavad-gītā* and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, and distributed them all over the world. In his *maṅgalācaraṇa* prayers at the beginning of the *Bhagavad-gītā*, Śrīla Prabhupāda includes a prayer to Rūpa Gosvāmī. We are still only now trying to appreciate both what Śrīla Prabhupāda accomplished as the empowered representative of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī and what mandate Prabhupāda has placed on us as servants of the Six Gosvāmīs in *paramparā*.

In another purport, Prabhupāda writes significantly about empowerment:

The Supreme Personality of Godhead is not partial to some and neutral to others. One can actually draw the attention of the Supreme Personality of Godhead by service. Then one is further empowered by the Lord to act in such a way that everyone can appreciate his service. This is confirmed in

Bhagavad-gītā 4.11 . . . Kṛṣṇa is responsive. If one tries to render his best service to the Lord, the Lord gives him the power to do so. . . . Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu bestowed his special favor upon Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī because Rūpa Gosvāmī wanted to serve the Lord to the best of his ability. Such is the reciprocation between the devotee and the Lord in the discharge of devotional duties.”

—*Antya* 1.197, purport

This was also especially true of Śrīla Prabhupāda. Because he was so successful, it is obvious that he was specifically empowered by Kṛṣṇa.

A further statement: “Because of Your causeless mercy toward Your devotees, You want to describe the transcendental pastimes of Vṛndāvana. Anyone empowered to do this can bring the entire world under Your influence.”

Śrīla Prabhupāda writes in his purport: “This passage parallels the statement *kṛṣṇa-śakti vinā nahe tāra pravartana* . . . Under the protection of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, a pure devotee can preach the holy name of the Lord so that everyone may take advantage of this facility and thus become Kṛṣṇa conscious.”

Again, we see the link between Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī and Śrīla Prabhupāda.

DON'T TRY TO TAKE KṚṢṆA OUT OF VṚNDĀVANA

When Rūpa Gosvāmī finally arrived in Jagannātha Purī, he went to stay with Haridāsa Ṭhākura. When the Lord came to visit Haridāsa, Rūpa Gosvāmī experienced an affectionate

reunion with the Lord. Suddenly, Lord Caitanya said to him, “Do not try to take Kṛṣṇa out of Vṛndāvana, for He does not go anywhere else at any time.” Then He spoke these words, which Prabhupāda often quotes: *vṛndāvanam parityajya, sa kvacin naiva gacchati*. “Lord Kṛṣṇa never goes a step out of Vṛndāvana.”

Rūpa Gosvāmī was astonished to hear the Lord’s words. As he considered them, he concluded that Lord Caitanya was omniscient. How else could He so suddenly confirm the instruction he had received from Satyabhāmā-devī in his dream?

“LET ME THINK DEEPLY”

Rūpa Gosvāmī became decisive: “I shall write two separate invocations of good fortune and two different introductions. Let me think deeply about the matter and then describe two different sets of incidents.”

I particularly appreciate his words, “Let me think deeply.” Rūpa Gosvāmī, as we have heard, was specifically empowered to write. All the truths of devotion had already been revealed to him. That does not mean, however, that he was an automatic medium who wrote guided by an unseen spirit. We occasionally hear about such “automatic writers” these days. They describe how “I was in my house in the Chicago suburbs. I picked up my pen to write a letter, but suddenly my pen started moving of its own accord. My pen didn’t stop moving for twenty days. I did not eat or drink or sleep in that time. Now I have written this book, which will become the authorized scripture of our sect.” Even though the “medium” is an ordinary person, some people

still accept their words as scripture. The *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* description is more accurate as to what happens to a Vaiṣṇava writer. Even though he is directed, he still must sit down and think how best to write on his theme. A Vaiṣṇava writer always has to make his own endeavor and imbue it with *bhakti* to create a literary offering. Then through his deep thought, his meditation, the vision (*sphurti*) of what to describe appears in his heart.

RŪPA GOSVĀMĪ AS A TRANSCENDENTAL POET

The day after Lord Caitanya discovered the palm leaf in Rūpa Gosvāmī's roof, He invited Sārvabhauma Bhaṭṭācārya, Svarūpa Dāmodara, and Rāmānanda Rāya to hear Rūpa Gosvāmī's poetry.

After hearing a sampling of a few verses, the Lord and the devotees wanted to hear all the verses Rūpa Gosvāmī had composed. Rāmānanda Rāya and Sārvabhauma Bhaṭṭācārya were expert dramatists and scholars and they wanted to savor Rūpa Gosvāmī's technical expertise as well as his devotion. Rūpa Gosvāmī was hesitant, but Lord Caitanya asked, "Why are you embarrassed? You should recite it so the devotees can hear the good fruit of your writing." (*Antya* 1.130)

Rūpa Gosvāmī went on to read his drama, *Vidagdha-mādhava*. This play is one result of Satyabhāmā's order to write separate dramas about Vṛndāvana-līlā and Dvārakā-līlā. *Vidagdha-mādhava* expresses the mood called *pūrva-rāga*, or the anticipation of first meeting. Here is a taste of Rūpa

Gosvāmi's poetry, which reveals the extent of Lord Caitanya's empowerment of him:

“Experiencing previous attachment to Kṛṣṇa [*pūrva-rāga*], Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī thought: ‘Since I have heard the name of a person called Kṛṣṇa, I have practically lost My good sense. Then, there is another person who plays His flute in such a way that after I hear the vibration, intense madness arises in My heart. And again there is still another person to whom My mind becomes attached when I see His beautiful lightning effulgence in His picture. Therefore I think I am greatly condemned, for I have become simultaneously attached to three persons. It would be better for Me to die because of this.’” (*Antya* 1.142)

Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī is married. Therefore, She laments that She has become unchaste because of Her attraction to three different males. Actually, the three “males” are Kṛṣṇa.

Here is another example:

“I was engaged in My own playful activities in My home, and because of My childish innocence I did not know right from wrong. Therefore, is it good for You to have forced us into being so attracted to You and then to have neglected us? Now You are indifferent to us. Do You think it is right?” (*Antya* 1.153)

In this way, Rūpa Gosvāmi read his verses to this select and qualified audience. In verse after verse, he describes the most wonderful nectar, glorifying Vṛndāvana, the vibration of Kṛṣṇa's flute, and the relationship between Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. Upon hearing these verses, Rāmānanda Rāya exclaimed, “Your poetic expressions are like continuous showers of nectar.”

After some time, Rūpa Gosvāmi began to read from the second drama, *Lalita-mādhava*. Rāmānanda Rāya again appre-

ciated his poetic expression. He said, "This is not a poetic presentation; it is a continuous shower of nectar. Indeed, it is the essence of all ultimate realizations, appearing in the form of plays. . . . What is the use of a bowman's arrow or a poet's poetry if they penetrate the heart but do not cause the head to spin?" (*Antya* 1.193, 195)

RŪPA GOSVĀMĪ'S HUMILITY

After the reading was over and Rūpa Gosvāmī and Haridāsa Ṭhākura were alone, Haridāsa exclaimed, "There is no limit to your good fortune. No one can understand the glories of what you have described." (*Antya* 1.210)

Even after receiving such praise, Rūpa Gosvāmī did not claim credit for his work. Instead, he said, "I do not know anything. The only transcendental words I can utter are those which Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu makes me speak." (*Antya* 1.211)

This exchange is yet another example of Rūpa Gosvāmī's humility. Sometimes we may give a lecture and people seem attentive or praise us. Afterwards we feel proud and excited. Rūpa Gosvāmī was not contaminated by such pride. He claimed only to be the puppet of Lord Caitanya. Rather than feeling proud, he felt unworthy to have received such glorious mercy.

Rūpa Gosvāmī makes a similar statement at the beginning of his *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*: "Although I am the lowest of men and have no knowledge, the Lord has mercifully bestowed upon me the inspiration to write transcendental literature about devotional service. Therefore I offer my obeisances at

the lotus feet of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who has given me the chance to write these books.” (*Brs.* 1.1.2) Similarly, in *Vidagdha-mādhava* he writes, “O learned devotees, I am by nature ignorant and low, yet even though it is from me that *Vidagdha-mādhava* has come, it is filled with descriptions of the transcendental attributes of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Therefore, will not such literature bring about the attainment of the highest goal of life? Although its wood may be ignited by a low-class man, fire can nevertheless purify gold. Although I am very low by nature, this book may help cleanse the dirt from within the hearts of the golden devotees.” (*Vidagdha-mādhava* 1.6, as quoted in *Antya* 1.139)

These statements provide a satisfying combination of a devotee’s simultaneous feelings of unworthiness and his wanting to bring our attention to the fact that the literature he has written is valuable because it was actually written by the Lord.

OTHER APPRECIATIONS OF ŚRĪLA RŪPA GOSVĀMĪ

In his *maṅgalācaraṇa* prayers at the beginning of *Mādhurya-kāḍambinī*, Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura writes: “Though previous *mahājanas* (Prahāda, Dhruva, the Kumāras) have taken up the path of *bhakti*, now, by the mercy of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, one attains the intelligence to see *bhakti* in its complete *rasa* form. I constantly pay my obeisances to him who is very dear to the Lord.”

Although Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura mentioned other *mahājanas*, he singled out Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī because he was

directly empowered by Lord Caitanya. Lord Caitanya is the most merciful form of Kṛṣṇa; He is Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa combined. Rūpa Gosvāmī's part in Lord Caitanya's pastimes was to rescue the entire world.

Although Rūpa Gosvāmī was not present in the Gambhirā when Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu was expressing His most intense feelings of separation, all these moods were revealed to him in his heart. His great qualification to receive the Lord's mercy was not only recognized during his lifetime, but by all the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas who came after him. Even Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī, who was personally trained by Svarūpa Dāmodara, eventually went to Vṛndāvana and took shelter of Rūpa Gosvāmī. Of course, Rūpa Gosvāmī is Rūpa-maṅjarī in his eternal identity. Therefore, we can certainly understand how he was able to comprehend Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī's moods. This understanding is a *maṅjarī's* special proclivity. It is inconceivable, however, that Rūpa Gosvāmī was able to express these confidential topics in his literature.

ALL RŪPĀNUGAS ARE EMPOWERED IN PARAMPARĀ

Sometimes devotees in ISKCON wonder whether it is possible for one of Śrīla Prabhupāda's followers to become empowered. It is possible for those who are following strictly in the footsteps of the empowered preacher.

Once, Śubhānanda dāsa approached Śrīla Prabhupāda about a book he wanted to write on Vedic psychology. After questioning Śubhānanda thoroughly on his understanding of Vedic psychology and on the purpose and conclusion of his proposed

book, Prabhupāda gave his permission for Śubhānanda to write the book.

Śubhānanda then said, “In some of your purports, you explain that one cannot write transcendental literature unless he is empowered by his spiritual master.”

Prabhupāda waved his hand and said, “You are empowered.”

We can take Prabhupāda’s somewhat casual empowerment of this disciple in two ways. We can be instantly and specifically empowered by Prabhupāda, and we are already empowered to the degree of our sincere adherence to the Kṛṣṇa conscious process.

Empowerment to preach is therefore implicit in the spiritual master’s order to preach.

Śrīla Prabhupāda often told the story of how his spiritual master ordered all his disciples to preach in the West. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura very much wanted Kṛṣṇa consciousness spread worldwide. In that sense, the offer of empowerment was there for all his disciples. Only Śrīla Prabhupāda accepted the offer and therefore he received the blessings to carry out his guru’s mission. In his purport to *Ādi* 12.8, he writes:

In the beginning, during the presence of Om Viṣṇupāda Paramahansa Parivrājakācārya Aṣṭottara-sata Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura Prabhupāda, all the disciples worked in agreement; but just after his disappearance, they disagreed. One party strictly followed the instructions of Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, but another group created their own concoction about executing his desires. . . . Despite the spiritual master’s order to form a governing body and execute the missionary activities of the Gaudiya Math, the two

unauthorized factions began litigation that is still going on after forty years with no decision.

Therefore, we do not belong to any faction. But because the two parties, busy dividing the material assets of the Gaudiya Math institution, stopped the preaching work, we took up the mission of Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura and Bhaktivīnoda Ṭhākura to preach the cult of Caitanya Mahāprabhu all over the world under the protection of all the predecessor *ācāryas*, and we find that our humble attempt has been successful. . . . According to this instruction of Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura, it is the duty of a disciple to follow strictly the orders of his spiritual master. The secret of success in advancement in spiritual life is the firm faith of the disciple in the orders of his spiritual master.

A devotee is empowered to the degree that he or she surrenders to and tries to carry out the spiritual master's mission.

OUR QUALIFICATION FOR EMPOWERMENT

Thus we can say that our qualification for empowerment is our humility and the symptom of our empowerment will be our humility. Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī said that he was simply Lord Caitanya's puppet. If we become that dependent on the instructions and mercy of our guru and the previous *ācāryas*, we can become eligible for special mercy. The *ācāryas* will be willing to give us their mercy because they know we won't misuse it.

The first job Śrīla Prabhupāda had when he got out of college was as a manager in Dr. Bose's laboratory. Immediately, he was trusted to sign checks for thousands of rupees, whereas people who had been with the firm for twenty or thirty years

did not have such responsibility. When Dr. Bose was questioned about this by some of his senior employees, he replied that Prabhupāda was just like his son. He trusted him as much as he would trust his own family member. Similarly, if we make our heart and interests one with our spiritual master's heart and interests, we will become trusted disciples and be given the power to serve. Then Kṛṣṇa Himself will work through us.

A sign that ISKCON devotees are empowered is that the holy name is becoming known all over the world. The *dharma* for this age is *harināma-saṅkīrtana*. Without being empowered by Kṛṣṇa, no one can spread this movement (*kali-kālera dharma—kṛṣṇa-nāma-saṅkīrtana/ kṛṣṇa-śakti vinā nahe tāra pravartana*). We may not be as empowered as Śrīla Prabhupāda or Rūpa Gosvāmī, but as we are surrendered to Kṛṣṇa's will, so proportionately we will be able to serve Him.

ŚRĪLA PRABHUPĀDA'S PURPORTS ON WRITING

WE SHOULD NOT CONSIDER EXTERNAL FAULTS IN A DEVOTEE'S WRITING

We can find Śrīla Prabhupāda's instructions to writers in the eighth chapter of *Ādi-līlā*. I like to study these purports because they help me understand both the bona fide nature of transcendental writing and of the literature produced. When someone writes, we expect that literature will result. Therefore, by understanding a writer's process, we can that much more understand his literature.

In his purport to *Ādi* 8.39, Prabhupāda describes the criteria for transcendental writing. For example, he says that grammatical and stylistic faults are not to be counted against a transcendental writer. This reminds us of the *Bhāgavatam* statement that even if transcendental literature is irregularly

composed, it will be appreciated because it contains glorification of Kṛṣṇa. Prabhupāda uses this *Bhāgavatam* verse to excuse the faults in his own first printing of the First Canto. Just as we avoid finding fault with a Vaiṣṇava due to his body or nationality, we should avoid criticizing the external faults in a pure devotee's writing.

That is not an excuse, however, for sloppy writing. Prabhupāda once wrote a letter to his editors asking them to "put it nicely." Another time, the devotees in Germany were printing Prabhupāda's books in German. They wrote to Prabhupāda that they were arguing with the translator over the speed of the book production. The translator wanted to be certain that there were no mistakes in the translation, but the devotees were eager for new books to distribute. They quoted back to Prabhupāda his own statement that he had published his own books, even though he knew there were so many mistakes in them and tried to offer that statement as a precedent to defeat the translator. Prabhupāda responded, "No, the translator is right. The books should not be published with mistakes. I may have published books with mistakes, but I also started the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement all over the world. If you can start the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement all over the world, then you can publish your book with some mistakes. If there are mistakes in the books, it will be a disgrace on us."

Also, Īśvara Purī once wrote a book about Kṛṣṇa. He told Lord Caitanya that he would like to show Him the book, but that he was too embarrassed because it was full of faults. Lord Caitanya answered that He did not consider any faults in the work of a Vaiṣṇava.

A DEVOTEE WRITER MUST DEPEND ON KṚṢṆA

Another specialty listed by Prabhupāda as characteristic of transcendental writing is that the Lord helps the devotee write. This does not mean that the Lord must dictate every word for a book to qualify as “transcendental,” although, of course, we also see that example in the history of how Vyāsadeva composed the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* or Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī composed the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*.*

Any devotee can preach, whether in speech or in writing, simply by strictly repeating the teachings of his bona fide spiritual master. A writer uses literary tools to deliver a message. Even a devotee who may have to struggle and pray and labor and use his intelligence to write can be helped by Kṛṣṇa. This characteristic of Vaiṣṇava writing, therefore, is an important one to understand. By his dependence on Kṛṣṇa, a devotee attains the qualification to write in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. In his purport, Prabhupāda writes, “Since a devotee

* At the end of the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja states, “I infer that ‘I have written’ is a false understanding, for my body is like a wooden doll. . . . I am writing this book by the mercy of the lotus feet of Śrī Govindadeva, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, Lord Nityānanda, Advaita Ācārya, other devotees and the readers of this book, as well as Svarūpa Dāmodara Gosvāmī, Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī, Śrī Sanātana Gosvāmī, Śrī Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī, who is my spiritual master, and Śrī Jiva Gosvāmī. I have also been specifically favored by another Supreme Personality. Śrī Madana-mohana Deity of Vṛndāvana has given the order that is making me write. Although this should not be disclosed, I disclose it because I am unable to remain silent.” (*Antya* 20.92, 96–99) Śrīla Prabhupāda made similar statements about his own writing.

writes in service to the Lord, the Lord from within gives him so much intelligence that he sits down near the Lord and goes on writing books.” (*Ādi* 1.39, purport)

Such dependence on Kṛṣṇa requires humility. When speaking about the *Caitanya-bhāgavata*, Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī humbly states, “What a wonderful description he has given of the pastimes of Lord Caitanya! Anyone in the three worlds who hears it is purified.” This statement reveals the non-envious, joyful spirit of the Vaiṣṇava. Neither Vaiṣṇava writers nor readers resemble mundane scholars. Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī and Vṛndāvana dāsa Ṭhākura were almost contemporaries. In the material world, a scholar takes the biography of one of his contemporaries and steps on it to increase the value of his own writing: “Of course, I have read Professor Jones’ biography on this subject. It is a very nice beginning work, filled with the author’s good intentions. However . . .” The scholar then lists his colleague’s mistakes, his wrong vision of the hero, and tries to convince the reader that his colleague’s biography was useless. Fortunately, however, we have this scholar’s work on the same subject to enlighten us. Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī tells us that he is simply eating the remnants of Vṛndāvana dāsa Ṭhākura’s work.

A VAIṢṆAVA AUTHOR SHOULD BE EMPOWERED

In his purport to *Ādi* 8.72–3, Prabhupāda states that to write transcendental literature, a devotee must be empowered. Prabhupāda defines this empowerment as freedom from the four defects of the conditioned souls.

Therefore, are ISKCON devotees empowered or authorized to write transcendental literature? We cannot make any automatic claims that everything we do is perfect. Neither are we on the level of Śrīla Prabhupāda or Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī. However, Prabhupāda instructed all his followers to write. If we take this order sincerely, we will be authorized. Working under authorization allows us to become empowered.*

* Here is a selection of statements about writing from other sources:

"My Guru Mahārāja, when he was selecting articles to be published in *The Harmonist*, if he sees simply that there is several times the writer has written, 'Kṛṣṇa,' 'Lord Caitanya,' like that, he passes immediately, 'All right. It is all right. So many times he has uttered Kṛṣṇa, so it is all right.'" (Śrīla Prabhupāda lecture, 6/6/69, New Vrindaban)

Here is something Prabhupāda heard Hayagrīva's mother say. (At that time, Prabhupāda still called him Howard, even though he was initiated.) Hayagrīva's mother had written Prabhupāda a letter telling him that she liked him and his books, and that "People who aren't devotees may write books, and they may make a lot of noise in the world, but it won't last." Prabhupāda loved that phrase, "make a lot of noise in the world, but it won't last." He said, "I very much like what Howard's mother has written very nicely. If you talk of Kṛṣṇa, you enjoy yourself and you give enjoyment to many others. But if you talk materialistic, you can create some noise. What is the exact word she has used? Noise. So if you are a good writer, if you are a good thinker, then just think of Kṛṣṇa and write. Then it will please you and it will please all others. Our *Back to Godhead* is for that purpose. And if you write some fiction, you can please some man and create some noise for some time, but it will be useless after some time."

Prabhupāda wrote a letter to Ranadhira in which he praised Ranadhira's writing in his own letter to Prabhupāda. Ranadhira was not a particularly literary person—he mainly engaged in business—but if Ranadhira can be commended in this way, we can also feel hopeful about our own writing.

AN AUTHOR MUST BE AUTHORIZED BY KṚṢṆA AND GURU

A Vaiṣṇava author must receive permission from guru and Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī refers to the various devotees who instructed him or encouraged him to write the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* as his *śikṣā-gurus*. In addition to their order, he approached Madana-mohana in Vṛndāvana and asked His permission.

Why did Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī ask Kṛṣṇa's permission to write if his guru had already given it? Kṛṣṇa is

Prabhupāda writes: "I liked your letter very much. You are a very descriptive writer and I enjoy very much your descriptions and use of words. Actually, if we are engaged in writing and speaking on behalf of Kṛṣṇa, this is the best process for advancing in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Such activity forces us to think very clearly on the subject matter in order to speak or write and convince others. So I think you should develop your ability for writing and spend some time writing articles for *Back to Godhead*."

From a 1971 lecture: "We are writing books. If you sit down and write some article on Kṛṣṇa, that means you have to concentrate on Kṛṣṇa's activities, devotees, and that very process will purify your heart. Therefore, we always recommend to our students that you write articles. Read our books."

From a 1972 lecture: "Realization means you should write. Everyone of you. What is your realization? What for this *Back to Godhead* is? You write your realization, what you have realized about Kṛṣṇa. That is required. It is not passive. Always you should be active. Whenever you find time, you write. Never mind two lines, four lines, but you write your realization. Writing means *smaraṇam* and then you have to remember what you've heard from your spiritual master."

present in the heart of all living entities as *caitya-guru*. Therefore, Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī approached the *caitya-guru* in the form of the Madana-mohana Deity to ask Him for the intelligence to write. Devotees are so humble that even after receiving their guru's blessings and instructions, they will approach Kṛṣṇa for the intelligence to follow those instructions. Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī did not feel qualified to write about the pastimes of Lord Caitanya. Still, he knew that the devotees in Vṛndāvana wanted him to write. Therefore, he approached Madana-mohana for permission to become an instrument of the devotees and we can take note that praying to Kṛṣṇa in humility for the intelligence to serve is also part of the guru's order.

AN AUTHOR MUST RECEIVE CONFIRMATION IN THE HEART

What does it mean for a devotee to have his service confirmed in the heart? There are two kinds of confirmation, direct and indirect. Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa went before the Deity of Govinda and was directly inspired to write a commentary on the *Vedānta-sūtra*. Similarly, Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī also received direct confirmation when he was offered Madana-mohana's garland.

Confirmation can also come in an indirect way in the form of intelligence supplied by the Lord. If a devotee does not receive direct confirmation, he can continue to seek confirmation by examining his motives and trying to purify his

intelligence. Kṛṣṇa will reciprocate with the devotee and then confirm his direction. A devotee can also receive confirmation through other devotees.

AN AUTHOR CANNOT BE A SENTIMENTALIST

In his purport to *Ādi* 9.4, Prabhupāda writes, “A sentimentalist who has no Vaiṣṇava qualifications cannot produce transcendental writings.” He speaks about the nondevotees who depict Kṛṣṇa’s pastimes out of sense gratification. We can include in that category those who may be favorable to Kṛṣṇa, but due to their sentimental attitude, cannot understand the essence of His pastimes and therefore wrongly depict them.

The dictionary defines “sentimentalist” as someone “having or showing delicate or tender feelings.” The second and more commonly used meaning states, “When these delicate or tender feelings are excessive, superficial, or presented in a maudlin or mawkish way.” A further definition: “Acting more on emotion than on practical reason.”

When we apply those definitions to Kṛṣṇa consciousness, we think of a sentimentalist as someone who tries to glorify Kṛṣṇa, but because he does not understand the *siddhānta*, he depicts Kṛṣṇa according to his own whim. Such glorification is tainted with the material viewpoint and thus a sentimentalist cannot be a transcendental writer.

DON'T WRITE FOR NAME AND FAME

Prabhupāda's purport to *Ādi* 9.5 is applicable to ISKCON devotees. Many of these qualifications are beyond our reach at present. They are definitions of liberated writers. In this purport, however, Śrīla Prabhupāda directly advises ISKCON devotees as follows: "One must be an authorized Vaiṣṇava, humble and pure. One should write transcendental literature to purify oneself, not for credit. By writing about the pastimes of the Lord, one associates with the Lord directly. One should not ambitiously think, 'I shall become a great author, I shall be celebrated as a writer.' These are material desires. One should attempt to write for self-purification. It may be published, or it may not be published, but that does not matter. If one is actually sincere in writing, all his ambitions will be fulfilled."

What does it mean to write for self-purification? One meaning is that writing is a form of *śravaṇam*, and *śravaṇam* purifies the hearer. When we write, we must write about Kṛṣṇa. If we are associating with Kṛṣṇa in this way, we will become purified.

We also become purified when we use our own writing to preach to ourselves. Even if we are writing for a particular purpose, we should not eliminate ourselves from the audience. Through writing, we can take the time to think out and correct any misconceptions, doubts, or subtle deviations in our own devotional practices. By becoming one of our own teachers, we can work to overcome our *anarthas*.

Another way to write for self-purification is to write as service. Any service we perform in a devotional mood will help

us become purified. Therefore, writing when performed as service can purify us.

In the purport Prabhupāda writes, “If one is actually sincere in writing, all his ambitions will be fulfilled.” Publication or preaching potential will be realized as a by-product of our sincere attempt to write for self-purification. If we place publication as the primary goal of our writing, we may not be able to attain it. Even if we do achieve a measure of fame from our writing, we will still have to be careful not to ruin our offering by trying to ride the waves of enjoyment.

Sincere writing means that our intent is to praise guru and Kṛṣṇa. It also means working sincerely at our offering and attempting to perfect our writing skills.

KṚṢṆADĀSA KAVIRĀJA GOSVĀMĪ’S QUALIFICATION AS AN AUTHOR

Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī informed us of the sources he used when writing the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*. The main sources were the diaries of Murāri Gupta and Svarūpa Dāmodara Gosvāmī, which happen to be the same sources Vṛndāvana dāsa Ṭhākura used. He also listed Lord Caitanya as a source because the Lord blessed him to write the book.

Another main source was Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī, who used to speak for two or three hours a day at Rādhā-kuṇḍa “with tears coming from his eyes” about his association with Lord Caitanya.

Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī further stated that while drawing from these sources, he also expressed his own “sponta-

neous understanding." Then he apologized if some people do not like what he has written, but he was not trying to please everyone. This phrase, "spontaneous understanding," indicates that Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī did not write like a robot, but that he added his own devotion to the work. The sources provided him with information about the Lord's pastimes, which Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī himself did not witness, but just as Śukadeva Gosvāmī added sweetness to the *Bhāgavatam* by his recitation of it, so Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī sweetened the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*. His beautiful verses and realizations make the Lord's pastimes more understandable and relishable.

CONCLUSION

Although I have summarized Prabhupāda's instructions to writers, I would like to emphasize that these instructions apply equally to all services. All services must be sanctioned by the Vaiṣṇavas, the guru, and the Supreme Lord. To perform any service, we have to become fully dependent on the Lord's mercy and pray to Him for the intelligence to carry it out. No service is successful if we contaminate it with the desire for name and fame. All service must be performed with the sole desire to please guru and Kṛṣṇa. Just as a Kṛṣṇa conscious author must be careful to exactly represent the *siddhānta*, so any devotee must strive for perfection in his or her service.



FROM COPPER TO TOUCHSTONE



VARṆĀŚRAMA-DHARMA AND PURE DEVOTIONAL SERVICE

SETTING THE SCENE

The *Madhya-līlā* begins with Lord Caitanya's acceptance of *sannyāsa*. He has gone to Jagannātha Puri on His mother's order. In Puri, He converts the impersonalist logician, Sārvabhauma Bhaṭṭācārya, into a Vaiṣṇava. Then Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu desires to travel to South India and preach. Finally, His associates in Jagannātha Puri give their permission, and before He leaves, Sārvabhauma Bhaṭṭācārya recommends that He seek out Rāmānanda Rāya in Vidyanagar. Sārvabhauma urges the Lord, "Don't neglect Rāmānanda Rāya just because he is a *gṛhastha* and a king" [in the lower social caste, a *sūdra*].

Lord Caitanya meets Rāmānanda Rāya, the governor of Madras, on the banks of the Godāvari River. It is unusual for a king and a *sannyāsī* to so eagerly meet, but Lord Caitanya and

Rāmānanda Rāya both become ecstatic to see each other. Lord Caitanya later explains, *kibā vipra, kibā nyāsi, sūdra kene naya, yei kṛṣṇa-tattva-vettā, sei 'guru' haya*. It does not matter what *āśrama* or *varṇa* one is in. If he knows the science of Kṛṣṇa, he should be accepted as a guru.

There is also an internal reason why the governor and the Lord are so happy to meet. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu is Kṛṣṇa, and Rāmānanda Rāya is actually the Vraja *gopī*, Viśākhā-devī. Furthermore, Lord Caitanya has accepted the mood and complexion of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī. Therefore, when Lord Caitanya meets Rāmānanda Rāya, it is Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī meeting Her intimate friend, Viśākhā.

Caitanya Mahāprabhu and Rāmānanda Rāya agree on a private meeting to discuss *kṛṣṇa-kathā*. At that first meeting, Lord Caitanya proposes that He will ask questions and Rāmānanda Rāya should answer them because, "I wish to hear from you about Lord Kṛṣṇa." Thus they have a series of meetings during which they discuss the meaning of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

WHY DOES LORD CAITANYA REJECT VARṇĀŚRAMA AS THE MEANS TO SATISFY KṚṢṆA?

Lord Caitanya asked Rāmānanda Rāya to recite a verse from the scriptures concerning the ultimate goal of life, *sarva sādhyā-sāra*, the essence of all means of perfection.

Rāmānanda Rāya replied, "If one executes the prescribed duties of his social position [*varṇāśrama*], he awakens his original Kṛṣṇa consciousness." For support, he quotes a verse from the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*: "The Supreme Personality of Godhead

Lord Viṣṇu, is worshiped by the proper execution of prescribed duties in the system of *varṇa* and *āśrama*. There is no other way to satisfy the Supreme Personality of Godhead. One must be situated in the institution of the four *varṇas* and *āśramas*.”

Lord Caitanya replied, “*Eho bāhya*, this is external. You had better tell me of some other means.”

Lord Caitanya is provoking a discussion of *śuddha-bhakti*, pure devotional service, as well as the various types of impure *bhakti*, which He rejects. Therefore, it will be helpful to first analyze *śuddha-bhakti*, according to Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī’s definition in *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*:

*anyābhilāṣitā-sūnyam
jñāna-karmādy-anāvṛtam
ānukūlyena kṛṣṇānu-
śīlanam bhaktir uttamā*

When first-class devotional service develops, one must be devoid of all material desires, knowledge obtained by monistic philosophy, and fruitive action. The devotee must constantly serve Kṛṣṇa favorably, as Kṛṣṇa desires

—Brs. 1.1.11, quoted in Cc., *Madhya* 19.167

In His teachings to Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, Lord Caitanya recited this verse in order to define pure devotional service. *Śuddha-bhakti* must be free of karma (fruitive work) and *jñāna* (speculative knowledge). *Bhakti* mixed with karma and *jñāna* is impure.

When Lord Caitanya rejected this opening statement by Rāmānanda Rāya, Rāmānanda then proposed a new solution. He said that if we stay in our occupation according to *varṇa*

and *āśrama*, but offer the results to Kṛṣṇa, this will be perfection. However, Lord Caitanya also rejected this statement. Śrīla Prabhupāda comments: “The system of *varṇāśrama-dharma* refers to the three modes of material nature, but transcendental devotional service is on the absolute platform. . . . the *saṅkīrtana* movement has nothing to do with this material world.” (*Madhya* 8.60, purport) Elsewhere, Śrīla Prabhupāda makes it clear that *varṇāśrama* cannot be considered pure devotional service.

In the opinion of the *karmīs* (fruitive workers), offering the results of *karma* is called servitorship. But according to Vaiṣṇava *ācāryas* like Rūpa Gosvāmī, servitorship means constant engagement in some kind of service to the Lord.

In the *Skanda Purāṇa* it is said that those who are attached to ritualistic activities, the four orders of social life and the four orders of spiritual life, are considered devotees. But when devotees are actually engaged in offering service to the Lord directly, these must be *bhāgavatas*, or pure devotees. Those who are engaged in fruitive activities, or prescribed duties according to the four orders of social and spiritual life, are not actually pure devotees. But still, because they are offering the results to the Lord, they are accepted as devotees. When one has no such desire, but acts spontaneously out of love of God, such a person must be accepted as a pure devotee. The conditioned souls who have come into contact with the material world are all more or less desirous of lording it over material nature. The system of *varṇāśrama* and the prescribed duties under this system are so designed that the conditioned soul may enjoy in the material world according to his desire for sense gratification and at the same time gradually become

elevated to spiritual understanding. Under these prescribed duties of *varṇa* and *āśrama* there are many activities which belong to devotional service in Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

—*The Nectar of Devotion*, Chapter 11, p. 95 (1970 ed.)

This does not mean that *varṇāśrama-dharma* is not useful, but Lord Caitanya asked Rāmānanda Rāya to speak on the ultimate goal and the means to attain it. *Varṇāśrama* should not be put forward as the ultimate goal. Neither is following *varṇāśrama* absolutely necessary in order to achieve the goal.

There are other reasons why Lord Caitanya and Śrīla Prabhupāda do not accept *varṇāśrama* as necessary for pure devotional service. The present-day world society is too degraded to introduce the system of gradual development through *varṇa* and *āśrama*. It takes too long for a person to elevate himself through the steps of *varṇāśrama*.

Śrīla Prabhupāda did want to introduce *daivi-varṇāśrama-dharma* in ISKCON, yet he did not require it when he began the International Society for Krishna Consciousness. As a preacher, Śrīla Prabhupāda emphasized the direct method of chanting the holy names and engaging in the nine processes of *bhakti* under the guidance of a spiritual master. Throughout his writings, we also find statements consistent with Lord Caitanya's rejection of *varṇāśrama-dharma* as the goal of *bhakti*. Here is one such statement:

[*Varṇāśrama*] divides society into *brahmacarya*, *gṛhastha*, *vānaprastha*, *sannyāsa*, and *brāhmaṇa*, *kṣatriya*, *vaiśya* and *sūdra*. This is the whole scheme of Vedic civilization. However, this institution is very difficult to establish in this age; therefore Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu advises that we not worry

about the Vedic system of *varṇāśrama-dharma*. Rather, we should take directly to the chanting of the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra and simply hear about the Supreme Personality of Godhead from pure devotees.

—*Madhya* 6.178, purport

THE IMPORTANCE OF VARṆĀŚRAMA

If our daily activities performed according to our *varṇa* and *āśrama* are not counted as pure devotional service, then where does it fit in? This is discussed by Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura in the *Brahma-saṁhitā*, in his purport to Text 61. There, Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī uses the word *gauṇa-dharma*, or subsidiary devotional activities. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī explains that Lord Brahmā had a desire to create. Because this was being done in relationship to the Lord's service, it can be classified as *gauṇa-dharma* or a "subsidiary spiritual function." It is subsidiary, but helpful to the growth of service to the Lord because it seeks protection from the Lord. Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura states that this instruction was appropriate for Brahmā because he was still attached to the work of creation and to the concept of himself as a creator.

This can be taken as another evidence that the activities of *varṇāśrama* do not constitute *bhakti* proper, yet because they are conducive to the development of pure *bhakti*, they are extremely important and necessary for persons who are not yet freed from material attachments and bodily identification. If these instructions were proper for Brahmā, then certainly they are appropriate for us also.

In his book *Caitanya-sikṣāmṛtam*, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura writes extensively on the importance of *varṇāśrama* and its relationship to *sādhana-bhakti*:

No one can deny the necessity of *varṇāśrama-dharma*, as long as a man is confined to the material body. If *varṇāśrama* is neglected, the life of the *jīvas* will go astray for want of learning the four principles* and there will be no good. . . . But it is not that the observance of *varṇāśrama-dharma* is the sole necessity. Therefore, with the help of that *dharma*, you should cultivate devotion. . . . Now the questions may be asked, “Will there ever be time to cultivate devotion since *varṇāśrama* development takes a long time? And what if a conflict arises between the two?” The answer to the first question is that if the body, mind, society, and spiritual life are not protected and nourished, then how can devotional service, which is the higher stage, be practiced? . . . It is to be admitted, therefore, that *varṇāśrama-dharma* will be helpful to the cultivation of devotion, although the former takes a long course. The cultivation of *vaidhi-bhakti* will, however, shorten its course. The members of *varṇāśrama-dharma* will be converted to become members of devotion gradually. . . . You will gradually leave that portion of work in *varṇāśrama-dharma* which is contrary to devotion. At last, in the life of the Vaiṣṇavas, *varṇāśrama-dharma* will be sanctified by devotion and converted into *sāttvika-bhāva*. It will then become the servant of *sādhana-bhakti*, and the dispute between karma and *bhakti* will disappear.

—*Caitanya-sikṣāmṛtam*, Chapter III, Part 4, pp. 126–27

* The four principles referred to here are (1) to obey the laws of health; (2) to cultivate and improve the faculty of the mind; (3) to cultivate the social good; and (4) to learn spiritual truth in order to cultivate devotion.

There are also many statements in Śrīla Prabhupāda's books on *varṇāśrama-dharma* as favorable to devotional service. Prabhupāda writes, "Sometimes we are criticized because although I am a *sannyāsī*, I have taken part in the marriage ceremonies of my disciples. . . . This may be astonishing to persons who are not very interested in establishing *daiva-varṇāśrama*, the transcendental system of four social orders and four spiritual orders. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, however, wanted to re-establish *daiva-varṇāśrama*. . . . It is this *daiva-varṇāśrama* that should be established all over the world to continue a perfect society for Kṛṣṇa consciousness." (*Bhāg.* 5.1.24, purport)

On a number of occasions, in conversations Śrīla Prabhupāda impressed upon his disciples that he wanted *varṇāśrama-dharma* established in ISKCON. One conversation took place on February 14, 1977 in Māyāpur. At this time, Śrīla Prabhupāda was expressing disappointment that some devotees in ISKCON who had received *brāhmaṇa* initiation or even *sannyāsa*, had fallen down from their positions. He said, "The *varṇāśrama-dharma* should be established to become a Vaiṣṇava. It is not so easy to become a Vaiṣṇava. . . . Why artificially should someone be called a *brāhmaṇa*? Let him do according to *śāstra* the work of a *sūdra* or *vaiśya*. Then he will get perfect." (*Conversations With Śrīla Prabhupāda*, Vol. 30, p. 344)

If we study this conversation, the devotees present, Hari-sauri Prabhu and myself, had difficulty in understanding how Śrīla Prabhupāda thought *varṇāśrama-dharma* could actually be introduced in ISKCON. Therefore I said, "When Rāmā-

nanda Rāya brought this up, Lord Caitanya said it was not possible to introduce *varṇāśrama* in this age.”

“Prabhupāda: Caitanya Mahāprabhu was interested only on the spiritual platform. He had no idea of material side. He rejected material side.

“Satsvarūpa: But don’t we do that also?

“Prabhupāda: No, our position is different. We are trying to implement Kṛṣṇa consciousness in everything. And Caitanya Mahāprabhu personally took *sannyāsa*. He rejected completely material. *Niskīñcana*. But we are not going to be *niskīñcana*. We are trying to cement the troubled position. . . . We are not rejecting the whole society.” Since that time, many devotees in ISKCON have articulated the need for *varṇāśrama* in ISKCON and have put forward ideas of how it may come about. As yet, the *varṇāśrama* divisions have not been introduced in a practical way, especially in terms of occupational duties (*varṇas*), but it is happening naturally.

It is not my intention in this book to discuss the practicalities of implementing *varṇāśrama-dharma* in ISKCON. I want to analyze the apparent conflict in Lord Caitanya’s statement with Śrīla Prabhupāda’s intentions, and to understand the relationship between *varṇāśrama-dharma* and pure devotional service. My emphasis is on the discussion between Rāmānanda Rāya and Lord Caitanya about the *sarva-sādhya-sāra*. Within that context, we have already established that *varṇāśrama-dharma* is external and cannot be considered pure devotional service, yet pure devotional service and *varṇāśrama-dharma* can be reconciled.

THE NEED TO TRANSCEND VARṆĀŚRAMA AND DEVELOP ATTRACTION FOR ŚUDDHA-BHAKTI

Varṇāśrama-dharma has a place within the Kṛṣṇa conscious society, but as Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura warned, *varṇāśrama* takes a long time to develop; it is a fully absorbing activity on its own. In order to reconcile Lord Caitanya's spirit with Śrīla Prabhupāda's, we should be clear that there is a need to transcend *varṇāśrama* and to develop attraction for *śuddha-bhakti*.

What will be the result if we work within our occupational duty but do not awaken attraction for pure devotional service? According to *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, all of our activities will be in vain:

*dharmāḥ svanuṣṭhiṭaḥ puṁsāṁ
viśvaksena-kathāsu yaḥ
notpādayed yadi ratim
śrama eva hi kevalam*

The occupational activities a man performs according to his own position are only so much useless labor if they do not provoke attraction for the message of the Personality of Godhead.

—*Bhāg.* 1.2.8

In the *Śrī Caitanya-śikṣāmṛtam*, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura explains the position of those who engage in *varṇāśrama* but who do not serve Kṛṣṇa. He then gives an interesting analysis of the mentality of such a person. He says that it is out of superstition that he refuses to make advancement and take the next steps forward:

If men belonging to the four *varṇas* and *āśramas* do not serve Kṛṣṇa, they fall into hell, with the performance of their own karma.

—Chapter I, Part 6, p. 44

It is the natural inclination of the *jīva* to climb the higher step from the lower step on which he is presently situated. . . . The desire to cling to the lower step is a superstition arising out of earnestness or loyalty toward the inferior convention. . . . According to this superstition, many persons professing *varṇāśrama-dharma* do not praise *vaidhi-bhakti*. This does not cause any harm to devotion; but it only shows their misfortune.

—Chapter III, Part 4, pp. 128–9

In this way, a person gets stuck in a lower position thinking that this is the goal. He forgets the higher goal.

We may also study Lord Caitanya's conversation with the leaders of the Tattvavādi community, the followers of Madhv-ācārya. This talk took place in Udupi, later on Lord Caitanya's southern tour. In a spirit similar to his inquiry from Rāmānanda Rāya, Lord Caitanya asked the chief ācārya of the Tattvavādis, "Please tell me the best ideal for humanity and how to attain it."

The ācārya replied, "When the activities of the four castes and the four āśramas are dedicated to Kṛṣṇa, they constitute the best means whereby one can attain the highest goal of life." (*Madhya* 9.256) Lord Caitanya did not accept this conclusion:

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu said, "According to the verdict of the *sāstras*, the process of hearing and chanting is the best means to attain loving service to Kṛṣṇa."

Purport

According to the Tattvavādis, the best process is to execute the duties of the four *varṇas* and *āśramas*. In the material world, unless one is situated in one of the *varṇas* (*brāhmaṇa*, *kṣatriya*, *vaiśya* and *śūdra*) one cannot manage social affairs properly to attain the ultimate goal. One also has to follow the principles of the *āśramas* (*brahmacarya*, *gṛhastha*, *vānaprastha* and *sannyāsa*), which are considered essential for the attainment of the highest goal. In this way the Tattvavādis establish that the execution of the principles of *varṇa* and *āśrama* for the sake of Kṛṣṇa is the best way to attain the topmost goal. The Tattvavādis thus established their principles in terms of human society. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, however, differed when He said that the best process is hearing and chanting about Lord Viṣṇu. According to the Tattvavādis, the highest goal is returning home, back to Godhead, but in Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's opinion the highest goal is attaining love of Godhead, either in the material or spiritual world.

—*Madhya* 9.258

Although Prabhupāda remarked in the conversation that his mission was in some ways different than the mission of Lord Caitanya, we should not exaggerate the meaning of that statement or take it out of context. Certainly Śrīla Prabhupāda is carrying out the mission of Lord Caitanya. Śrīla Prabhupāda's *praṇāma-mantra* states, "*gaura-vāṇī-pracāriṇe*," he was preaching the mission of Lord Caitanya. Lord Caitanya was not interested in developing *varṇāśrama-dharma*; Śrīla Prabhupāda said that he wanted to introduce it. But Lord Caitanya and Śrīla Prabhupāda did not have any real difference of opinion about the ultimate goal of life. This is clear from Prabhupāda's purport. He says that Lord Caitanya differed from the

Tattvavādīs. Śrīla Prabhupāda himself also differs from them and supports the conclusion of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu about pure devotional service.

Lord Caitanya and Śrīla Prabhupāda make it clear to us that we have to transcend *varṇāśrama* and attain pure devotional service. Even when engaged in *varṇa* and *āśrama*, devotees should never neglect their basic *sādhana*, at least the minimum chanting of sixteen rounds and the following of the four rules. In the name of developing *varṇāśrama*, the more important aspects of devotional life should never be put aside.

In concluding this chapter, we may quote from *Bhāgavatam* 11.20.9, “As long as one is not satiated by fruitive activity and has not awakened his taste for devotional service by *śravaṇam kīrtanam viṣṇoḥ*, one has to act according to the regulative principles of the Vedic injunctions.”

The emphasis here is definitely on awakening attraction for the nine processes of devotional service. If we carry out our duties in *varṇāśrama*, with emphasis on the practices of *bhakti*, we will gradually awaken attraction for Kṛṣṇa and become purified of the desire for material enjoyment. But if we work away without awakening attraction to the processes of *bhakti*, we cannot expect to attain love of God.

IMPURE MIXTURES IN BHAKTI

EHO BĀHYA

In this chapter, we will cover Rāmānanda Rāya's third and fourth statements to Lord Caitanya, and the Lord's rejection of them.

When Lord Caitanya replied, "*Eho bāhya*," Rāmānanda Rāya replied, "To give up one's occupational duties in the *varṇāśrama* is the essence of perfection." It is as if Rāmānanda Rāya thought, "All right, since you have rejected *varṇāśrama* as the perfection, and also the giving up of the fruits of *varṇāśrama* work as an offering to Kṛṣṇa—therefore, I will suggest to *give up varṇāśrama*. That is the essence of perfection." In other words, he recommended *tyāga*, or renunciation, as the goal.

In support of this proposal, Rāmānanda Rāya quoted the *Bhagavad-gītā*'s concluding verse, "After giving up all kinds of religious and occupational duties, if you come to Me, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and take shelter, I will give you protection from all of life's sinful reactions. Do not worry."

(Bg. 18.66) Using *Bhagavad-gītā* 18.66 to support his argument was certainly a strong move. Śrīla Prabhupāda considered this verse to be the last word in the *Bhagavad-gītā*. However, quoting a verse does not necessarily win an argument.

After hearing Rāmānanda Rāya's words, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu said, "*Eho bāhya*, go ahead and say something more."

PREMATURE RENUNCIATION

Why did Lord Caitanya reject this proposal? In a *Madhya-līlā* purport (8.61), Śrīla Prabhupāda states that renunciation is on the material platform. It is the opposite of sense gratification, but is not in itself transcendental. In the third chapter of the *Bhagavad-gītā*, Lord Kṛṣṇa warns against premature renunciation, before the heart is purified. The most obvious example of this is the giving up of family duties in order to take *sannyāsa*.

To become a *sannyāsī* or give up all worldly duties, is a necessary stage in *varṇāśrama* life. But Prabhupāda writes, "If one accepts *sannyāsa* at an immature stage, there is every possibility of his being attracted by women and lusty desires and thus again becoming a so-called *gṛhastha* or a victim of women. Such a person is most shameless and he is called *vāntāśī*, or one who eats that which he has already vomited. He certainly leads a condemned life. In our Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement it is advised, therefore, that the *sannyāsīs* and *brahmacārīs* keep strictly aloof from the association of women

so that there will be no chance of their falling down again as victims of lusty desires.” (*Bhāg.* 7.15.36, purport)

In general, Lord Caitanya advised against a person entering the *sannyāsa* order. He personally demonstrated this in the case of a *brāhmaṇa* whom the Lord met at Kūrmakṣetra. Lord Caitanya stopped there briefly and the Kūrma *brāhmaṇa* became attracted to Lord Caitanya. He proposed that he leave his family duties and become the Lord’s traveling companion. Lord Caitanya replied, “Don’t speak like that again. Better to remain at home and chant the holy name of Kṛṣṇa always.” (*Madhya* 7. 127)

In his purport to this verse, Śrīla Prabhupāda writes, “It is not advisable in this age of Kali to leave one’s family suddenly . . . It would be better to remain with his family and try to become purified by chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra* regularly under the direction of a spiritual master. . . . If this principle is followed by everyone, there is no need to accept *sannyāsa*.” Lord Caitanya advised the Kūrma *brāhmaṇa* in a positive spirit to become an ideal householder and to advise everyone he met to chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra.

The practical challenge before most devotees today is how to live successfully in *gṛhasṭha* life. The *gṛhasṭha-āśrama* is not easy. There are many spiritual and material obstacles. But the endeavor should not be abandoned. We shouldn’t consider the *gṛhasṭha-āśrama* expendable. Premature renunciation results in *bhoga-tyāga*, whimsical vacillation between enjoyment and renunciation.

Gṛhasṭha life is not material. The use of the word *āśrama* denotes that the householder is living in a spiritual order. Therefore, his job is to reform his life within his *āśrama*

according to the rules and regulations of that *āśrama*. The *gr̥hastha* can purify himself, just as a *sannyāsi* or *brahmacārī* can become purified by following the main limbs of *vaidhi-bhakti* and not becoming distracted by impure mixtures of *jñāna* or karma.

Becoming mature enough to enter the *sannyāsa* order does not constitute perfection. Therefore, the act of external renunciation cannot in itself be considered the *sarva-sādhya*, or the goal of perfection. In *Teachings of Lord Caitanya*, Śrīla Prabhupāda writes, “Because in simple renunciation there is no conception of spiritual planets and spiritual activities, Lord Caitanya rejected this third proposal.” (p. 298)

JÑĀNA-MIŚRĀ-BHAKTI: DEVOTION MIXED WITH EMPIRICAL KNOWLEDGE

When Lord Caitanya rejected Rāmānanda Rāya’s proposal regarding renunciation, Rāmānanda Rāya next offered, “Devotional service mixed with empiric knowledge is the essence of perfection.”*

Prabhupāda writes, “. . . Rāmānanda Rāya suggested that devotional service based on philosophy and logic is a more progressed position.” As evidence, Rāmānanda Rāya quoted *Bhagavad-gītā* 18.54, *brahma-bhūtaḥ prasannātmā* . . . This verse implies that if one fully realizes the theory of monism, he will become liberated and eligible for devotional service. Lord Caitanya had already stated that renunciation is material. The

* This is known as *jñāna-miśra-bhakti*.

elimination of material desires does not bring us beyond the Virajā.*

Rāmānanda Rāya now asserts that the goal is *bhakti*, but *bhakti* attainable through philosophical realization. The concept of perfection is contained in the word *brahma-bhūta*. *Brahma-bhūta* is characterized by joyfulness and the relief of all material lamentation and hankering. But Śrīla Prabhupāda defines *brahma-bhūta* as “freed from material conceptions of life, but attached to an impersonal situation.”

The defect in *jñāna-miśrā-bhakti* is that the *jñāni* seeks liberation by merging into the Supreme Lord’s effulgence. A pure devotee always rejects this *ekatva-mukti*. The devotee even rejects the four kinds of Vaiṣṇava or personal liberation, even if they are offered to him by the Supreme Lord.†

The devotee’s attitude is expressed by Lord Caitanya in His *Śikṣāṣṭakam* verse:

*na dhanam na janam na sundarim
kavitam vā jagadīśa kāmāye
mama janmani janmaniśvare
bhavatād bhaktir ahaituki tvayi*

There, Lord Caitanya states that He does not seek material pleasures such as wealth, beautiful women, or followers; neither does He seek liberation. He only desires “birth after birth, Your causeless devotional service.”

* The Virajā River is the border between the spiritual and material worlds.

† The four kinds of Vaiṣṇava liberation are *sālokya* (residence on the same planet as the Lord), *sāmīpya* (to become a personal associate of the Lord), *sārūpya* (to have the bodily features of the Lord), and *sārṣṭi* (to be equal in opulence to the Lord).

The mixture of pure *bhakti* with material impurities is also discussed by Lord Kapiladeva in the Third Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. Lord Kapila tells of devotional service mixed with the three modes of nature—ignorance, passion, and goodness. By this analysis, *jñāna-miśrā-bhakti* can be seen as *bhakti* in the material mode of goodness with the desire for liberation. Śrīla Prabhupāda states, “The devotee is so fond of rendering service to the Supreme Lord that the five kinds of liberation are not important to him. If one is engaged in pure transcendental loving service to the Lord, it is understood that he has already achieved the five kinds of liberation.

“ . . . For a devotee, there is no question of desiring any material or spiritual prosperity. He simply aspires to serve the Lord. That is his highest happiness.” (*Bhāg.* 3.29.13, purport)

Two examples of the superiority of pure devotional service over *jñāna-miśrā-bhakti*: the conversion of the four Kumāras and the story of Śukadeva Gosvāmī. These great devotees were formerly transcendentalists who had realized *brahma-bhūta*. They were not yet aware of the personal feature of the Absolute Truth. But as soon as they came in contact with the Lord—the Kumāras by smelling the *tulasī* offered at the lotus feet of the Lord, and Śukadeva Gosvāmī by hearing the recitation of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* from his father, Vyāsadeva—they gave up their impersonal tendencies and became pure *bhaktas*.

This principle is also described in the *ātmārāma* verse of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. This verse states that even liberated souls who have no attraction to matter are attracted by the desire to hear about the glories of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Thus devotional service mixed with empirical knowledge is

certainly not the ultimate goal, or why would great transcendentalists be interested in going further and in giving up their impersonal conclusions?

On hearing Rāmānanda Rāya's proposal that *jñāna-miśrā-bhakti* is the highest perfection, the Lord, as usual, rejected it and said, "*Eho bāhya.*"

Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura explains this rejection by saying that *jñāna-miśrā-bhakti* is "not within the jurisdiction of pure devotional service as practiced in Vaikuṇṭhaloka. As soon as there is some conception of materialistic thought—be it positive or negative—the service is not spiritual." (*Madhya* 8.66, purport) It lacks positive engagement in devotional service based on knowing one's relationship with Kṛṣṇa.

IMPURE MIXTURES IN ISKCON

For further discussion, let us now apply these principles to the International Society for Krishna Consciousness. We have already discussed how premature renunciation occurs in ISKCON, but what about *bhakti* mixed with *jñāna*, or the desire for liberation? It may seem to us that such a thing is unheard of in our society of devotees. But it does occur—when there is too much emphasis on knowledge over *bhakti*.

When lesser categories of Vedic knowledge are taken as absolute or as the main interest in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, this is *jñāna-miśrā-bhakti*. If there is too much interest in astrology or Āyur Veda or in any Vedic sub-branch, that is *jñāna-miśrā-bhakti*. If this is true even of the Vedic sub-branches, then how much more true is it if we are too interested in nondevotional

psychology, science, technology, etc. In the *Bhāgavatam*, Lord Kṛṣṇa states that when devotional service is mixed with the modes of nature, people then describe Lord Kṛṣṇa as Time, the Self, the universe, as one's own nature, or as religious ceremonies (*Bhāg.* 11.10.34).

The impure mixture of devotion and knowledge occurs when the pastimes of Lord Kṛṣṇa are seen as less important than Vedantic debates and analysis. It occurs when there is knowledge for knowledge's sake and not for the service of *bhakti*. This kind of impure mixture does not bring satisfaction to the self. Śrīla Vyāsadeva felt this dissatisfaction after he completed the *karma-kāṇḍīya* section of the *Vedas*.

Let us now widen the topic to consider any mixture injected into pure devotional service, whether karma or *jñāna*. What about using Western modes of education, art, literature, science, music, etc.? Is this considered *jñāna-miśrā*- or *karma-miśrā-bhakti*? Should they be rejected by ISKCON devotees? Not necessarily. Śrīla Prabhupāda approved many Western adaptations of Vedic culture as *bhakti* on the principle of *yukta-vairāgya*, but these adaptations have to be accepted under the direction of an expert devotee. "Devotional service is dynamic activity, and the expert devotees can find out competent means to inject it into the dull brains of the materialistic population." (*Bhāg.* 1.5.16, purport)

There should never be, however, a spirit of compromise with nondevotional learning. We should not think that *bhakti* is incomplete or incompetent in itself. And we should not become diverted from the pure relishing of *bhakti*'s main limbs—chanting, hearing, and remembering Kṛṣṇa. Then why or how

does a devotee get sidetracked into a wrong emphasis on *jñāna* and karma? Why does he compromise?

It is often due to a lack of faith. A neophyte devotee may try chanting for a while, but if he does not get the desired result, he may think he should supplement the chanting with something outside the process. If a devotee has faith, he will persist on the pure path of *bhakti*.

Another reason a neophyte may inject impurities into his practice is that he is not tasting pure *bhakti*. We should understand that we lack taste because we are diseased, jaundiced, ignorant. When we cure our “jaundice,” we will earn the right to taste the original pure sweetness of chanting, hearing, and remembering Kṛṣṇa’s pastimes, names, and qualities. An immediate lack of taste is not a reason or excuse to inject impurities into the *bhakti* path.

A devotee may also mix pure *bhakti* with *jñāna* and karma because he is possessed by material desires. He thinks he can cultivate his desires within the house of *bhakti*.

Lord Caitanya rejects all these mixed motives in devotional service. None of them are considered pure *bhakti*. Does that mean we have to be pure devotees before we start practicing *bhakti*? No. All persons, regardless of their material desires, are encouraged to begin pure devotional service. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* states:

*akāmaḥ sarva-kāmo vā
mokṣa-kāma udāra-dhīḥ
tivrēna bhakti-yogena
yajeta puruṣaṁ param*

A person who has broader intelligence, whether he be full of all material desire, without any material desire, or desiring liberation, must by all means worship the supreme whole, the Personality of Godhead.

—*Bhāg.* 2.3.10

This verse was spoken by Śrīla Śukadeva Gosvāmī after he discussed material desire in religious life. Śukadeva recommended that if a person has material desires, he should approach the demigod in charge of that realm. For example, if someone wants material power, he should worship Lord Brahmā. For wealth, he should worship Kuvera. For a good wife, he should worship Umā. Ultimately, however, Śukadeva advises that we not pursue temporary benefits as our goal. Prabhupāda writes, “. . . everyone, whether an *akāma* or *sakāma* or *mokṣa-kāma*, should worship the Lord with great expedience. This implies that *bhakti-yoga* may be perfectly administered without any mixture of karma and *jñāna*. As the unmixed sun ray is very forceful and is therefore called *tīvra*, similarly unmixed *bhakti-yoga* of hearing, chanting, etc., may be performed by one and all regardless of inner motive.” (*Bhāg.* 2.3.10, purport)

Śrīla Prabhupāda worked on this principle from his very first days of preaching in America. He engaged whomever he met in the congregational chanting of the holy name. In this way, he brought people immediately up to the pure, transcendental sound vibration, bypassing all *jñāna*- and *karma-miśrā*. If we do as Śrīla Prabhupāda requests, serving him for his pleasure, then our inner material motives will be purified. Everything

becomes purified in service to the spiritual master and to the holy names. Nothing is lacking in pure *bhakti*; pure *bhakti* does not need to be improved by anything material.

PURE DEVOTIONAL SERVICE

A QUICK REVIEW

Let us review what Rāmānanda Rāya has said so far. Lord Caitanya asked him to speak on *sādhya-sāra*, the essence of perfection. Rāmānanda Rāya first offered *varṇāśrama-dharma*. Lord Caitanya replied, “*Eho bāhya*.” Next Rāmānanda Rāya suggested that offering the fruits of one’s occupation while engaged in *varṇāśrama* was the essence of perfection. Lord Caitanya replied, “*Eho bāhya*.” Then Rāmānanda Rāya said renunciation of occupation. “*Eho bāhya*.” Rāmānanda Rāya next said devotional service mixed with speculative knowledge (*jñāna-miśrā-bhakti*), and Lord Caitanya replied, “That is external. Say something more.”

Lord Caitanya and Śrīla Prabhupāda explain the defects in each of these proposals. Śrīla Prabhupāda tells us, however,

that each of Rāmānanda Rāya's suggestions are been better than the previous ones. The discussion is progressing, although Lord Caitanya has not yet accepted any of his proposals.

THE BASIC PRINCIPLE OF PERFECTION

Rāmānanda Rāya next says, "Pure devotional service without any touch of speculative knowledge is the essence of perfection." To support this he quotes a *śloka* from the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*:

*jñāne prayāsam udapāsyā namanta eva
jīvanti san-mukharitām bhavadiya-vārtām
sthāne sthitāḥ śruti-gatām tanu-vān manobhir
ye prāyaśo 'jita jito 'py asi tais tri-lokyām*

Lord Brahmā said, "My dear Lord, those devotees who have thrown away the impersonal conception of the Absolute Truth and have therefore abandoned discussing empiric philosophical truths should hear from self-realized devotees about Your holy name, form, pastimes, and qualities. They should completely follow the principles of devotional service and remain free from illicit sex, gambling, intoxication and animal slaughter. Surrendering themselves fully with body, words and mind, they can live in any *āśrama* or social status. Indeed, You are conquered by such persons, although You are always unconquerable."

—*Bhāg.* 10.14.3, as quoted in Cc., *Madhya* 8.67

To this, Lord Caitanya replies, "*Eho haya*. This is all right, but still you can speak more on the subject."

Lord Caitanya therefore accepted the verse, *jñāne prayāsam* as the basic principle of perfection. One has to practice this principle in order to make further progress. Since this *śloka* is so important, let us consider its main elements.

The verse recommends practice of *śravaṇam*, hearing. This is the same limb of *bhakti* by which Mahārāja Parikṣit achieved perfection. But hearing *what*? Hearing the name, form, qualities, and pastimes of Lord Kṛṣṇa. This means hearing *Bhagavad-gītā*, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, *The Nectar of Devotion*, and other authorized scriptures. And hearing *from whom*? From self-realized pure devotees. We can hear by reading Śrīla Prabhupāda's purports and discussing them with like-minded devotees.

To practice *śravaṇam* perfectly, we need to be rightly situated. To hear with rapt attention requires a pure mind. A pure mind requires pure habits of eating, mating, sleeping, and defending. Thus Prabhupāda has written into his translation the four rules of Kṛṣṇa consciousness—"remain free from illicit sex, intoxication, gambling and animal slaughter."

Do we have to renounce *varṇa* and *āśrama* to perform pure *śravaṇam*? No. What is the result of this practice? Kṛṣṇa is conquered. Of course, Kṛṣṇa is only conquered by love, but if we practice *śravaṇam* fully by submissive hearing, then Kṛṣṇa is pleased.

This *Bhāgavatam* verse was spoken by Lord Brahmā after he attempted to defeat Kṛṣṇa by his mystic potency. Kṛṣṇa, of course, defeated him, and Brahmā then gave up all speculative attempts and surrendered. The mood of *śravaṇam*, therefore, is to surrender to Lord Kṛṣṇa by hearing submissively from His devotees.

PREMA-BHAKTI

Lord Caitanya accepted this proposal of *śravaṇam* and said, “But still you can speak more on this subject.”

Rāmānanda Rāya replied, “*Prema-bhakti—sarva-sādhya-sāra*. Ecstatic love for the Supreme Personality of Godhead is the essence of all perfection.” This means that we have to hear of Kṛṣṇa’s pastimes and qualities with love, not just mechanically. Kṛṣṇa will not be “conquered” by mechanical *sādhana*.

But neither can we suddenly jump to the platform of *prema-bhakti*, pure love. Therefore, we have to practice *śravaṇam* at the lower stage. Prabhupāda writes, “One has to practice this principle in order to make further progress. When further progress is actually made, one comes to the platform of ecstatic loving service to the Lord. This first stage is technically called *sādhana-bhakti*, or devotional service in practice. The result of *sādhana-bhakti* must be ecstatic love, attachment to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, which is also called *prema-bhakti*.” (*Madhya* 8.68, purport)

THREE STAGES OF DEVOTIONAL SERVICE

In *The Nectar of Devotion*, we will find a further elaboration on the stages in *uttama-bhakti* (pure devotional service). Rūpa Gosvāmī defines *uttama-bhakti* in the verse *anyābhilāṣitā-śūnyam*. This means that devotional service to Kṛṣṇa, when performed favorably without any tinge of *jñāna* and karma, can be considered *uttama-bhakti*.

Rūpa Gosvāmī divides *uttama-bhakti* into (1) *sādhana-bhakti*; (2) *bhāva-bhakti*; (3) *prema-bhakti*. All three of these are considered to be within the realm of *uttama-bhakti*, pure devotional service. In the practicing stage, the devotee is called a *sādhaka*, and in the *prema-bhakti* stage, he is called a *sādhya* or *siddha*, perfect. Śrīla Prabhupāda compared pure devotional service to a mango. Whether it is unripe or ripe, a mango is a mango. Even in the beginning, a devotee who follows Śrīla Prabhupāda's program for personal *sādhana* and who works in his mission (the mission of Lord Caitanya), is on the path of perfection.

We may ask, "What exactly is the difference between *sādhana-bhakti* and the impure mixtures of *jñāna* and karma which were mentioned earlier?" In other words, if a devotee is still not perfect, then how can we say that his practice is pure devotional service? The answer is in the goal which Śrīla Prabhupāda has set for us. Even if our motives are not yet a hundred percent pure, by following the process, we are directly progressing toward the goal of *prema-bhakti*.

Bhāva-bhakti is the stage at which a devotee attains realization and taste. This comes not exactly as a result of a practice or by our own endeavors, but by the descending process—mercy coming down from Kṛṣṇa directly or through His pure devotees. What is the relationship between *sādhana-bhakti* and *bhāva-bhakti*? *Sādhana* softens the heart. *Sādhana* is therefore essential, because by practicing pure devotional service, we become ready to receive *bhāva*.

TWO KINDS OF SĀDHANA-BHAKTI: VAIDHI-BHAKTI AND RĀGĀNUGĀ-BHAKTI

Rūpa Gosvāmī further divides *sādhana-bhakti*, the stage of practice, into two: *vaidhi-bhakti* and *rāgānugā-sādhana*. These two divisions are also made by Rāmānanda Rāya. He next recites two verses for the pleasure of Lord Caitanya. Rāmānanda Rāya composed these verses himself, and they appear in Rūpa Gosvāmī's compilation, *Padyāvalī*. One verse describes *vaidhi-bhakti*, the other *rāgānugā-bhakti*:

*nānopacāra-kṛta-pūjanam ārta-bandhoḥ
preṇṇaiva bhakta-hṛdayaṁ sukha-vidrutaṁ syāt
yāvat kṣud asti jathare jarāṭhā pipāsā
tāvat sukhāya bhavato nanu bhakṣya-peye*

Rāmānanda Rāya continued, "As long as there is hunger and thirst, eating and drinking make one feel very happy. When the Lord is worshiped with pure love, transcendental bliss is awakened in the heart of the devotee."

—*Madhya* 8.69

In this verse, faith is the main element. *Vaidhi-bhakti* means to practice devotional service before we actually taste spontaneous love. A *vaidhi-bhakta* practices in faith on the order of his spiritual master and on the authority of the scriptures. Just as a man needs to increase his hunger before the prospect of a meal is attractive to him, so he needs faith in order to take to the practices of *bhakti*.

The second verse composed by Rāmānanda Rāya explains spontaneous loving service:

*kṛṣṇa-bhakti-rasa-bhāvitā matiḥ
 kriyatām yadi kuto 'pi labhyate
 tatra laulyam api mūlyam ekalaṁ
 janma-koti-sukṛtair na labhyate*

Pure devotional service in Kṛṣṇa consciousness cannot be had even by pious activity in hundreds and thousands of lives. It can be attained only by paying one price—that is, intense greed to obtain it. If it is available somewhere, one must purchase it without delay.

—*Madhya* 8.70

Śrīla Prabhupāda often paraphrased this verse and examined its elements in his lectures. He said that if we hear that love of God is for sale in the market, we should go there at once and prepare to purchase it. If the prospective customer asks, “What is the price?” he will be told, “The price of your desire.” On hearing this, he may say, “Oh, that’s all right. Yes, I will purchase it. Here is my desire.” But the seller of *prema-bhakti* replies, “It is not so easy.” The desire required here is *laulyam*, intense greed, and we have to wait for *koti-janma*, many, many births, before we earn this greed.

SPONTANEOUS DEVOTIONAL SERVICE IN VṚNDĀVANA

“Spontaneous” should not be taken in a simplistic way. It does not mean merely “enthusiastic.” A sinful person is enthusiastic to enjoy illicit sex and intoxication. A pious man may work spontaneously to attain the heavenly planets. *Rāgānugā* refers to the greed to hear about Kṛṣṇa under the guidance of

a Vaiṣṇava who is deeply attached to devotional service in the *rasa* of Vṛndāvana. Particularly, it means hearing about Kṛṣṇa in His original form in Vṛndāvana.

There are many expansions of God in the spiritual planets. There are also many forms of God worshiped in various world religions. Lord Caitanya's followers, the followers of Rūpa Gosvāmī, practice hearing and chanting to gain attraction for Śrī Kṛṣṇa in His original form in Vṛndāvana.

We may ask if a purely dedicated follower of, for example, the Catholic saints, could also attain pure love of God and go back to Godhead. Yes, but there are many departments within the kingdom of God. (Jesus Christ also stated that there are many rooms in his Father's mansion.) Similarly, the devotees of Rāma or Viṣṇu also go back to Godhead. What, then, is the special feature of Kṛṣṇa in Kṛṣṇaloka? This can best be understood by the concepts of *aiśvarya* and *mādhurya*.

Aiśvarya means worshiping God in awe and reverence. The worshiper emphasizes the Lord's power and majesty and follows the regulative principles. In *mādhurya*, Kṛṣṇa is worshiped in His sweetness. The devotee exchanges in intimate ways with the Lord and is free of the *aiśvarya* mood.

The Six Gosvāmīs of Vṛndāvana—and, as we will soon hear, Rāmānanda Rāya—teach exclusive devotion to Kṛṣṇa and His associates in Vṛndāvana-dhāma. Vṛndāvana is the land of *mādhurya*.

Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī describes *mādhurya-bhāva* in his *Manah-sikṣā* as follows:

My dear mind, you must categorically relinquish all frivolous and mundane talk, which is like a prostitute who steals all your

intelligence and resolve. The desire for liberation is equally evil, for it is like a terrifying tiger, devouring your very being. I further request that you even abandon your attachment to Lord Nārāyaṇa, the husband of Mother Lakṣmī, the goddess of fortune, who offers the grand benediction of residence in Vaiṣṇava. I simply and humbly request that you live in Vraja and worship Śrī Rādhā and Śrī Kṛṣṇa, for They bless Their devotees with engagement in Their devotional service.

—*Manaḥ-sikṣā*, verse 4

In Lord Brahmā's prayers to Lord Kṛṣṇa (10th Canto, Chapter 14), Brahmā explains the superior nature of worship in Vṛndāvana. He points out that the Vrajavāsis are beyond *vaidhi-bhakti*, or the regulative principles, and the mood of *aśvarya*:

The difference between the pure devotees of Vṛndāvana and other devotees is that the residents of Vṛndāvana have no other desire but to be associated with Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa, being very kind to His devotees, fulfills their desire; because they always want Kṛṣṇa's association, the Lord is always prepared to give it to them. The devotees of Vṛndāvana are also spontaneous lovers. . . . Brahmā is also a devotee of the Lord, but he is subject to follow the regulative principles. He prays to Kṛṣṇa to give him a chance to take birth in Vṛndāvana so that he might be elevated to the platform of spontaneous love.

—*Kṛṣṇa*, Vol. 1, Chapter 14, p. 108

WHAT DOES ALL THIS MEAN?

We have come a long way in the description of *sādhya-sāra*, from *varṇāśrama* to spontaneous love of Kṛṣṇa in Vṛndāvana. Let us summarize a bit, and consider the practical application

of these teachings for devotees in the International Society for Krishna Consciousness.

The beauty of Kṛṣṇa conscious life is that from the very beginning, we are introduced to Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa as the goal of all spiritual perfection. In what way does ISKCON promote this?

If we visit a temple where there is Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa *vigraha*, immediately we will be introduced to Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, the worshipable Deities of Vṛndāvana. Even a casual visitor will understand that God is being worshiped in this form.

By reading *Kṛṣṇa* book (one of the first books written and published by Śrīla Prabhupāda) or any of Prabhupāda's books, we will be directly introduced to Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa as the goal. We can find this emphasis even in the purports of *Bhagavad-gītā*.

And by chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa we can realize Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. The names of the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra are all names of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa in combination. By chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra, immediately we begin to practice a form of *vaidhi-sādhana* that is intended to bring us to the ripened stage of spontaneous attraction to hearing and serving Kṛṣṇa in Vṛndāvana.

Also, by worshiping Lord Caitanya, we take the express route to spontaneous attraction. Lord Caitanya came to this world to teach spontaneous love of God; therefore, His followers are the most fortunate.

The *jñāne prayāsam* verse, which Lord Caitanya accepted as the basic principle of perfection, is practiced by all *sādhakas* in ISKCON. We concentrate on hearing and chanting under Śrīla Prabhupāda's direction while living in our authorized *āśrama* (whether *gṛhastha*, *brahmacārī*, *vānaprastha*, or *san-*

nyāsa). Whoever follows the four rules and engages in full service with enthusiasm and patience, is on the road to *prema-bhakti*.

Also, by serving in Lord Caitanya's preaching mission, under the direction of Śrīla Prabhupāda, we receive the special mercy that is required for elevation in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. *Prema-bhakti* is only attained by guru and Kṛṣṇa's grace.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ON PREMA-BHAKTI

At this point, some crucial questions may come to mind. How can we get that greed which Rūpa Gosvāmī says is the price of spontaneous love of God? Should we expect it to take many lifetimes? If so, what should be our attitude? How should we pray? Should we look down on *vaidhi-bhakti* as something unimportant or inferior?

It may be true that it will take us many lifetimes to attain our specific goal of "back to Godhead." Therefore our prayer should be the prayer of Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura:

*tādera caraṇa-sebi-bhakta-sane bās
janame janame hoy ei abhilāṣ*

This is my desire, that birth after birth I may live with those devotees who serve the lotus feet of the Six Gosvāmīs.

There are many similar prayers in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* where devotees express that "I may come again into this material world according to my karma, but in whatever birth I may be born, dear Lord, please let me have the association of

Your pure devotees who are chanting and hearing Your pastimes.” We will be successful in this lifetime if we can at least realize the ultimate goal and yearn to approach it, if not immediately, then, as Kṛṣṇa desires, in some future birth.

We will attain greed if we can associate with persons who have *laulyam*, or at least a shadow of *laulyam*. We should at least be greedy for such association. And we should certainly never look down on the practices of *vaidhi-bhakti* or minimize them. *Vaidhi-bhakti* is our only hope. Those same *vaidhi* practices—chanting and hearing—will be continued in the spontaneous stage. Only the quality will change. There is no question of abandoning *vaidhi-bhakti*; rather, *vaidhi-bhakti* will change into spontaneous devotional service.

Since Kṛṣṇa is worshiped in spontaneous love in Vṛndāvana-dhāma, we may ask, “What is the relationship of going to Vṛndāvana in India and attaining pure love for Kṛṣṇa?” The answer is that a pilgrimage to Vṛndāvana-dhāma is highly recommended by the Kṛṣṇa conscious *ācāryas*. In Rūpa Gosvāmī’s *Upadeśāmṛta*, he recommends residence in Vṛndāvana, as well as many of the other practices which we have discussed here. This occurs in text 8 of *Upadeśāmṛta*, which also contains the phrase *upadeśa-sāram*, “the essence of all instruction.” Just as Lord Caitanya requested Rāmānanda Rāya to speak on *sādhya-sāra*, so Rūpa Gosvāmī gives us the *upadeśa-sāram* (essence of perfection) in one verse:

*tan-nāma-rūpa-caritādi-sukirtanānu-
smṛtyoḥ krameṇa rasanā-manasī niyojya
tiṣṭhan vraje tad-anurāgi-janānuṅgāmi
kālaṁ nayed akhilam ity upadeśa-sāram*

The essence of all advice is that one should utilize one's full time—twenty-four hours a day—in nicely chanting and remembering the Lord's divine name, transcendental form, qualities and eternal pastimes, thereby gradually engaging one's tongue and mind. In this way one should reside in Vraja [Goloka Vṛndāvana-dhāma] and serve Kṛṣṇa under the guidance of devotees. One should follow in the footsteps of the Lord's beloved devotees, who are deeply attached to His devotional service.

In understanding Vṛndāvana, we must know that Vṛndāvana is both *aprākṛta* (unmanifested) and *prākṛta* (manifested). Vṛndāvana is not visible to us in our conditioned state in this material world. Kṛṣṇa in *aprākṛta* Vṛndāvana means Kṛṣṇa in the topmost whorl within the lotus of Kṛṣṇaloka in the spiritual sky. The Vṛndāvana that we see in India today is the manifested form of Vṛndāvana. According to our qualification, we may begin to see the *aprākṛta* Vṛndāvana even within the *prākṛta* Vṛndāvana-dhāma in India. Certainly pilgrimage to Vṛndāvana-dhāma is beneficial for development of *bhakti*, but that pilgrimage must be made properly, under the guidance of the pure devotees who honor Vṛndāvana-dhāma and who know its secrets. By the mercy of the pure devotees of Vṛndāvana, past and present, we can get guidance in our attempts to progress on the path of perfection.

THE GOPĪS AS TEACHERS FOR ALL DEVOTEES

“GO ON SPEAKING, GO ON SPEAKING”

When Rāmānanda Rāya said that *prema-bhakti* was the essence of perfection, Lord Caitanya agreed. Now, whatever Rāmānanda Rāya speaks is based on *prema-bhakti* and is agreeable to Lord Caitanya. The Lord requests him to “go on speaking, go on speaking.”

Rāmānanda Rāya next states that spontaneous love in servitude (*dāsyā-prema*), as exchanged by a master and servant, is the highest perfect.

Lord Caitanya asks him to go a step further. There is a limit to the master-servant relationship because there is an element of fear. The servant is afraid of the master, although their common interest may create intimacy between them.

Rāmānanda Rāya then mentions *sakhya-rasa* (the fraternal *rasa*) where feelings of equality replace the fear and respect of

the master-servant relationship. Lord Caitanya says, “This is very good, but proceed further.” Rāmānanda Rāya replies, “Loving service to the Lord in the parental relationship [*vātsalya-prema*] is the highest perfectional stage.” Parental love is more affectionate than *sakhya-rasa* and is characterized by the desire to protect and maintain the Lord.

Lord Caitanya says, “Your statements are certainly getting better and better one after the other, but surpassing all of them is another transcendental mellow, and you can speak of that as the most sublime.” (*Madhya* 8.79) Lord Caitanya is reminding us that He knows what is to come next in the mellows or *rasas* and that He Himself is manipulating the discussion.

Rāmānanda Rāya replies that *mādhurya-rasa*, or conjugal attachment, is the topmost position in love of God.

Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī explains how *mādhurya-rasa* contains all the favorable affections of the other four *rasas*. He gives the example of the material elements. In the subtle element, sky, the only quality present is sound. In the next element, air, there is sound as well as touch. In the element of fire, there are the qualities of sound, touch, and form. Water contains all of the previous qualities plus taste. And in the earth repose all five qualities—sound, touch, form, taste, and aroma. In a similar way, *mādhurya-rasa* contains all the mellows of the previous *rasas* from neutrality (*śānta-rasa*) to servitude (*dāsyā-rasa*) to friendship (*sakhya-rasa*) to parental (*vātsalya-rasa*), plus the addition of the conjugal *rasa*. Therefore, those who study and follow the *siddhānta* of Lord Caitanya’s teachings should know without a doubt that *mādhurya-rasa* is the best of all expressions of loving service to Kṛṣṇa.

MĀDHURYA-RASA HAS NO MATERIAL EQUIVALENT

Mādhurya-rasa is the topmost goal of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava philosophy, but it is very difficult to approach. This is because it appears to resemble mundane sex. As long as we maintain material sex desire, we are prohibited from entering this sublime *rasa*. This is an important warning, and any sober devotee will pause before trying to rush into the intimate discussions of *mādhurya-rasa*.

When scholars discuss *mādhurya-rasa* from an academic viewpoint without faith, or when materialists discuss it or depict it through their poetry or art, they completely misunderstand it. A sincere devotee should avoid all such discussions. To hear of Kṛṣṇa and the *gopīs* from the right source, however, in disciplic succession, is purifying and conducive to *kṛṣṇa-bhakti*. One time, Prabhupāda instructed us on this point in a way I shall never forget. This was in 1969 at a *Back to Godhead* magazine editorial meeting. Prabhupāda told us that he very much liked an essay Hayaḡrīva dāsa had written about Kṛṣṇa and the *gopīs*. I had heard that this subject matter was forbidden for neophytes, so I asked Prabhupāda why we were publishing it. Prabhupāda replied, “We have not taken a vow to boycott the *gopīs*.” He went on to say that we worship the *gopīs*, and of course, he also then expressed the caution with which to approach their relationship with Kṛṣṇa.

Even before we are qualified to hear the more intimate *lilās*, the *ācāryas* and *mahājanas* teach us about the *gopīs*’ qualities because they are the best of all devotees in Vraja.

I have titled this chapter, “The *Gopīs* As Teachers For All Devotees.” I want to state some of the *gopīs*’ outstanding

qualities and show how they can be appreciated by all devotees. I will cite a verse or give an example of this quality from the *śāstras* and attempt to apply it to ourselves by showing how we can follow their example. We cannot follow the *gopīs* by cheap imitation as the *prākṛta-sahajiyās* do, but by appropriate action as neophyte *sādhakas*.

TO PLEASE KṚṢṆA, ONLY DEVOTION IS REQUIRED

The *gopīs* show us that to please Kṛṣṇa, only devotion is required. In the *Kṛṣṇa* book Prabhupāda writes, “The *gopīs* were not born in very high *brāhmaṇa* or *kṣatriya* families; they were born in the families of *vaiśyas*, and not in big mercantile communities, but in the families of cowherd men. They were not very well educated, although they heard all sorts of knowledge from the *brāhmaṇas*. . . . The *gopīs*’ only purpose was to remain absorbed in thoughts of Kṛṣṇa.” (*Kṛṣṇa*, Vol. 1, Chapter 21, p. 151)

How can we apply this example? We can remember this important instruction and not feel disqualified in *bhakti* by our birth or education. All the great devotees described in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* teach it, and we see it in the case of devotees like Prahlāda Mahārāja, Dhruva Mahārāja, and others. But in the *gopīs*, its expression is supreme. Women are sometimes considered socially inferior, but the *gopīs* are better than any male devotees. Of course, they are not comparable to ordinary women within this world; nevertheless, within their own society they were considered subordinates. But that did

not prohibit them from intensely loving Kṛṣṇa and thus pleasing Him more than any other devotees.

Prabhupāda writes, “The *gopīs* were all simple souls . . . they immediately abided by [Kṛṣṇa’s] order. . . . they became His most obedient servitors.” (*Kṛṣṇa*, Vol. 1, Chapter 22, p. 155) Prabhupāda is praising their simplicity. Kṛṣṇa should be obeyed no matter what He requests. There should be no doubt, no over-intelligent inquiry, no hesitation.

The quality of simple obedience is exemplified in the story about Kṛṣṇa’s headache. He told His servant that He could be cured by placing the dust from the feet of Vaiṣṇavas on His head. When His servant approached various *brāhmaṇa* devotees, they were all unwilling. They calculated that they would be committing a great offense and that the reaction would be severe. When Kṛṣṇa’s servant approached the *gopīs* of Vraja, they immediately gave their foot-dust to alleviate His headache. They were not concerned with the possibilities of committing an offense or with the reaction they might incur. They were simply concerned with pleasing Kṛṣṇa.

Only devotion is required. In a number of places in the Tenth Canto, we hear of how the *gopīs* engaged in *kīrtana*. Prabhupāda describes one incident when the Vrajavāsis were returning home after Kṛṣṇa performed His Govardhana-līlā: “As usual, the *gopīs* began to chant the glorious pastimes of Lord Kṛṣṇa with great feeling, for they were chanting from the heart.” (*Kṛṣṇa*, Vol. 1, Chapter 25, p. 176)

Kīrtana does not have to be musically sophisticated, but from the heart. This is the quality that pleases Kṛṣṇa. We can follow this example by always being sincere in our Kṛṣṇa conscious activities.

OVERCOMING OBSTACLES IN GOING TO KṚṢṆA

Another quality exemplified by the *gopīs* is that they overcame all obstacles in going to Kṛṣṇa. Actually, whatever quality we cite, we will find that the *gopīs* are the topmost examples among all devotees. If we discuss *śraddhā*, or *śaraṇāgati* (surrender), or whatever quality, the *gopīs* excel. Sanātana Gosvāmi discusses the excellence of the Vraja *gopīs* in Part One of his *Bṛhad-Bhāgavatāmṛta*. Nārada Muni tries to discover who is the real object of Kṛṣṇa's mercy. He approaches Indra, Brahmā, Śiva, Prahlāda, Hanumān, the Pāṇḍavas, the Yadus, and finally Uddhava (the best of the Yādavas). Finally, Śrī Kṛṣṇa informs Nārada that the *gopīs* are the best objects of His mercy.

On the night of the *rāsa* dance, Kṛṣṇa admits that the *gopīs* had to overcome great obstacles to see Him. Kṛṣṇa was playing His flute in the forest in the middle of the night and the *gopīs* ran to join Him without hesitation. Kṛṣṇa said to them, "My dear friends, you must know now that it is the dead of night and the forest is very dangerous. . . . all the ferocious jungle animals, the tigers, bears, jackals, and wolves, are prowling in the forest. . . . I think, therefore, that you are taking a great risk in coming here in the dead of night." (*Kṛṣṇa*, Vol. 1, Chapter 29, p. 196)

Of course, the *gopīs* were risking much more than danger from the jungle animals. Some of the obstacles Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, the best of the *gopīs*, overcame, are mentioned in a verse of *Vidagdha-mādhava*, as quoted in *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*:

O Lord Kṛṣṇa, You are just like an ocean. The river of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī has reached You from a long distance—leaving far behind the tree of Her husband, breaking through the bridge of social convention, and forcibly crossing the hills of elder relatives. Coming here because of fresh feelings of love for You, that river has now received Your shelter . . .

—*Vidagdha-mādhava*, text 3.9, as quoted in *Antya* 1.155

How does this apply to us? An ordinary devotee cannot think of himself or herself as a *gopī* running into the forest in the dead of night. Yet we all had to overcome these same obstacles when we first joined the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement. Most of us came against the advice of friends and family. And obstacles continue to appear in our path to test our determination. When we have to overcome these impediments, we can remember the fearlessness of the *gopīs* and get new courage and inspiration from their example. They don't care what others think. They run to Kṛṣṇa. Their example is worshipable and completely pure.

ALWAYS ABSORBED IN KṚṢṆA

The *gopīs* are foremost among all of Kṛṣṇa's devotees because of their constant absorption in Him.

Persons who are constantly engaged in the transcendental meditation of seeing Kṛṣṇa, internally and externally, by thinking of Him playing the flute and entering the Vṛndāvana forest, have really attained the perfection of *samādhi*. . . . and the *gopīs* indicate that the pastimes of Kṛṣṇa are the perfection of all meditation and *samādhi*.

—*Kṛṣṇa*, Vol. 1, Chapter 21, pp. 147–48

The *gopīs* had to stay home when Kṛṣṇa went to the forest, but they thought of Him and discussed His pastimes among themselves. Śrīla Prabhupāda writes, “This is the perfect example of Kṛṣṇa consciousness: to somehow or other remain always engrossed in thoughts of Kṛṣṇa. The vivid example is always present in the behavior of the *gopīs*; therefore Lord Caitanya declared that no one can worship the Supreme Lord by any method which is better than the method of the *gopīs*.” (*Kṛṣṇa*, Vol. 1, Chapter 21, p. 151)

The *gopīs*’ *samādhi* is technically called *sahajā-samādhi*, which means that they engaged in it naturally. They did not have to sit down in a yogic *āsana* and control their breath in order to reach this stage. They attained *samādhi* while doing whatever they did during the day—their household chores, churning butter, drawing water from the well, etc.

How can we presume to benefit from such an exalted example? We can learn to meditate on Kṛṣṇa according to our qualification. Śrīla Prabhupāda taught us to think of Kṛṣṇa while performing our daily activities. Arjuna thought of Kṛṣṇa by fighting for Him. We can think of Kṛṣṇa by a simple meditation. We can think, “Kṛṣṇa wants me to do this work,” or we can hear how the *gopīs* thought of Kṛṣṇa and remember the *ślokas* describing their *samādhi*. Śrīla Prabhupāda writes, “Kṛṣṇa wanted to teach through the behavior of the *gopīs* that one who is constantly in trance like the *gopīs* surely attains the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa.”

APPRECIATING KṚṢṆA'S BEAUTY

No one appreciates Kṛṣṇa's beauty as much as the *gopīs*. Since all devotees in Kṛṣṇa consciousness aspire to be attracted to Kṛṣṇa's beauty, we can learn from the *gopīs* by hearing their descriptions of Kṛṣṇa. The best *ślokas* describing Kṛṣṇa in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* are spoken by the *gopīs*. Here is one beautiful verse:

Wearing a peacock-feather ornament upon His head, blue *karṇikāra* flowers on His ears, a yellow garment as brilliant as gold, and the Vaijayanti garland, Lord Kṛṣṇa exhibited His transcendental form as the greatest of dancers as He entered the forest of Vṛndāvana, beautifying it with the marks of His footprints. He filled the holes of His flute with the nectar of His lips, and the cowherd boys sang His glories.

—*Bhāg.* 10.21.5

It is not sufficient for a devotee to simply engage in devotional service without thinking of Kṛṣṇa. We should become more attracted to Kṛṣṇa's beauty. Prabhupāda encourages this in many purports, such as this one from the *Bhagavad-gītā*: “. . . one should concentrate his mind upon Kṛṣṇa—the very form with two hands carrying a flute, the bluish boy with a beautiful face and peacock feathers in His hair. There are descriptions of Kṛṣṇa found in the *Brahma-saṁhitā* and other literatures. One should fix his mind on this original form of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa. One should not even divert his attention to other forms of the Lord.” (Bg. 18.65, purport) Learning appreciation for the beauty of Kṛṣṇa, we can do no better than to follow in the footsteps of the *gopīs* of Vṛndāvana.

SERVING KṚṢṆA FOR HIS PLEASURE

Another of the *gopīs*' excellent qualities is that they have no tinge of sense gratification in their service to Kṛṣṇa. They think only of satisfying Kṛṣṇa's desires, not their own.

O dearly beloved! Your lotus feet are so soft that we place them gently on our breasts, fearing that Your feet will be hurt. Our life rests only in You. Our minds, therefore, are filled with anxiety that Your tender feet might be wounded by pebbles as You roam about on the forest path.

—*Bhāg.* 10.31.19

Although this verse describes an intimate conjugal relationship, Prabhupāda used to speak on it in a simple way even to large public audiences. He said that the *gopīs* were such great lovers of Kṛṣṇa that they always used to think of Him and feel anxious for His welfare. This is just the opposite of the worshiper who thinks of God as the order supplier. The *gopīs* think of Kṛṣṇa roaming barefoot in the forest and worry that His feet might be hurt by the sharp pebbles on the paths, and thinking like this, they cry.

In *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī describes the *gopīs*' love as pure and spotless. He defines *prema* (love of God) and *kāma* (material lust), and shows that they are as different as gold and iron. "The desire to gratify one's own senses is *kāma* [lust], but the desire to please the senses of Lord Kṛṣṇa is *prema* [love]." (*Ādi* 4.165)

Lord Kṛṣṇa felt that the *gopīs*' love was so pure and total that they broke His promise, which was to reciprocate fully with devotees in proportion to their surrender to Him. He told

the *gopīs*, “I am not able to repay my debt. Please be satisfied with your own service.”

Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmi says that the *gopīs* have no inclination for their own enjoyment, yet their joy increases. This appears to be a contradiction. “For this contradiction I see only one solution: the joy of the *gopīs* lies in the joy of their beloved Kṛṣṇa.” (*Ādi* 4.189) When Kṛṣṇa sees the *gopīs*, His joy increases. When they see Kṛṣṇa’s happiness, then their joy increases. This produces a competition in which no one acknowledges defeat.

Śrīla Prabhupāda says that the *gopīs* are the best example of the *akāma* spirit. Sometimes people display an *akāma* spirit; they engage in generous or selfless work on behalf of their families or societies. Prabhupāda says that this is only “a partial manifestation of the same original feeling in which a pure living entity feels happiness by the happiness of the Supreme Lord. Such superb feelings were exhibited by the damsels of Vrajabhūmi for the happiness of the Lord. The *gopīs* loved the Lord without any return, and this is the perfect exhibition of the *akāmaḥ* spirit.” (*Bhāg.* 2.3.10, purport)

How can we follow the *gopīs*’ example of selfless devotion? To begin with, we may *aspire* to act as they do. As we discussed in a previous chapter, a devotee should not allow impure motives to enter into his devotional service. We can check these motives by asking ourselves before we act, “Am I doing this for myself or for Kṛṣṇa?”

A safe way to serve purely is to serve under the direction of Kṛṣṇa’s representative and to always try to please him. In this way, we can overcome any impure motives. This principle is

expressed in the *Gurvāṣṭakam* verse, *yasya prasādād bhagavat-prasādo*: by pleasing the spiritual master, Kṛṣṇa is pleased.

The *gopīs* are expert in pleasing Kṛṣṇa. They don't usually express to Him that their motive is to please Him. Rather, they tell Him they want to be pleased *by* Him. They ask Him to please appear before them and to embrace them. Hearing these statements, it may seem that they are interested in their own sense gratification, but Viśvanātha Cakravarti has explained the psychology of love in his commentary on the *Bhāgavatam*. He gives this example:

If we want to cook for a hungry friend, we won't tell him, "I've cooked this meal for you because I am a selfless person. I have done it just to please you in a way that you like." If we said that, our friend's spontaneous affection would diminish. He may reply, "Oh, don't go to so much trouble." We can better increase the devotional feelings if we don't profess our desire to please our friend as the motive. Our friend may say, "This is a wonderful dinner. You have gone to so much trouble for me." Then the loving cook will reply, "It was no trouble. I had to cook for the Deity anyway." These covered dealings are more pleasing when the actual desire is to please each other.

The more we read about the *gopīs* dealings with Kṛṣṇa, the more we understand that they have everything to teach us about devotion to the Lord.

THE MAHĀJANAS OF DIFFERENT RASAS ALL WORSHIP THE GOPĪS

All devotees of Lord Kṛṣṇa acknowledge the supremacy of the *gopīs*. Even devotees who are not in *mādhurya-rasa* see the *gopīs* as their worshipable masters in the art of *bhakti*. In the *Nārada-bhakti-sūtra*, Nārada Muni defines pure *bhakti* as selfless, and to give an example, he cites the Vraja *gopīs*. Śrīman Uddhava, who is in the *rasa* of friendship and servitorship with Kṛṣṇa in Dvārakā, was able to personally witness the *gopīs*' mood of separation from Kṛṣṇa when he visited Vṛndāvana. At that time, he felt all of his pride in being the best devotee ground into dust. While staying in Vṛndāvana, Uddhava composed songs in praise of the *gopīs*:

Among all persons on earth, these cowherd women alone have actually perfected their embodied lives, for they have achieved the perfection of unalloyed love for Lord Govinda. . . . Oh, let me be fortunate enough to be one of the bushes, creepers or herbs in Vṛndāvana, because the *gopīs* trample them and bless them with the dust of their lotus feet. . . . When these *gopīs* loudly chant the glories of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the vibration purifies the three worlds.

—*Bhāg.* 10.47.58, 61, 63

HOW CAN WE GET THEIR MERCY?

When we hear Uddhava's prayer, a question arises, "How can I get the blessings of the *gopīs*?" One answer is to follow the *guru-paramparā* coming down to us in the form of the Six

Gosvāmīs and our spiritual masters in disciplic succession. All of these spiritual masters are themselves enriched in the mood of *gopī-bhāva*. They can help us directly.

Another answer to this fortunate question is to be attentive to the *gopīs* and their example when we pray. In other words, we can *pray* for their mercy. Even a great warrior and *mahā-jana* like Bhiṣmadeva, who was in the mood of servitorship with Kṛṣṇa with strong feelings of chivalry, prayed to the *gopīs* at the end of his life:

The relation of the Lord with Arjuna is undoubtedly praiseworthy for devotees like Bhiṣmadeva, but the relation of the *gopīs* with the Lord is still more praiseworthy because of their still more purified service. . . . Bhiṣma's aspiration to remember the *gopīs* is a prayer to have their mercy also at the last stage of his life.

—*Bhāg.* 1.9.40, purport

Every endeavor begins with some desire. Let us desire their mercy. If we do not even have that desire at present, let us pray to have it.

We should not think that because the *gopīs* are in *mādhurya-rasa*, their example is entirely inaccessible to us and that we should not think of them. They are the best examples of surrendered devotees of the Lord and we can be inspired by them and worship them.

RELEVANT QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ON THE GOPĪS AS TEACHERS

A question may be asked, “What if our hearing about the *gopīs* and Kṛṣṇa brings on material conceptions of men and women in our minds?” If this happens, then stop hearing such intimate descriptions. We should especially not indulge in hearing of their intimate meetings. But Kṛṣṇa book is safe and it explains all these things in a balanced way. Śrīla Prabhupāda writes that hearing of the *rāsa* dance can free us from lusty desires, but we have to hear about it from the right sources.

If lust does enter our minds when we are hearing about Kṛṣṇa and the *gopīs*, we should not be complacent about it. The remedy is not simply to stop reading about the *gopīs*; rather, it should make us realize that we still have material desires and that they prohibit us from advancing in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. The solution is to reduce these lusty desires by not engaging in activities which agitate them.

Sometimes when a neophyte devotee hears about Kṛṣṇa and the *gopīs*, he feels restless for another reason. He wonders if perhaps he has a different original *rasa* than that of the *gopīs* with Kṛṣṇa. What if our original *rasa* is in *Vaikuṇṭha* in *dāsyā-prema*; what if we are originally situated in *sānta-rasa*; what if we are really a cowherd boy? But it does not matter what our *rasa* is. There is no harm in being trained under an *ācārya* who teaches *mādhurya-rasa*. This was the case with Murāri Gupta and Anupama. Both were determined, original devotees of Lord Rāmacandra, yet they became devotees of Lord Caitanya who taught exclusive devotion to Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa in *Vraja*. The members of Lord Caitanya’s movement, the International

Society for Krishna Consciousness, are following Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī. Rūpa Gosvāmī teaches *mādhurya-rasa* as supreme. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's *praṇāma-mantra* states, "I offer my respectful obeisances unto you, the personified energy of Śrī Caitanya's mercy, who delivered devotional service which is enriched with conjugal love of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, coming exactly in the line of revelation of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī."

To teach that *mādhurya-prema* as the supreme *rasa* is the conclusion given by Rāmānanda Rāya and accepted by Lord Caitanya, as well as all spiritual masters who follow the leadership of Rūpa and Sanātana Gosvāmīs. Therefore, any person aspiring to love of Godhead in any division of *bhakti* can learn from the *gopīs*; this is certainly true of those who are following in the *rūpānuga* line.

In order to deliver the poor conditioned souls, they [the Six Gosvāmīs of Vṛndāvana] accepted loincloths, treating themselves as mendicants, but they are always merged in the ecstatic ocean of the *gopīs*' love for Kṛṣṇa, and bathe always and repeatedly in the waves of that ocean.

—Śrī Śrī Śaḍ-gosvāmy-aṣṭaka, verse 4

ULTIMATE CONCLUSIONS

MĀDHURYA-RASA IS THE HIGHEST

Rāmānanda Rāya described the topmost feature of *prema-bhakti* as *mādhurya-rasa*. This *rasa* is best exemplified in the devotional service of the *gopīs* in Vṛndāvana who loved Kṛṣṇa as their life and soul. We have noted some of the outstanding qualities of the *gopīs* and how they can be followed as examples for all devotees—such as the *gopīs* overcoming all obstacles, their appreciation of Kṛṣṇa's beauty, and the selfless nature of their desire to please the Lord.

When Lord Caitanya heard the praises of *gopī-bhāva* from Rāmānanda Rāya, He said, “This is certainly the limit of perfection, but please be merciful to Me and speak more if there is more.” (*Madhya* 8.96)

Rāmānanda Rāya replied, “Until this day I did not know anyone within this material world who could inquire beyond this perfectional stage of devotional service.” (*Madhya* 8.97)

THE BEST OF ALL DEVOTEES

Rāmānanda Rāya then described that among the *gopīs*, the love of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī for Kṛṣṇa is topmost. To support this, he quoted two *ślokas* from authorized scriptures. They both explicitly declare that Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī is the best of all the *gopīs*. The first is from the *Padma Purāṇa*:

Just as Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī is most dear to Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Her bathing place known as Rādhā-kuṇḍa is also dear to Him. Among all the *gopīs*, Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī is supermost and very dear to Lord Kṛṣṇa.

—*Padma Purāṇa*, also in *Laghu-bhāgavatāmṛta* 2.45 *

Rāmānanda Rāya also quoted from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, the one verse in which the name of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī is mentioned, although in a concealed way:

*anayārādhito nūnam
bhāgavān harir īśvaraḥ
yan no vihāya govindaḥ
prīto yām anayad rahaḥ*

When the *gopīs* began to talk among themselves, they said, “Dear friends, the *gopī* who has been taken away by Kṛṣṇa to a secluded place must have worshiped the Lord more than anyone else.”

—*Bhāg.* 10.30.28, as quoted in Cc., *Madhya* 8.100

* This verse is also quoted in C.c., *Ādi* 4.215, *Madhya* 8.99 and *Madhya* 18.8

Śrīla Prabhupāda informed his disciples of the preeminence of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī as early as 1966. I can remember on Rādhāṣṭamī of that year, Śrīla Prabhupāda told us, “Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī is the best of all the devotees. That is because She loves Kṛṣṇa the most.” In those two statements, Śrīla Prabhupāda summed up the confidential topic of *rādhā-prema* in a way that we could appreciate.

The subject of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa’s loving affairs is very confidential, which is indicated by the fact that it is mentioned only indirectly in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu Himself did not write down any of these topics. He empowered Rūpa Gosvāmī to reveal to the world the actual glories of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī and Her service. By the Lord’s mercy, Rāmānanda Rāya also revealed something about Rādhā’s devotion in his talks with Lord Caitanya.

LORD CAITANYA COVERS RĀMĀNANDA RĀYA’S MOUTH

Lord Caitanya was eager to hear more and more. Rāmānanda Rāya spoke, and Lord Caitanya replied, “Can you say something more?” Finally, Rāmānanda Rāya was discussing the subject, *prema-vilāsa-vivarta*. This refers to the ecstatic bewilderment experienced either by Rādhā or Kṛṣṇa when They feel intense separation from each other. Rāmānanda Rāya began to sing a song he had composed on this topic, but Lord Caitanya, in the ecstasy of *prema*, covered Rāmānanda Rāya’s mouth with His own hand.

Why did He do this? Lord Caitanya wanted to indicate that spiritual mellows can only be understood when we are on the

transcendental platform. Confidential talks should be held only among qualified devotees.

Prabhupāda specifically criticizes those who approach these topics from any materialistic viewpoint, or those who have no foundation of *sādhana* or faith. “A person who identifies with his material body cannot understand these talks between Śrī Rāmānanda Rāya and Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. . . . They cannot accommodate an elephant on a dish.” In other words, the speculators approach Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa’s pastimes by using “frog philosophy.” Just as a frog tried to measure the Atlantic Ocean by comparing it to his well, foolish people try to imagine Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa’s pastimes based on their own experiences in this world. We should be careful not to hear these topics from unauthorized sources such as the *prākṛta-sahajiyās*, mundane poets, or nondevotee scholars. “Talks between Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and Rāmānanda Rāya were meant for advanced devotees only. Those who are on the mundane platform and who study these talks in order to put forward some thesis for a Ph.D. will not be able to understand them. Instead, their conversations will have a poisonous effect.” (*Madhya* 8.250, purport)

WHO IS QUALIFIED TO HEAR?

At this point we may ask ourselves, “Are we qualified to hear these topics?” Better to think that we are unqualified. Yet Śrīla Prabhupāda has put these topics in his books and that means he wants us to read them. They should be studied carefully in the complete context of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, including study

of the *Bhagavad-gītā*, the early cantos of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, and while strictly following the four rules and chanting sixteen rounds. Also, the topics are meant to be relished among devotees; they are not for general preaching. Lord Caitanya did not preach on these, and neither did Śrīla Prabhupāda. If we do so, we may be guilty of the ninth offense in chanting, “To spread the glories of the holy name to the unfaithful.”

But then we may also ask why Prabhupāda printed books like *The Nectar of Devotion*, *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, and *Kṛṣṇa* book and why he asked that these books be widely distributed.

Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī faced a similar dilemma while preparing *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*. He explained it as follows:

All these conclusions are unfit to disclose to the public. But if they are not disclosed, no one will understand them. Therefore I shall mention them, revealing only their essence, so that loving devotees will understand them but fools will not. . . . All these conclusions are like the newly grown twigs of a mango tree; they are always pleasing to the devotees, who in this way resemble cuckoo birds. The camel-like nondevotees cannot enter into these topics. Therefore there is special jubilation in my heart. . . . after offering obeisances to the devotees, for their satisfaction I shall speak without hesitating.

—*Ādi* 4.231–32, 234–35, 237

Discussing *kṛṣṇa-kathā* together in this way, Lord Caitanya and Rāmānanda Rāya stayed up all night in great ecstasy. Rāmānanda Rāya asked Lord Caitanya to stay ten more days so that they could continue their talks. Lord Caitanya replied, “To say nothing of ten days, as long as I live I shall find it impossible to give up your company. Both you and I shall

remain together at Jagannātha Puri. We shall pass our time together in joy, talking about Kṛṣṇa and His pastimes.” (*Madhya* 8.240–41) They continued to meet and discuss by the question and answer process.

A KṚṢṆA CONSCIOUS CATECHISM

At the end of *Madhya-līlā* Chapter Eight, Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī gives us a list of the many questions Lord Caitanya asked and Rāmānanda Rāya’s replies. Both the questions and answers are brief, but each contains the ultimate truth. Therefore, they form a Kṛṣṇa conscious catechism.

A catechism is a short book summarizing basic theological tenets in the form of questions and answers. The catechism given to us by Lord Caitanya and Rāmānanda Rāya, however, is more than basic.

In each case, Lord Caitanya asks Rāmānanda Rāya about a topic of general interest—education, the nature of glorious activities, economics, etc.—and Rāmānanda Rāya tells Him the highest conclusion of that subject matter. Prabhupāda writes, “In these exchanges, there is an attempt to show the difference between spiritual and material existence.” Rāmānanda Rāya’s replies reject all inferior concepts and point us to the best Kṛṣṇa conscious version of the topic. As we read these, we can try to base our lives on these definitions because they are the best. This is, therefore, a catechism for any devotee who wants to attain Kṛṣṇa consciousness and go back to Godhead.

The questions and answers are brief, like *sūtras*. Each one could be expanded into a separate study. The reader should go

directly to *Madhya-lilā* Chapter Eight to study these, but since we are savoring them now, I will select a few of these to give us the flavor.

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu asked, “Of all kinds of distress, what is the most painful?” Śrī Rāmānanda Rāya replied, “Apart from separation from the devotee of Kṛṣṇa, I know of no unbearable happiness.”

“Out of all auspicious and beneficial activities, which is best for the living entity?” Rāmānanda Rāya replied, “The only auspicious activity is association with the devotees of Kṛṣṇa.”

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu further inquired, “Out of many types of meditation, which is required for all living entities?” Śrī Rāmānanda Rāya replied, “The chief duty of every living entity is to meditate upon the lotus feet of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa.”

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu asked, “Where should the living entity live, abandoning all other places?” Rāmānanda Rāya replied, “The holy place known as Vṛndāvana or Vrajabhūmi, where the Lord performed His *rāsa* dance.”

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu asked, “Out of all topics people listen to, which is best for all living entities?” Rāmānanda Rāya replied, “Hearing about the loving affairs between Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa is most pleasing to the ear.”

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu asked, “Among all worshipable objects, which is the chief?” Rāmānanda Rāya replied, “The chief worshipable object is the holy name of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra.”

—*Madhya* 8.248, 251, 253–55

LORD CAITANYA REVEALS HIS IDENTITY TO RĀMĀNANDA RĀYA

When they met again the following evening, Rāmānanda Rāya caught hold of Lord Caitanya's feet. He declared that Lord Caitanya had actually been supplying all the answers Himself since He is the Supersoul in Rāmānanda Rāya's heart. Rāmānanda Rāya then asked Lord Caitanya to remove one doubt. He said that sometimes he saw Lord Caitanya as a *saṅnyāsī*, but "I now see You appearing like a golden doll, and Your entire body appears covered by a golden luster. I see that You are holding a flute to Your mouth, and Your lotus eyes are moving very restlessly due to various ecstasies. . . . Please tell me without duplicity what is causing this."

Lord Caitanya answered by saying that because Rāmānanda Rāya had such deep love for Kṛṣṇa, he was seeing everyone and everything as the Supreme Lord. That is the nature of the *mahā-bhāgavata*. Whatever he sees simply awakens his Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Rāmānanda Rāya replied, "My dear Lord, please give up all these serious talks." In other words, Rāmānanda Rāya told Lord Caitanya to stop tricking him with words. "Please do not conceal Your real form from me."

Rāmānanda Rāya then stated his realization that Lord Caitanya is Lord Kṛṣṇa but with the ecstasy and bodily complexion of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī. Thus He has appeared as Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. ". . . You have descended in this incarnation of Lord Caitanya . . . to taste Your own spiritual bliss, and at the same time, You are transforming the whole world by spreading the ecstasy of love of Godhead." (*Madhya* 8.280)

Lord Caitanya then revealed His real form to Rāmānanda Rāya. Rāmānanda Rāya saw Him standing before him as the combination of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. This vision as seen by Rāmānanda Rāya is also corroborated in one of the opening verses of the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*:

Although Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa are one in Their identity, They separated Themselves eternally. Now these two transcendental identities have again united in the form of Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya. I bow down to Him, who has manifested Himself with the sentiment and complexion of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī although He is Kṛṣṇa Himself.

Ādi 1.5

On seeing this form, Rāmānanda Rāya almost lost consciousness and fell to the ground. Lord Caitanya touched him and he regained consciousness. Now he again saw Lord Caitanya as a *sannyāsī*, and he was struck with wonder. Lord Caitanya assured Rāmānanda Rāya that all the truths and pastimes of the Lord had been revealed to him.

KEEP IT A SECRET

Lord Caitanya asked Rāmānanda Rāya to keep all these talks a secret. “Since My activities appear to be like those of a madman, people may take them lightly and laugh.”

Śrīla Prabhupāda writes, “If one is actually advanced in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, he can understand these confidential talks; otherwise, they appear crazy.” In this connection, Śrīla Prabhupāda quotes the *Bhagavad-gītā*, “What is night for all

beings is the time of awakening for the self-controlled; and the time of awakening for all beings is night for the introspective sage.” (Bg. 2.69)

This is true certainly on the highest level of Kṛṣṇa conscious discussion and it is also true even on the beginning level. “Sometimes Kṛṣṇa consciousness appears like a type of madness to mundane people, just as the activities of mundaners are considered a form of madness by Kṛṣṇa conscious men.” (*Madhya* 8.291, purport)

We might ask why these confidential matters were ever revealed by Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī if Lord Caitanya wanted them kept secret. But unless Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī gave us these secrets, the world would never know them. He did it for the benefit of sincere devotees. Devotees cannot expect people in general to honor and understand these truths. Therefore, for general preaching we can inform them of something, but not all.

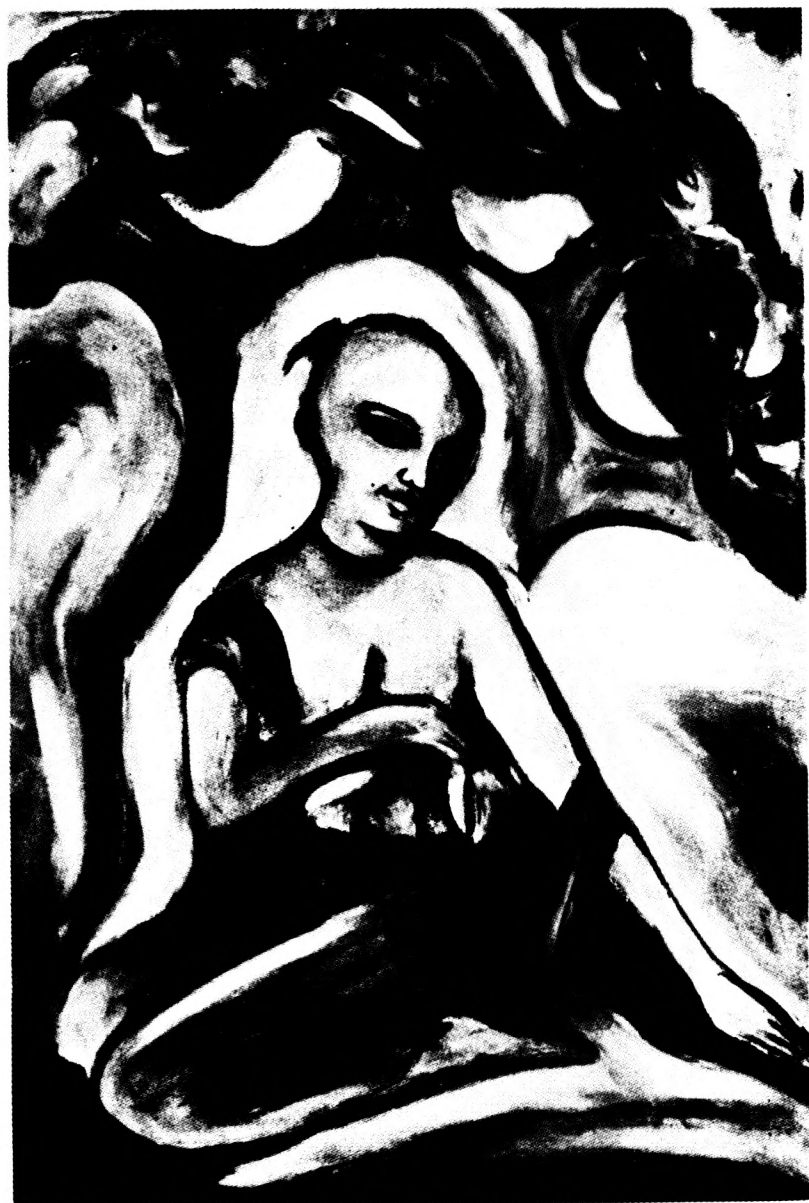
Lord Caitanya and Rāmānanda Rāya continued discussing without reaching the limit. Rāmānanda Rāya later joined Lord Caitanya in Puri and assisted the Lord in His *antya-līlā* pastimes where He fully entered the mood of Rādhā in separation from Kṛṣṇa. Only Rāmānanda Rāya and Svarūpa Dāmodara shared all Lord Caitanya’s moods in the Gambhīrā.

Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī says that the conversations between Lord Caitanya and Rāmānanda Rāya are comparable to a mine from which one can get all metals, starting with copper, bell metal, silver, gold, and finally *cintāmaṇi*.

I thank the reader for accompanying me on this brief tour of the sublime discussions between these great persons, Lord Caitanya and Rāmānanda Rāya. I am not qualified to conduct

such a tour or to understand these topics, but I have tried to stick to presenting the facts as given to us in Śrīla Prabhupāda's translations and purports. I hope this section has given the readers cause for serious reflection on basic questions of how to remove impurities from devotional service by always remembering the goal as *uttama-bhakti*—chanting and hearing the name, qualities, and pastimes of Lord Kṛṣṇa. I hope it will stimulate your greed to read more in *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *The Nectar of Devotion*, and *Kṛṣṇa* book about the pastimes of Kṛṣṇa in Vṛndāvana.

**CARITA-
CHARACTERISTICS OF
THE LORD AND HIS
DEVOTEES**



COMMENTS ABOUT ISKCON FROM ŚRĪLA PRABHUPĀDA'S PURPORTS TO CAITANYA-CARITĀMṚTA

INTRODUCTION

We can appreciate the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* on many different levels. For example, we can simultaneously relish the poetry of *Vidagdha-mādhava* and examine Prabhupāda's comments on ISKCON.

Although Śrīla Prabhupāda adheres to the commentaries of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura and Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, his purports are unique because they contain much of his realization and experience as ISKCON's founder-*ācārya*. In that sense, Śrīla Prabhupāda himself was unique. It was he who carried out Lord Caitanya's prediction that the holy name would be spread to every town and village.

Comments about ISKCON are unique to Prabhupāda's *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* purports. We rarely find them elsewhere. Therefore, as followers of Śrīla Prabhupāda, we can relish this special nectar and come to understand how Prabhupāda linked ISKCON to Lord Caitanya's *saṅkīrtana* movement. Not only do we become convinced that Lord Caitanya is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, we also become convinced that the present Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is under His direction. These are important convictions for us to live by.

I will not attempt to present everything Prabhupāda said about ISKCON in this book, but I have chosen a selection of interesting quotes and divided them into three categories: ISKCON as a continuation of Lord Caitanya's movement, Śrīla Prabhupāda's defense of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness, and specific instructions to ISKCON members.

ISKCON AS A CONTINUATION OF LORD CAITANYA'S MOVEMENT

ISKCON IS A BRANCH OF LORD CAITANYA'S TREE

"Thus the branches of the Caitanya tree formed a cluster or society with great branches covering all the universe." (*Ādi* 9.18)

Lord Caitanya is compared to the gardener of the tree of love of God. He wants to distribute the fruits. The seed of love of God fructified in Mādhavendra Puri, then Íśvara Puri, and then Lord Caitanya Himself became the trunk of the tree. Nine

sannyāsī roots sprouted from the tree* and made it firm in the ground. Then the tree trunk branched into two. “One trunk was named Śrī Advaita Prabhu and the other Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu.” (*Ādi* 9.21) The only purport Prabhupāda wrote to this section of Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī’s description of the spreading Caitanya tree states, “Our International Society for Krishna Consciousness is one of the branches of the Caitanya tree.” (*Ādi* 9.18, purport)

This is not a casual connection, but in this context, a weighty statement about ISKCON’s validity. When we read this statement, we can feel assured about our society’s future, although it also has a humbling effect. We are only *one* branch; we are not the whole tree.

WHAT IS ISKCON?

The next question we have to ask, therefore, is what is ISKCON and how widely can that term be defined? Of course, when Prabhupāda says that the International Society for Krishna Consciousness is one of the branches of the Caitanya tree, we have to measure our definition of ISKCON against his concept. Therefore, we have a legal definition and a working definition. The legal definition will include things such as the fact that ISKCON is an organization governed by the GBC, that it consists of certain properties and follows particular laws. Even more specifically, ISKCON is defined or distinguished

* Paramānanda Puri, Keśava Bhārati, Brahmānanda Puri and Brahmānanda Bhārati, Śrī Viṣṇu Puri, Keśava Puri, Kṛṣṇānanda Puri, Śrī Nṛsimhatirtha, and Sukhānanda Puri.

from other branches of the Caitanya tree by the fact that the founder-*ācārya* is Śrīla Prabhupāda and that we follow his specific vision of what he wanted the International Society for Krishna Consciousness to do and become. His disciples and followers are meant to carry out that mandate. As Prabhupāda said in his last days, “Your love for me will be tested by how you cooperate together after I am gone.”

The words “Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement,” however, can also be used more widely. A wider definition of ISKCON would include the congregational members and the devotees who don’t live in temples. Such devotees are financially independent but spiritually aligned with ISKCON’s purposes.

Whomever reads Prabhupāda’s books and desires to be part of ISKCON will be drawn toward ISKCON in one way or another. Therefore, the concept “ISKCON” has evolved over the past thirty years and it continues to evolve as Śrīla Prabhupāda’s teachings spread out and infiltrate mainstream society.

LOYALTY TO ISKCON IS SERVICE TO PRABHUPĀDA

Discussing this topic raises another question. Does loyalty to Śrīla Prabhupāda require loyalty to ISKCON? In a general sense, it does. Part of following Prabhupāda means maintaining a favorable service relationship with his institution. Prabhupāda’s followers should identify with his goals and should try to serve the institutional vehicle he created to realize those goals. This does not mean that devotees have to live in the temples, but they should identify with ISKCON as their movement and either serve in it peacefully or work to improve it.

That is often not an easy choice—to be peaceful or to work to improve this movement. There are so many faults that devotees often don't know where to start or whether they are even up to the task. Prabhupāda said, "ISKCON, with all thy faults, I love thee." Śrīla Prabhupāda also saw the faults in this institution, but he was not prepared to leave it. Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura addressed this point in his prediction that Lord Caitanya's name would be sung in every town and village: "Although there is still no pure society of Vaiṣṇavas to be had, yet Lord Caitanya's prophetic words will in a few days come true, I am sure. Why not? Nothing is absolutely pure in the beginning. From imperfection, purity will come about."

ISKCON IS NONDIFFERENT FROM LORD CAITANYA'S PASTIMES

In *Antya-līlā* 5.88, Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī states: "The activities of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu are just like an ocean of nectar. Even a drop of this ocean can inundate the three worlds." Prabhupāda writes in his purport: "Now that same mercy is overflowing the entire world through the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement. The present Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is nondifferent from the pastimes performed by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu when He was personally present, for the same principles are being followed and the same actions performed without fail."

Devotees are often surprised by this statement. How can ISKCON, with all its apparent imperfections, be nondifferent from Lord Caitanya's pastimes? To answer that, we can take

the definition of ISKCON a step further. ISKCON is a preaching movement. What Prabhupāda means here is that the preaching, the *saṅkīrtana*, the Deity worship, the *bhakti* being expressed by ISKCON's members is nondifferent from the activities that took place during Lord Caitanya's manifest presence. We do not have to examine this statement in light of ISKCON's faults, but in light of its successes. As devotees, we have to concentrate on the essence of ISKCON life and see the actual quality of life in a preaching movement rather than concentrating only on its faults. With this attitude, we will be able to understand ISKCON as a continuation of Lord Caitanya's *saṅkīrtana* movement.

ISKCON, by Śrīla Prabhupāda's grace, is functioning under the spiritual energy. We should not take our membership in such a movement cheaply. By the pure devotee's mercy, we can become empowered servants in his movement; by his displeasure we can lose our energy to serve. Therefore, it is important that each of us understand this purport and realize that it is our duty to behave in such a way that we contribute to the continuation of Lord Caitanya's pastimes. Śrīla Prabhupāda, when questioned about Lord Brahmā's position, once said that when Lord Brahmā is acting properly, his activities are perfect. Although Lord Brahmā sometimes deviates, Prabhupāda said, when he is acting properly, "he is nondifferent from Kṛṣṇa." Similarly, if we act properly and follow our spiritual master's orders coming down from *paramparā*, then we can participate in *caitanya-līlā*.

In another purport, Prabhupāda writes about Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura's song where he says that all of Lord Caitanya's devotees are *nitya-siddha*. Prabhupāda explains that "this does

not mean only in the time of Lord Caitanya, but it also means now." Of course, we know that Śrīla Prabhupāda is a *nitya-siddha* and an intimate associate of Lord Caitanya, but we can understand from Prabhupāda's words that what was going on in *caitanya-līlā* has been extended now into ISKCON.

These are intriguing statements describing ISKCON's future. Bhaktivinoda Thākura writes: "The religion preached by Mahāprabhu is universal and not exclusive. . . . The principle of *kīrtana* as the future church of the world invites all classes of men, without distinction of caste or clan, to the highest cultivation of the spirit. This church, it appears, will extend all over the world and take the place of all sectarian churches, which exclude outsiders from the precincts of the mosque, church or temple. . . . Oh, for that day when the fortunate English, French, Russian, German, and American people will take up banners, *mṛdaṅgas*, and *karatālas* and raise *kīrtana* through the streets and towns. When will that day come?"

These statements are being fulfilled now and will continue to be fulfilled in the future. Whole countries will become Kṛṣṇa conscious and the high court judges will wear *tilaka*. There will be so many heroes to honor and so many tales to be told. How can we deny that any of it will be separate from *caitanya-līlā*? Prabhupāda writes, "Most of the devotees of Lord Caitanya lived in Bengal or Orissa. . . . At present, however, by the grace of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu, His cult is being propagated all over the world, and it is most probable that in the future history of Lord Caitanya's movement, Europeans, Americans, Canadians, Australians, South Americans, Asians and people from all over the world will be celebrated as devotees of Lord Caitanya." (*Ādi* 10.122, purport)

“We shall eagerly wait for the happy days of *Bhāgavata-dharma*, or *prema-dharma*, inaugurated by the Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.” (*Bhāg.*, Introduction, p. 40)

A DEVOTEE CAN EVEN EXCEL LORD NITYĀNANDA’S SERVICE

“Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu continued, ‘You can perform a task that even I cannot do. But for You, I cannot find anyone in Gauḍa-deśa who can fulfill My mission there.’” (*Madhya* 16.65) The Lord addressed this statement to Nityānanda Prabhu. Śrīla Prabhupāda comments: “Similarly, if one is true to Gaura-Nitāi’s service in the disciplic succession, he can even excel Nityānanda Prabhu’s service. This is the process of disciplic succession. If we simply follow Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu’s instructions and follow in the footsteps of Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu, this Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement can advance, and even more difficult tasks can be performed by the preachers . . . ” This is an extraordinary statement.

Of course, the first devotee we think of as “excelling” Lord Nityānanda’s service is Śrīla Prabhupāda. Lord Nityānanda saved two extremely fallen souls when He delivered Jagāi and Mādhāi, but Śrīla Prabhupāda delivered thousands of them. Prabhupāda is not boasting when he makes this claim. Prabhupāda always saw himself as an instrument of the *param-parā*. He gave all credit to his spiritual master for whatever good results he achieved. In this way, his good results glorify Lord Nityānanda’s power. Śrīla Prabhupāda himself said that if he has done anything great, it is that he followed his Guru

Mahārāja and did not change his teachings: “If I have any credit in this connection, it does not belong to me personally, but it is due to my eternal spiritual master . . . If personally I have any credit in this matter, it is only that I have tried to present *Bhagavad-gītā* as it is, without any adulteration. . . . Our business is to present the will of Kṛṣṇa, not that of any mundane speculator like the politician, philosopher or scientist, for they have very little knowledge of Kṛṣṇa, despite all their other knowledge.” (Bg., Preface, p. xviii) For Prabhupāda to say that devotees can do more than Lord Nityānanda does not minimize Lord Nityānanda; Prabhupāda recognized, and we should also realize, that whatever service we do is done with Lord Nityānanda’s grace and by the extension of His mercy.

WE TOO CAN SERVE

Therefore, ISKCON devotees can read this purport and aspire to attain Lord Nityānanda’s mercy through Śrīla Prabhupāda. We are not meant only to eulogize Prabhupāda; we are meant to ourselves become pure devotees and to preach to the conditioned souls.

One devotee tells how Prabhupāda once told him that since he gets up at 1 A.M., this devotee should also rise early. The devotee answered, “But Prabhupāda, you are a *paramahansa*.” Prabhupāda retorted, “You be *paramahansa* too!” That is our mandate. Prabhupāda said that the great *ācāryas*, such as Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura or his own Guru Mahārāja, could have converted everyone, but they wanted to leave something for us to accomplish.

Śrīla Prabhupāda was such a great *ācārya* that he was able to set a worldwide movement in motion. For example, he went to Russia almost alone, spoke to one interested man, and left after a few days. It didn't appear that he accomplished much, but through that one contact, he started the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement in Russia and everything developed from there. Prabhupāda's disciple went on to preach and gradually a following developed. Eventually, Prabhupāda's disciples were able to get into the Soviet countries and thousands of people have since become devotees. It appears that Prabhupāda's disciples are doing more than he did, yet they are successful only because of Prabhupāda's desire. That should be our vision, that we are successful only by Prabhupāda's desire. Then we will receive the empowerment to preach on his behalf.

ISKCON'S EXPANSION IS PRABHUPĀDA'S GLORY AND OUR DUTY

Even after his disappearance, therefore, Prabhupāda continues to preach through his disciples. ISKCON's expansion is Śrīla Prabhupāda's glory. ISKCON was Prabhupāda's great hope, and it is by his power that it increases. Prabhupāda did not work just so that by the time he left this world he would have established something for which he could become famous. He was not like the American presidents with their four-year term in office, hoping to do something revolutionary so that they can go down in history for their achievements. Prabhupāda was genuinely concerned for the world's people.

That means that the movement he established must continue and be protected even after his disappearance.

A corollary to this is that the movement has to acknowledge Prabhupāda's grand-disciples and eventually his great-grand-disciples, as bona fide followers of His Divine Grace. Prabhupāda is still with us and all ISKCON devotees follow him.

HOW LORD CAITANYA INUNDAATES THE WHOLE WORLD WITH LOVE OF GOD FROM NAVADVĪPA

“The *saṅkīrtana* movement went on from one part of the town to another, as the Lord wandered everywhere performing *kīrtana*. In this way He inundated the whole world by distributing love of Godhead.” (*Ādi* 13.32)

Prabhupāda raises a doubt in his purport: “One may raise the question how all three worlds became inundated with love of Kṛṣṇa since Caitanya Mahāprabhu performed *kīrtana* only in the Navadvīpa area. The answer is that Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu is Kṛṣṇa Himself. The entire cosmic manifestation results from the Lord's first setting it in motion. Similarly . . . the *saṅkīrtana* movement was first set in motion five hundred years ago by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's desire . . .” It is a physical law that what is once set in motion will continue to move. Lord Caitanya gave the original push in Navadvīpa, and that push has set the worldwide *saṅkīrtana* movement in motion. ISKCON is continuing the momentum of Lord Caitanya's original push.

Upon hearing this, we may wonder how we can realize that our present activities in ISKCON were set in motion by Lord

Caitanya. We can read the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* and see the similarities. We perform *nāgara-saṅkīrtana* with *mṛdaṅga* and *karatālas*, we distribute *prasādam* and hold feasts. We engage in civil disobedience when the government tries to stop us from distributing the holy name. These are proofs that we are engaged in the same cultural movement of *saṅkīrtana*.

Other activities we perform, although bona fide, may not have such an obvious connection. For example, Lord Caitanya did not engage in large-scale book production. The Six Gosvāmīs wrote their books on palm leaves and they were meticulously hand-copied for distribution. There was little developed technology during Lord Caitanya's time. Therefore, to see all of our activities as linked to the *saṅkīrtana* movement, we have to look for their essence. The *saṅkīrtana* methods may change according to time and place, but the preaching essence is the same. Śrīla Prabhupāda was expert and keen to engage the *yukta-vairāgya* principle in Lord Caitanya's service.

The next question seems to be how we can detect whether an addition to the *saṅkīrtana* movement is *not* sanctioned by Caitanya Mahāprabhu. Sometimes we can only judge by the results. If the devotees are happy, the essence is *paramparā*, and the preaching is increasing, we can accept the innovation. And the addition has to conform to the eternal truths handed down by guru, *sādhū*, and *sāstra*.

DEVOTEES CAN BE CLEANSED BY THE HOLY NAME

“Let me offer my respectful obeisances to Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, by whose mercy even unclean *yavanas* become perfectly well-bred gentlemen by chanting the holy name of

the Lord. Such is the power of Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.” (Ādi 17.1) Prabhupāda said he has seen this verse come true in ISKCON. This verse is yet another prediction of ISKCON. Otherwise, this verse can be seen as theoretical, or even as exaggeration. Śrīla Prabhupāda himself, however, established the practical proof of this statement; he lived to see *yavanas*—and those lower than *yavanas*—become devotees.

Prabhupāda writes in his purport:

There is a persistent misunderstanding between caste *brāhmaṇas* and advanced Vaiṣṇavas or *gōsvāmīs* because caste *brāhmaṇas*, or *smārtas*, are of the opinion that one cannot become a *brāhmaṇa* unless he changes his body. As we have discussed several times, it is to be understood that by the supremely powerful potency of the Lord . . . everything is possible. Caitanya Mahāprabhu is as fully independent as Kṛṣṇa. . . . If He wants, by His mercy He can convert even a *yavana* . . . into a perfectly well-behaved gentleman. This is actually happening in our propagation of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement. The members of the present Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement were not born in India, nor do they belong to the Vedic culture, but within the short time of four or five years they have become such wonderful devotees, simply by chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra, that even in India they are well received as perfectly well-behaved Vaiṣṇavas wherever they go. . . . Even in the United States, when our devotees chant on the street, American ladies and gentlemen inquire from them whether they are actually Americans because no one could expect Americans to become such nice devotees all of a sudden. . . . before joining, they never regarded any principles of religion seriously, but now they have become

sincere devotees of the Lord. . . . Such wonders are possible, however, only by the mercy of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. They are not ordinary or mundane.

The average Westerner does not even compare favorably with Jagāi and Mādhāi when we examine their respective backgrounds. At least Jagāi and Mādhāi were *brāhmaṇas* and had undergone the purificatory *saṁskāras*. Although they became sinful, their birth was much higher than the average Westerner's birth. Westerners are almost always born as *varṇa-saṅkara*, in families of meat-eaters, sex-mongers, and intoxicators. In this purport, however, Śrīla Prabhupāda says that within four or five years his disciples were becoming cultured, well-behaved Vaiṣṇavas. He further states, “. . . we take great pride in the transcendental behavior of our students.”

Is this an exaggeration? No. In the age of Kali, it is *amazing* if anyone is able to give up the four prohibited activities. Therefore, Prabhupāda told us that if we followed the regulative principles, we would be worshiped all over the world, at least by those who value religious principles.

Our ability to follow these principles is Prabhupāda's gift to us, and ultimately the mercy of the holy name. *The Nectar of Devotion* states that even the beginning of devotional service brings all auspiciousness and defeats all inauspiciousness. Therefore, it is our responsibility not only to feel flattered by Prabhupāda's statements in this purport, but to live up to his praise. Our advancement is an important part of Śrīla Prabhupāda's preaching. Whenever Prabhupāda spoke to an audience of nondevotees, he would tell them to associate with his “boys and girls,” because we had become “so knowledgeable.” He

would say, “You compare them with any yoga student. There is no comparison.” In such statements, he was praising his disciples, praising the devotional process, and simultaneously presenting us with a challenge to guide our lives.

ISKCON IS ENGAGED ONLY IN PURE DEVOTION

“In all the revealed scriptures of Vedic culture, devotional service to Lord Kṛṣṇa is explained throughout. Therefore devotees of Lord Kṛṣṇa do not recognize the processes of philosophical speculation, mystic yoga, unnecessary austerity and so-called religious rituals. They do not accept any process but devotional service.” (Ādi 13.65)

Everything but pure devotional service is rejected by the Gauḍiya Vaiṣṇava. Prabhupāda writes, “Our Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement follows this principle. We do not recognize any method for spiritual realization other than Kṛṣṇa consciousness, devotional service.”

In his *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī defines “pure devotional service” as:

*anyābhilāṣitā-sūnyam
jñāna-karmādy-anāvṛtam
ānukūlyena kṛṣṇānu-
śīlanam bhaktir uttamā*

When first-class devotional service develops, one must be devoid of all material desires, knowledge obtained by monistic philosophy, and fruitive action. The devotee must constantly serve Kṛṣṇa favorably, as Kṛṣṇa desires.

In *The Nectar of Devotion*, Śrīla Prabhupāda writes, “The definition of a pure devotee . . . can be summarized thus: his service is favorable and is always in relation to Kṛṣṇa.”

Śrīla Prabhupāda taught his disciples and followers to engage only in pure devotional service. This principle is also expressed in Lord Caitanya’s talks with Rāmānanda Rāya where Lord Caitanya did not accept any activity below the standard of pure devotional service. Śrīla Prabhupāda writes: “There are many persons who are very much attracted by the ritualistic activities described in the *Vedas*. But if one becomes attracted simply to ritualistic activities without understanding Kṛṣṇa, his activities are unfavorable to Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Actually, Kṛṣṇa consciousness can be based simply on hearing, chanting, remembering, etc. Described in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* are nine different processes, besides which everything done is unfavorable to Kṛṣṇa consciousness. . . . This *karmādi* (fruitive work) consists of activities which are unable to help one attain to pure devotional service. Many forms of so-called renunciation are also not favorable to Kṛṣṇa conscious devotional service.” (NOD, p. xxiv)

Therefore, Śrīla Prabhupāda did not want ISKCON to become a society of mixed *jñāna*, karma, and *bhakti*, or to become a society based solely on the principles of *varṇāśrama-dharma*. He wanted his followers to concentrate on the pure *sādhana* of chanting and hearing.

Of course, there are many activities included within the definition of pure devotion, and Prabhupāda therefore prescribed that we engage in various kinds of services, such as preaching and Deity worship. Although it is now up to Prabhupāda’s followers to cooperatively define for ISKCON his short

statement that “we do not recognize any method for spiritual realization other than Kṛṣṇa conscious devotional service,” Śrīla Prabhupāda made it clear that everything we do—including activities that engage karma and *jñāna*—must be employed purely in Kṛṣṇa’s service.

ISKCON’S INNOVATIVE PREACHING

From *Ādi* 16.19: “In this way Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu contributed the greatest benefit to the people of East Bengal by initiating them into *hari-nāma*, the chanting of the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra*, and making them learned scholars by educating them.”

In his purport, Śrīla Prabhupāda discusses his books: “We are giving people an immense treasury of transcendental literature, translated into all the important languages of the world, and by the grace of Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu this literature is selling profusely, and people are chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa *māha-mantra* with delight.”

ISKCON’s book distribution is a specific method to fulfill Lord Caitanya’s desire to educate people. Although this may be an innovation from how knowledge was distributed in Lord Caitanya’s time, it is an example of how preachers can engage the principle of *yukta-vairāgya*.

A great *ācārya* in strict *paramparā* from Lord Caitanya may introduce into this *saṅkīrtana* movement a new way of spreading the movement, but he has to be expert enough that his innovation does not become a deviation from Lord Caitanya’s mood.

Both Śrīla Prabhupāda and Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura were innovative in their preaching methods. One of the most important innovations was Prabhupāda's emphasis on book distribution.

BY PREACHING, WE CAN BECOME NITYA-SIDDHA

Some years ago, a devotee wrote me a letter and asked, "I understand that ISKCON is nondifferent from Lord Caitanya's movement . . . " and then he quoted this statement: "All the devotees have unlimited strength to deliver unobstructed, unceasing love of Kṛṣṇa." This devotee was half-challenging me, "Can you do this?"

However, we do not have the strength of Lord Caitanya's direct associates. Therefore, for our purification and the purification of any who will hear us, we can at least recite the glories of such devotees and teach Kṛṣṇa consciousness according to the *paramparā*. In this way, we can hope to become more empowered.

When one of Lord Caitanya's associates would walk by, just by seeing that devotee, so many people would immediately attain love of God. These statements are not exaggerated. Lord Caitanya's associates were spiritually potent. Śrīla Prabhupāda used to say, "People say God is dead, but a pure devotee can hand God over to you."

Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura sings:

*gaurāṅgera saṅgi-gaṇe nitya-siddha kari' māne
se yāya vrajendra-suta-pāśa*

One who is intelligent understands that all the personal associates and devotees of Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu are ever liberated.

Śrīla Prabhupāda quotes this song and then defines the term “*nitya-siddha*”:

A devotee is always thinking of how better to serve Lord Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and how to broadcast His name, fame and qualities throughout the world. One who is *nitya-siddha* has no business other than broadcasting the glories of the Lord all over the world according to his ability. Such people are already associates of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu. . . . One should not think that because Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu was personally present five hundred years ago, only His associates were liberated.

—*Madhya* 11.89, purport

Once a devotee asked Prabhupāda, “Are we *nitya-siddha* devotees?” When Prabhupāda said, “Yes,” the devotee began to feel special. Then Prabhupāda added, “*Everyone* is an associate of Lord Caitanya.”

There are different ways to understand Prabhupāda’s statement. One way to understand it is to use the definition that a *nitya-siddha* is an eternally liberated soul who has never been conditioned. Usually we categorize devotees into three types: *sādhana-siddha*, *nitya-siddha*, and *kṛpā-siddha*. Why should *nitya-siddhas* only appear when Lord Caitanya is present and not after? Śrīla Prabhupāda’s appearance is proof that *nitya-siddhas* can come to the material world even after the Lord has wound up His pastimes.

There is another implication, however, although it seems contrary to the usual definition of *nitya-siddha*. That is, Prabhupāda invited everyone to revive his original, eternal spiritual nature in relation to Lord Kṛṣṇa. This can be especially activated by preaching Lord Caitanya's teachings. " . . . Śrīla Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura says that anyone is a *nitya-siddha* if he acts on behalf of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu by spreading the glories of the holy name of the Lord. We should respect those devotees preaching the glories of the Lord as *nitya-siddha* and should not consider them conditioned."

ŚRĪLA PRABHUPĀDA'S DEFENSE OF THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR KṚṢṆA CONSCIOUSNESS ĀDI 10.160

"From each branch of the tree have grown hundreds and thousands of sub-branches of disciples and grand-disciples."

In his purport, Prabhupāda regrets that "so-called devotees" criticize ISKCON. Since they criticize him and his movement, Prabhupāda writes, "The real truth must be stated." He then goes on to say that Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura and Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura wanted devotees all over the world. In pursuit of that end, ISKCON is spreading worldwide. Lord Caitanya's devotees should be happy and proud to see ISKCON spreading instead of "viciously criticizing its propaganda work."

Prabhupāda righteously defends his bona fide movement from its attackers. Although we cannot imitate his mood, we

can both understand the importance of, and feel grateful for the defense he leveled at ISKCON's critics, which simultaneously protected us from being influenced by them.

“PRABHUPĀDA”: ĀDI 10.7

“I offer my obeisances to all the dear devotees of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, the eternal tree of love of Godhead. I offer my respects to all the branches of the tree, the devotees of the Lord who distribute the fruit of love of God.”

In his purport, Prabhupāda speaks of a specific controversy among his Godbrothers, some of whom objected to his use of the title “Prabhupāda.” Some of his Godbrothers were so vehement in their criticism that they rejected ISKCON's preaching as *unbona fide*.

Śrī Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmi sets the example of offering obeisances to all the preacher devotees of Lord Caitanya, without distinction as to higher and lower. Unfortunately, at present there are many foolish so-called devotees of Lord Caitanya who make such distinctions. For example, the title “Prabhupāda” is offered to a spiritual master, especially to a distinguished spiritual master such as Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmi Prabhupāda, Śrīla Jiva Gosvāmi Prabhupāda or Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmi Prabhupāda. When our disciples similarly wanted to address their spiritual master as Prabhupāda, some foolish people became envious. Not considering the propaganda work of the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement, simply because these disciples addressed their spiritual master as Prabhupāda they became so envious that they formed a faction along with other such envious persons just to minimize the value of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement.

This is a sensitive issue. Śrīla Prabhupāda dared to enter the controversy in order to protect his disciples. He wanted to be certain that they would not doubt his credentials or the credentials of the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement.

Therefore, Prabhupāda's followers should read such passages with submission and acceptance. We should also be careful: Śrīla Prabhupāda is simultaneously addressing his Godbrothers and instructing his disciples. Prabhupāda's Godbrothers are, of course, senior to us. We should therefore hear Śrīla Prabhupāda's instructions maturely and not commit any offense.

NON-HINDUS CAN BECOME VAIṢṆAVAS

In another purport, Prabhupāda writes: "Although they are not as exalted as Haridāsa Ṭhākura, such Americans and Europeans, having accepted the principles of Vaiṣṇava philosophy and behavior, should never be excluded from Vaiṣṇava society." (*Antya* 3.220)

ISKCON does not always follow all the ritualistic rules and regulations of Hindu society. We certainly do not follow regulations based on the crippled idea that one can only become a *brāhmaṇa* by birth or that Westerners are forever excluded from Vaiṣṇava culture because they were born outside India. This purport and other similar purports support ISKCON's position on these points. Prabhupāda writes:

The Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement, therefore, is a cultural movement that does not care about local social conventions. Following in the footsteps of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and

Advaita Ācārya, we can accept a devotee from any part of the world and recognize him as a *brāhmaṇa* as soon as he is qualified due to following the principles of Vaiṣṇava behavior.

—Antya 3.321, purport

WHAT ABOUT WHEN DEVOTEES MISBEHAVE?

Although Śrīla Prabhupāda defended ISKCON's members, sometimes his defense was undermined by the devotees' misbehavior and apostasy. Therefore, we have to admit that some criticism toward ISKCON is justified.

We cannot imitate Śrīla Prabhupāda, but we too must defend ISKCON.

Once I was with Śrīla Prabhupāda on a morning walk in Vṛndāvana, and I asked him how we should reconcile his statement that Kṛṣṇa is the spiritual master of everyone in Vṛndāvana with the fact that we see people smoking and doing so much nonsense. Prabhupāda replied, "Just like I am your spiritual master, but you are not always following me . . . " Similarly, ISKCON is based on principles, but not everyone is able to live up to the principles. Therefore, our defense should not include dogmatic denial of the problems devotees experience in following this movement, but it should also acknowledge the strength and advancement of those who do follow strictly. Our defense has to include proper attention to the principles and ideals.

Śrīla Prabhupāda said that it is not so wonderful that someone leaves this movement; it is wonderful that someone stays.

Prabhupāda's defenses are spirited, and they are in *param-parā*. Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī himself says that people who criticize his work are like pigs and dogs. Prabhupāda picks up his spirit and adds that ISKCON will continue despite such foolish critics.

We are fortunate to have such a champion as Śrīla Prabhupāda to explain ISKCON's exalted position as a branch of Lord Caitanya's tree. We should honor our champion by maintaining good behavior.

SPECIFIC INSTRUCTIONS TO ISKCON'S MEMBERS

INTRODUCTION

Śrīla Prabhupāda often gives specific instructions to his disciples through his purports. For example, if a verse mentions the Deity's bed, Prabhupāda may take the opportunity to tell the movement's leaders to immediately ensure that all Deities in ISKCON have a bed. In this way, the timeless purport, which is generally addressed to a wide audience, simultaneously becomes a personal instruction to ISKCON leaders, an instruction he might normally write in a letter.

Here is an example: "It is advisable that food being offered to the Deity be covered when taken from the kitchen to the Deity room. In that way, others may not see it. Those who are not accustomed to following the advanced regulative devotional principles may desire to eat the food, and that is an offense. Therefore no one should be given a chance to even see it. How-

ever, when it is brought before the Deity, it must be uncovered.” (*Madhya* 4.124, purport)

This purport occurs in the section describing Mādhavendra Puri’s loving devotional service.

As Prabhupādānugas, finding these instructions throughout the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* should make us take special notice of them. Śrīla Prabhupāda has not only discussed these points in his letters, but has given them the dignity of appearing in his purports. These include instructions on how money should be handled, how temples should be managed, how the Deity should be worshiped, and how devotees should associate. These instructions are meant to teach us how to live practically in this movement. Prabhupāda was a great theologian and also a great manager. In this chapter, I offer a sampling from such purports.

ALL DEVOTEES MUST FOLLOW CĀTURMĀSYA

Cāurmāsyā should be observed by all sections of the population. It does not matter whether one is *gṛhastha* or a *sannyāsi*. The observance is obligatory for all *āśramas*. The real purpose behind the vow taken during these four months is to minimize the quantity of sense gratification. This is not very difficult. In the month of Śrāvaṇa, one should not eat spinach. In the month of Bhādra, one should not eat yogurt, and in the month of Āśvina, one should not drink milk. One should not eat fish or other nonvegetarian food during the month of Kārttika. A nonvegetarian diet means fish and meat. Similarly, *masura dāl* and *urad dāl* are also considered nonvegetarian. These two *dāls* contain a great amount of protein, and food rich in protein

is considered nonvegetarian. On the whole, during the four-month period of Cāturmāsyā, one should practice giving up all food intended for sense enjoyment.

—*Madhya* 4.169

According to Vedic culture, Cāturmāsyā is to be followed strictly by practicing many difficult austerities. For example, some *sādhus* eat only once a day. They place their food on the floor (usually unspiced *kicchari*), put their hands behind their backs, and accept only what they can eat by once bending down. As soon as they sit up again, their meal is over. Prabhupāda did not invite us to perform such austerities, but he did order us to avoid the prohibited foods for each of the four months. Therefore, we should follow this order strictly. If someone wants to perform more austerity, he can follow the spirit Prabhupāda mentions: “. . . during the four-month period of Cāturmāsyā, one should practice giving up all food intended for sense enjoyment.”

ISKCON MUST PUBLISH BOOKS

In another purport, Prabhupāda writes about how the *prākṛta-sahajiyās* say that writing books or even touching books is taboo.

According to Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, distributing literature is like playing on a great *mṛdaṅga*. Consequently we always request members of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness to publish as many books as possible

and distribute them widely throughout the world. By thus following in the footsteps of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, one can become a *rūpānuga* devotee.

—*Madhya* 19.132, purport

CHANT TWENTY-FOUR HOURS A DAY

The International Society for Krishna Consciousness now has its world center in Navadvīpa, Māyāpur. The managers of this center should see that twenty-four hours a day there is chanting of the holy names of the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra*, with the addition of *haraye namaḥ*, *kṛṣṇa yādavāya namaḥ*, for this song was a favorite of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. But all such *saṅkīrtana* must be preceded by the chanting of the holy names of the five *tattvas*—*śrī-kṛṣṇa-caitanya prabhu nityānanda śrī-advaita gadādhara śrīvāsādi-gaura-bhakta-vṛnda*. We are already accustomed to chant these two mantras—*śrī-kṛṣṇa-caitanya prabhu nityānanda śrī-advaita gadādhara śrīvāsādi-gaura-bhakta-vṛnda* and Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma Hare Hare. Now, after these, the other two lines—namely, *haraye namaḥ*, *kṛṣṇa yādavāya namaḥ/ gopāla govinda rāma śrī-madhu-sūdana*—should be added, especially in Māyāpur. Chanting of these six lines should go on so perfectly well that no one there hears any other vibration than the chanting of the holy names of the Lord. That will make the center spiritually all-perfect.

—*Ādi* 17.123, purport

This purport is a main instruction for the temple managers in Māyāpur and Vṛndāvana. Other temples have occasionally attempted to hold twenty-four-hour *kīrtanas*, especially when

there is an emergency—we used to hold them when Prabhupāda was very sick or the movement was in some danger—but generally, few temples can maintain them.

Such instructions from Śrīla Prabhupāda are so potent and authoritative, however, that a devotee can live his or her entire life dedicated to them and be assured that Prabhupāda approves of what they are doing. If he had not kindly written this statement, we might never know for certain that sitting and chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa *kīrtana* day and night is authorized under these circumstances.

ISKCON DEVOTEES MUST PREACH THE CULT OF VṚNDĀVANA

The Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement continues the tradition of the Six Gosvāmīs, especially Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmi and Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī. Serious students of this Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement must understand their great responsibility to preach the cult of Vṛndāvana (devotional service to the Lord) all over the world. We now have a nice temple in Vṛndāvana, and serious students should take advantage of it. I am very hopeful that some of our students can take up this responsibility and render the best service to humanity by educating people in Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

—*Madhya* 23.104, purport

DO NOT PREMATURELY RENOUNCE PREACHING

In his purport to *Madhya* 11.176, Prabhupāda warns devotees not to prematurely renounce preaching:

This statement of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu is significant. . . . ‘I shall sit down there in that solitary place and remember the lotus feet of the Lord.’ Neophyte students are not to imitate sitting in a solitary place and remembering the lotus feet of the Lord by chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra*. We should always remember that it was Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu Himself who wanted such a place, either for Himself or Haridāsa Ṭhākura. No one can suddenly attain the level of Haridāsa Ṭhākura. . . . Only an exalted person like Haridāsa Ṭhākura or Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, who is personally exhibiting the proper behavior for an *ācārya*, can engage in such a practice.

“At the present moment, we see that some of the members of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness are tending to leave their preaching activities in order to sit in a solitary place. This is not a very good sign. It is a fact that Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura has condemned this process for neophytes.

DEVOTEES MAY WEAR WESTERN DRESS WHEN DISTRIBUTING BOOKS

Sometimes members of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness—especially in the Western countries—find it difficult to approach people to distribute books because people are unfamiliar with the traditional saffron robes of the devotees. The devotees have therefore inquired whether they can wear European and American dress before the general public. From the instructions given to King Pratāparudra by Sārva-bhauma Bhaṭṭācārya, we can understand that we may change our dress in any way to facilitate our service. When our members change their dress to meet the public or to introduce our books, they are not breaking the devotional principles. The real

principle is to spread this Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement, and if one has to change into regular Western dress for this purpose, there should be no objection.

—*Madhya* 14.5, purport

There are quite a few other direct instructions to ISKCON devotees in the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* purports. Some require great sacrifice to carry out and some may have to be evaluated according to time, place, and person in the context of other instructions Prabhupāda has given. None of these instructions should simply be ignored.

A GLIMPSE OF LORD CAITANYA AS A PERSON

INTRODUCTION

Lord Caitanya is a person. As devotees, we can study and appreciate the Lord's personality as He revealed it in His exchanges with His devotees. We are not meant to understand the Lord simply as a body of teachings or as a person always overcome with incomprehensible ecstasy. Neither is He only the official founder of a new direction in the Brahmā-Mādhva-Gauḍīya-sampradāya. When Kṛṣṇa appeared in Vṛndāvana five thousands years ago, His devotees exchanged with Him in the five primary and seven secondary *rasas*. However, He was always the independent Supreme Personality of Godhead. Lord Caitanya's devotees all exchanged with Him in the mood of servant to master. Within that exchange, Lord Caitanya remained the independent Supreme Person. We can relish His sometimes very human and loving gestures, His personalized

relationships with His various devotees, and His sometimes incomprehensible harshness in rejecting a particular devotee not only because these exchanges and gestures are instructive, but because they help us to glimpse His personality.

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu actually descended to give happiness to the devotees. Thus He behaved in whatever way fit the time and circumstances. Because of His full independence, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu sometimes behaved like a common man and sometimes manifested His godly opulence. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu sometimes accepted Rāmacandra Puri as His master and considered Himself a servant, and sometimes the Lord, not caring for him, would see him as being just a straw. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu behaved exactly like the Supreme Personality of Godhead, beyond the restriction of anyone's intelligence.

—Antya 8.92

THE LORD'S DEVOTEES ARE ALL ETERNAL ASSOCIATES

Lord Caitanya did whatever He liked and all His activities were beautiful. We should also understand that the devotees with whom He exchanged were not ordinary devotees, but all eternal associates, each with their own mood in loving Him. Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmi warns us in the *Ādi-līlā* not to consider one devotee greater and another lesser because each devotee has his or her specific role to play in the Lord's *līlā*. Thus Lord Caitanya accepted the service of the Six Gosvāmis, who were ordered to excavate the lost *tīrthas* in Vṛndāvana

and to compose *bhakti-śāstras*, and He accepted the loving service performed by Damayanti as she prepared bags of foodstuffs and digestive aids for His pleasure.

THE LORD EXPRESSES HIS GRATITUDE:

JHĀRIKHAṆḌA-LĪLĀ

Lord Caitanya wanted to go to Vṛndāvana. He asked Svarūpa Dāmodara and Rāmānanda Rāya for permission to travel alone, but they convinced Him to allow Balabhadra Bhaṭṭācārya to accompany Him. The Lord left early one morning when the devotees were asleep and immediately left the public roads to avoid the crowds. He took a bypass through the jungle. While walking through the jungle, the Lord induced the tigers, deer, elephants, and other animals to chant the holy name.

For the purposes of this discussion, however, I would like to focus on the Lord's exchanges with Balabhadra Bhaṭṭācārya. The Lord was in the mood of a simple Vaiṣṇava *sannyāsī*, depending on Kṛṣṇa even while traveling in lonely places. In this section, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu speaks of His gratitude toward His servant for helping Him through the difficulties of jungle life, and of His own satisfaction at the simplicity of *sannyāsa* travels.

“Balabhadra Bhaṭṭācārya used to cook all kinds of vegetables gathered from the forest, and Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu was very pleased to accept these preparations. Balabhadra used to keep a stock of food grains that would last from two to four days. Where there were no people, he would cook the grains

and prepare vegetables, spinach, roots and fruits collected from the forest.

“The Lord was always very happy to eat these forest vegetables, and He was even happier when He had an opportunity to stay in a solitary place.”* It is so sweet to see the Lord relishing a simple *sannyāsa* life. We see Him almost as a child at play.

“Balabhadra was so affectionate to the Lord that he was rendering service just like a menial servant. His assistant *brāhmaṇa* carried the water pot and garments. The Lord used to bathe three times a day in the warm water of the waterfalls. He also used to heat Himself morning and evening with a fire made of the limitless wood.” Sometimes devotees assume that any appreciation for rural settings is sense gratification in the mode of goodness, but everything can have its place in Kṛṣṇa consciousness if our minds are focused on Kṛṣṇa. Here we see the Lord enjoying nature, bathing in waterfalls, and heating Himself by a small fire at night.

“While traveling in this secluded forest and feeling very happy, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu made the following statement. ‘My dear Bhaṭṭācārya, I have traveled very far through the forest, and I have not even slightly received any trouble. Kṛṣṇa is very merciful, especially to Me. He has shown His mercy by bringing Me on this path through the forest. Thus He has given Me great pleasure. Before this, I decided to go to Vṛndāvana and on the way see My mother, the River Ganges and other devotees once again. I thought that once again I

* This section comes from *Madhya-līlā* 17.61–76

would see and meet all the devotees and take them with Me to Vṛndāvana.”

The Lord goes on to explain that the last time He attempted to go to Vṛndāvana, He had traveled through Bengal where millions of people began to follow Him. At that time, He happened to meet Sanātana Gosvāmī, who mentioned to Him that it wasn't proper to go to Vṛndāvana with such a large crowd because Vṛndāvana is such a solitary place.

“Kṛṣṇa is an ocean of mercy. He is especially merciful to the poor and fallen. Without His mercy, there is no possibility of happiness.’ Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu then embraced Bala-bhadra Bhaṭṭācārya and told him, ‘It is only by your kindness that I am now so happy.’”

The Lord is expressing such genuine feeling. We can just imagine Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu suddenly embracing Bala-bhadra out of gratitude for His servant's spontaneous and affectionate service. Lord Caitanya expressed such a variety of moods, but just as Kṛṣṇa enjoyed being cared for by His mother and elders, so Lord Caitanya, in the mood of a sometimes childlike *sannyāsī*, accepted with gratitude the care of His loving and faithful devotees.

THE LORD EXPRESSES ANGER: THE DELIVERANCE OF GOPINĀTHA PAṬṬANĀYAKA

Gopinātha was one of the sons of Bhavānanda Rāya and the brother of Rāmānanda Rāya. Gopinātha was the tax collector for a particular area, but because he had misappropriated some of the government's money and insulted the prince, he was

about to be punished with death. The prince raised Gopinātha on the *cāṅga*, a platform under which was placed many upright swords. Gopinātha was about to be pushed off the platform onto the swords.

Upon seeing this, some people immediately ran to inform Lord Caitanya of Gopinātha's plight: "Gopinātha Paṭṭanāyaka, the son of Bhavānanda Rāya, has been condemned to death by the *baḍa-jānā*, the eldest son of the King, and has been raised on the *cāṅga*. . . . O Lord, only if You protect him will he be saved."*

As the drama progresses, four different messengers ran to inform the Lord and to beg for His help. Lord Caitanya became filled with "affectionate anger": "Gopinātha Paṭṭanāyaka is in charge of collecting money on behalf of the government, but he misappropriates it. Not fearing the King, he squanders it to see dancing girls." Again and again the Lord announces that He is just a *sannyāsī*. What can He do?

Finally, all the devotees, headed by Svarūpa Dāmodara, approach the Lord and tell Him that because Gopinātha is a pure devotee, it is not proper for the Lord to remain indifferent to him. The Lord suggests that the devotees plead for Gopinātha's life to Lord Jagannātha, and in the end, Gopinātha is saved.

The next day, Kāśī Miśra goes to see the Lord and "the Lord talked with him with some agitation."

"I cannot stay here any longer. I shall go to Ālalanātha. There are too many disturbances here, and I cannot get any rest. . . . When the King put Gopinātha Paṭṭanāyaka on the

* This section comes from *Antya* 9.13–66

cāṅga, messengers came four times to inform Me about the incident. As a beggar *sannyāsī*, a mendicant, I wish to live alone in a solitary place, but these people come to tell Me about their unhappiness and disturb Me. Jagannātha has saved him once from death today, but if tomorrow he again does not pay what he owes the treasury, who will give him protection? If we hear about the activities of materialistic persons, our minds become agitated. There is no need for Me to stay here and be disturbed in that way.”

I am attracted to this pastime because of the way Lord Caitanya expresses something I also sometimes feel, that I become troubled when I have to become entangled in people’s material problems. This is not something that only I feel, but it happens to many of us from time to time. Here we see Lord Caitanya acting as a *sannyāsī* and guru expressing these same feelings. Of course, the Lord’s purpose is to give spiritual instructions and association to all His devotees. In this case, His instruction is that Gopinātha is not approaching Him for spiritual instruction, but to have his material problem solved. The Lord found this disturbing to His practice of *bhajana* and *sannyāsa*. This is the preacher’s risk.

It should be noted, however, that Lord Caitanya actually did make an arrangement to save His servant—He told the devotees to pray to Lord Jagannātha. Once the devotees approached Lord Jagannātha, we see that suddenly an officer appears and presents Gopinātha’s case to the king. We can take it that Lord Jagannātha’s actions reflect Lord Caitanya’s desire to save Gopinātha.

But how can we understand Lord Caitanya’s apparent indifference to Gopinātha’s plight? Śrīla Prabhupāda makes it

clear in his purports throughout this section that the Lord is displeased with Gopinātha's behavior. Because the Lord's mercy is not shown in material benediction but in spiritual upliftment, His indifference is actually a sign of His mercy. Therefore, not only is Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu showing His displeasure at Gopinātha's behavior, but He is showing the devotees that material activities are a disturbance to Him and give Him pain. In this way, the Lord reveals His personal involvement in their lives.

This is His way of instructing His devotees. The devotees never want to disturb or inconvenience the Lord; therefore, He instructs them in such a merciful and personal way. He does not instruct them as a detached teacher, but as a loving spiritual master.

Other interesting points to note: Lord Caitanya asked what Gopinātha was doing when he was arrested. The messenger informed Him: "He was fearlessly, incessantly chanting the *mahā-mantra* . . . ' Hearing this news, the Lord was very pleased. Who can understand the mercy of the Lord upon His devotee?"

The Lord also expressed the importance of honesty through this pastime. Gopinātha Paṭṭanāyaka was cheating the government. Lord Caitanya considered that the government had the moral and legal right to punish him.

We cannot understand the depth of Lord Caitanya's pastimes. Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī states: "The intentions of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu are so deep that one can understand them only if he has complete faith in service to the lotus feet of the Lord." (*Antya* 9.151)

THE LORD'S SARCASM: PASTIMES WITH JAGADĀNANDA PAṆḌITA

Sarcasm is defined as “a taunting or contemptuously ironic remark.” The word is derived from the Greek *sarkasmós*, “to tear flesh.”

Usually, an exalted person will not indulge in sarcasm, especially in a formal situation. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu has a particularly mild and humble demeanor. When we see the Lord using sarcasm, we know that we are being allowed to witness intimate moments with His closest devotees. Such moments are delightful.

Jagadānanda Paṇḍita was an intimate devotee of Caitanya Mahāprabhu. Once, while visiting Bengal, he prepared a large jar of sandalwood oil for Lord Caitanya's use. Upon returning to Puri, he presented the oil to Govinda and asked, “Please rub this oil on the body of the Lord.”* Govinda carefully presented the oil to Lord Caitanya: “Jagadānanda Paṇḍita has brought some scented sandalwood oil. It is his desire that Your Lordship apply a little of this oil on Your head so that blood pressure due to bile and air will be considerably diminished.” Lord Caitanya, however, replied that a *sannyāsī* has no use for scented oil. “Take it out immediately.” The Lord then told Govinda to bring the oil to the Jagannātha temple so that Jagadānanda's labor in producing it would not go in vain.

Govinda did not deliver the oil to the Jagannātha temple, but ten days later approached the Lord again and asked Him to use

* This section comes from *Antya* 12.104–120

the oil as Jagadānanda desired. The Lord became angry and spoke sarcastic words:

“Why not keep a masseur to massage Me? Have I taken *sannyāsa* for such happiness? Accepting this oil would bring Me ruination, and all of you would laugh.”

Lord Caitanya rarely spoke sarcastically directly to Jagadānanda Paṇḍita's face. He would speak these sarcastic words behind his back and only speak sweetly to Jagadānanda, because Jagadānanda would sulk and fast. In this way, Jagadānanda would influence Lord Caitanya. Therefore, in this and other pastimes with Jagadānanda, Lord Caitanya addressed His comments to Govinda or other devotees.

When the Lord again refused to use the oil, saying that when He walked on the road, people would smell the oil and think He was a tantric *sannyāsī*, Jagadānanda himself went to see the Lord. Lord Caitanya was conciliatory and He again suggested that the oil be offered to Lord Jagannātha.

“Jagadānanda Paṇḍita replied, ‘Who tells you all these false stories? I never brought any oil from Bengal.’ After saying this, Jagadānanda Paṇḍita took the jug of oil from the room and threw it down before Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu in the courtyard and broke it. After breaking the jug, Jagadānanda Paṇḍita returned to his residence, bolted the door and lay down.”

These pastimes give us an extraordinary glimpse of the depth of the Lord's affectionate dealings with His devotees. Because everyone in Lord Caitanya's pastimes accepts the Lord as master and themselves as servant, the devotees tend to follow the etiquette of honoring the Lord's moods and instructions as absolute. Jagadānanda's behavior, however, extends beyond the bounds of normal obedience due to his

intense love for the Lord. Jagadānanda Paṇḍita is an incarnation of Satyabhāmā, and he expresses Satyabhāmā's fiery temperament in his relationship with Lord Caitanya.

Jagadānanda Paṇḍita relates this same incident in his own book, *Prema-vivarta*: "Once I bought Him a pot of pure sandalwood oil, but in return He simply gave me cutting words; so out of insolence and frustration I broke that pot in front of Him. Angry, and in a sulking mood, I remained fasting. But my wonderful Lord, using devious means, dissolved my ire. He made me cook wild-grown varieties of spinach for our meal, saying, 'Food prepared by an angry cook enhances the taste.' This statement incensed me further, and He seemed more pleased by this. His joys are my only precious concern."

In this book, Jagadānanda also recounts the conversation he had about writing with Svarūpa Dāmodara Gosvāmī. Svarūpa Dāmodara tried to give Jagadānanda Paṇḍita some good advice about how to present Lord Caitanya's pastimes in a systematic way. Jagadānanda Paṇḍita was not so receptive, however:

"Svarūpa Dāmodara Gosvāmī once inquired, 'What do you write, Paṇḍitji?' I replied, 'I simply write about subjects which are most dear to me. I wish to secretly write down those pastimes of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu that are stored in my memory.' Svarūpa Dāmodara Gosvāmī said, 'Then, write about the wonderful characteristics of the Lord. The entire world can derive their greatest benefit from reading them.' I said, 'I am ignorant about what is beneficial to the world. I'll just write down whatever appeals to me.' Svarūpa Dāmodara Gosvāmī left me alone, knowing I was eccentric."

Although Svarūpa Dāmodara was giving him good literary advice, Jagadānanda's response was so volatile that Svarūpa

Dāmodara decided to leave him alone. “Sitting by myself, I meditate upon the Lord and I simply write about His pastimes. I have witnessed many of my Lord’s pastimes. I am writing down some of these events according to my bent of mind. As I remember them, my mind and heart cry and my eyes shed incessant tears.” If he can shed incessant tears while writing about Lord Caitanya, his approach must be a good one.

Lord Caitanya again speaks sarcastically when Jagadānanda Paṇḍita offers a mattress for the Lord to sleep on. Jagadānanda could not bear to see the Lord living the life of an austere *sannyāsī*. He worried that sleeping on the bare floor must be painful. Therefore, he constructed a comfortable mattress and filled it with cotton from a *śimula* tree. When Lord Caitanya saw the quilt and pillow, He was immediately angry, but when He heard that Jagadānanda Paṇḍita had made it, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu was somewhat fearful.

“Svarūpa Dāmodara said to the Lord, ‘I cannot contradict Your supreme will, my Lord, but if You do not accept the bedding, Jagadānanda Paṇḍita will feel great unhappiness.’

“Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu replied, ‘You should bring a bedstead for Me to lie on. Jagadānanda wants Me to enjoy material happiness.’”

Although Svarūpa Dāmodara eventually made another mattress that the Lord accepted, Jagadānanda Paṇḍita remained angry. This pastime precipitates his wanting to go on pilgrimage to Vṛndāvana.

ŚRĪLA PRABHUPĀDA'S SARCASM

Śrīla Prabhupāda also used sarcasm to train his disciples. I remember one incident where Prabhupāda was giving a talk in Vṛndāvana. He was speaking about death. One man said that he didn't know if he was going to die. Prabhupāda retorted, "Oh? You are something special? You will not die?" The man did not back down: "I don't know." Then Prabhupāda said, "I don't know. If you don't know, then I don't know if you are human."

Another time I was cutting vegetables for Prabhupāda and I cut them the wrong way. Prabhupāda got angry. I was hurt by his anger, so I defended myself: "I'll get it right eventually. I'll learn to get it right."

"You will not learn in three hundred years!" His sarcasm was so cutting.

LORD CAITANYA RELIEVES GOVINDA'S ANXIETY

This pastime is described in *Antya-līlā*, Chapter 10. Every year the devotees would travel from Bengal to Jagannātha Puri to see Lord Caitanya and to observe Ratha-yātrā and Cātur-māsya. They would all bring various offerings of *prasādam* with them to give to Lord Caitanya. Each devotee would present his offering and the Lord would tell Govinda to store it in His room. Then later, the devotees would approach Govinda and ask him, "Did Lord Caitanya like my preparation?"

Govinda was in a unique position in that he was not Lord Caitanya's disciple but His Godbrother. Therefore, he had

more of a right to be agitated. Although Govinda was completely devoted to Lord Caitanya, he also had to satisfy the devotees that their offers were being accepted by the Lord.

“Each devotee would bring a certain type of *prasāda*. He would entrust it to Govinda and request him, ‘Please arrange that the Lord will surely eat this *prasāda*.’ . . . Govinda would present the *prasāda* and say to Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, ‘This has been given by such and such devotee.’ The Lord, however, would not actually eat it. He would simply say, ‘Keep it in storage.’ Govinda kept accumulating the food, and soon it filled a corner of the room. There was quite enough to feed at least a hundred people. All the devotees asked Govinda with great eagerness, ‘Have you given Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu the *prasāda* brought my me?’ When the devotees questioned Govinda, he had to tell them lies.”

One day, Govinda approached the Lord about this problem. He said that many respectable devotees had gone to great endeavor to procure the offerings and had entrusted them all to him. “You do not eat it, but they ask me again and again. How long shall I go on cheating them? How shall I be freed from this responsibility?”

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu replied, “Why are you so foolishly unhappy? Bring here to Me whatever they have given you.” Śrīla Prabhupāda comments that because Govinda had been living with the Lord for a long time, he should have known that the Lord was able to eat all the offerings and thus satisfy the devotees.

Govinda then brought in all the varieties of *prasāda* and offered them to Lord Caitanya, naming each devotee who had

given them. The Lord ate all the offerings, which by then amounted to more than a hundred men could eat.

This is a sweet pastime. Not only did Lord Caitanya satisfy the devotees, but it is touching how He relieved His servant Govinda's anxiety.

A SIMILAR STORY ABOUT ŚRĪLA PRABHUPĀDA

I was Śrīla Prabhupāda's secretary in 1974 when he was in Vṛndāvana. One of my duties was to keep guests out. So many people used to come to visit Prabhupāda and many of them were not serious about spiritual life. They used to waste his time discussing their families or other mundane matters. They were similar to the people who still go into his rooms in Vṛndāvana—simple villagers or *tyāgīs* in worn-out rags and long matted hair or people from Delhi dropping by to see the *sādhū*. I would tell everyone that Prabhupāda had visiting hours and that they should come back then. I didn't let anyone in.

One day, I wasn't at my post and a man went in to see Prabhupāda. I was angry that someone had slipped past my blockade and I was sure this man would waste Prabhupāda's time. Then Prabhupāda rang his bell to call me in. He said, "This man says that you did not let him in when he wanted to see me."

"Well, I told him that you had visiting hours, Prabhupāda."

"No, you should not have done this. You should not prevent him from coming in to see me." Then Prabhupāda turned to the man and said, "They are not very trained. They don't know so many things. I have to train them." The man was

triumphant, “Yes, you are not trained.” Without any further exchange, Prabhupāda sent me out. Before I left, though, I saw that the man was wasting Prabhupāda’s time. He was simply telling Prabhupāda about his family life.

After that incident, I lost confidence in maintaining my blockade and I began to let different people in to see Prabhupāda. When Tamāla Kṛṣṇa Mahārāja saw this, he asked, “Why are you letting people in? You are supposed to be a watchdog at the door.” I became confused, so I went in to see Prabhupāda. I was practically babbling when I spoke about it. “Prabhupāda, I was trying to keep people out, but then that man came in and you said that I shouldn’t keep them out, but my Godbrother, Tamāla Kṛṣṇa Mahārāja says that I *should* keep them out . . .” Prabhupāda looked at me and said, “It’s all right.” Immediately, I was free of the anxiety. I could see that he wasn’t disturbed, that he was *dhīra*. I had become disturbed by such a small event, and in an instant, Prabhupāda relieved my anxiety. (Later, Tamāla Kṛṣṇa Mahārāja and others saw Prabhupāda and Prabhupāda confided in them that actually these people simply come to waste his time and we should keep them out.)

LORD CAITANYA UNDERSTANDS ŚRĪKĀNTA’S MIND

One year, the devotees were traveling from Bengal to Puri to see the Lord. Śivānanda Sena took care of the devotees on such travels and both paid the tolls and arranged for their lodging. One day, he was detained at a toll booth. The whole party had to wait for him because only he could arrange their

lodging. Lord Nityānanda became angry and cursed Śivānanda's three sons to die. Then when Śivānanda finally came, the Lord kicked him in the chest. Although Śivānanda Sena, was very happy to be kicked by Lord Nityānanda, his nephew, Śrīkānta, took it as an insult. Thus he left the party and went quickly to see Lord Caitanya just so he could complain about Lord Nityānanda's behavior. When he arrived where the Lord was staying, Śrīkānta went right up to the Lord and offered his obeisances. Seeing that Śrīkānta had not taken off his *kūrta* before offering obeisances, Govinda corrected him, but Lord Caitanya said, "Leave Śrīkānta alone. His mind is disturbed." Immediately, Śrīkānta understood that the Lord was omniscient. Therefore, he did not say anything.

I like this pastime because it reveals to us that Lord Caitanya was aware of the stress a devotee might feel in dealing with other devotees or in trying to serve Him. I like to think of Lord Caitanya not just as the demanding master, but in His soft-hearted, compassionate mood where He can see into our hearts and understand them. He could have seen into Śrīkānta's heart and chosen to reprimand him for his criticism of Lord Nityānanda. Instead, He is gentle and simply lets Śrīkānta know that He is already aware of everything.

Lord Caitanya can also be as hard as a thunderbolt. Repeatedly after developing affectionate relationships with His devotees, the Lord leaves them to go somewhere else. When the Lord leaves, the devotees often faint in separation. We see this in pastimes with Sārvabhauma Bhaṭṭācārya, Gadādhara Paṇḍita, and Rūpa Gosvāmī. When Sārvabhauma Bhaṭṭācārya fainted, the Lord ignored him. He just kept walking. Śrīla

Prabhupāda writes in a purport that great personalities do not always behave according to the mundane estimation of right and wrong. Therefore, we cannot judge them.

LORD CAITANYA SHOWS INDIFFERENCE TO A MĀYĀVĀDĪ

Here is another example of Lord Caitanya's mildness. Bhagavān Ācārya had taken shelter of Lord Caitanya at Jagannātha Puri. Bhagavān's brother, Gopāla Bhaṭṭācārya, however, was a learned Māyāvādī who had studied in Benares. Because Bhagavān Ācārya had affection for his brother, he wanted him to meet Lord Caitanya.

"Bhagavān Ācārya took his brother to meet Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, but the Lord, knowing that Gopāla Bhaṭṭācārya was a Māyāvādī philosopher, could not get much happiness from meeting him. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu derives no happiness from meeting one who is not a pure devotee of Kṛṣṇa."*

We should not think that Lord Caitanya behaved without discrimination. He was not a sentimentalist. He distinguished between devotees and nondevotees. He could see, therefore, that Gopāla Bhaṭṭācārya did not possess a Vaiṣṇava heart and He did not derive any happiness from his presence. The Lord appears to be so human in this pastime, as if He is affected by the dry, godless presence of a Māyāvādī.

"Thus because Gopāla Bhaṭṭācārya was a Māyāvādī scholar, the Lord felt no jubilation in meeting him. Nevertheless,

* This section comes from *Antya* 2.90-100

because Gopāla Bhaṭṭācārya was related to Bhagavān Ācārya, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu feigned pleasure in seeing him.”

That is another sweet touch, that the Lord would feign pleasure in meeting His devotee’s relative, even though that relative was not a devotee. Later we read that Bhagavān Ācārya is so attached to this brother that he proposes to Svarūpa Dāmodara that his brother be allowed to read Śaṅkara’s commentary to Lord Caitanya. Svarūpa Dāmodara, of course, does not allow this. He speaks strongly, “You have lost your intelligence in the association of Gopāla, and therefore you are eager to hear the Māyāvāda philosophy. When a Vaiṣṇava listens to *Śārīraka-bhāṣya*, the Māyāvāda commentary upon Vedānta-sūtra, he gives up the Kṛṣṇa conscious attitude that the Lord is the master and the living entity is His servant. Instead, he considers himself the Supreme Lord. The Māyāvāda philosophy presents such a jugglery of words that even a highly elevated devotee who has accepted Kṛṣṇa as his life and soul changes his decision. . . .”

In spite of Svarūpa Dāmodara’s protest, Bhagavān Ācārya continued, “We are all fixed at the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa with our hearts and souls. Therefore the *Śārīraka-bhāṣya* cannot change our minds.”

Svarūpa Dāmodara replied, “Nevertheless, when we hear the Māyāvāda philosophy, we hear that Brahman is knowledge and that the universe of *māyā* is false, but we gain no spiritual understanding. . . . Hearing this kind of commentary breaks the heart and life of a devotee.”

Bhagavān Ācārya felt ashamed of himself and he sent his brother away. He no longer wanted anything to do with his Māyāvādi brother.

THE LORD REFUSED TO EXCUSE CHOṬA HARIDĀSA

Lord Caitanya was like a thunderbolt in the incident with Junior Haridāsa. In order to see one aspect of Lord Caitanya's nature, I would like to focus on one vignette within that drama.

After Lord Caitanya banned Choṭa Haridāsa from His association, the devotees approached Him several times and tried to change His mind. After their first attempt, Lord Caitanya said, "You should all tend to your respective engagements. Give up this useless talk. If you speak this way again, I shall go away, and you will no longer see Me here."

The devotees became frightened, but they were determined to induce the Lord to be merciful to Junior Haridāsa. Therefore, they approached Paramānanda Puri, who was senior to Lord Caitanya, to go and pacify the Lord. It is this scene that I would like to examine.*

Paramānanda Puri went to see Lord Caitanya and was greeted with great respect. The Lord then asked, "What is your order? For what purpose have you come here?" Paramānanda Puri submitted his prayer that the Lord should show favor to Junior Haridāsa. "Hearing this request, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu replied, 'My dear lord, please hear Me. It is better for you to stay here with all the Vaiṣṇavas. Please give Me permission to go to Ālālanātha. I shall remain there alone; only Govinda will go with me.' After saying this, the Lord called for Govinda. Offering obeisances to Paramānanda Puri, He got up and began to leave."

* This section occurs in the second chapter of *Antya-lilā*, verses 125–34

What is relishable about this scene is its spontaneity. Lord Caitanya was threatening to leave, He immediately started for the door, “Govinda! Let’s go!” It is such an impulsive act. When we read this pastime, we are filled with the same anxiety that Paramānanda Purī experienced. “In great haste Paramānanda Purī Gosāṇi went before Him and with great humility persuaded Him to sit down in His own room.”

Lord Caitanya was already standing, ready to leave. In effect, He told Paramānanda, “Now sit here and take over. You be the *ācārya*. You be Lord Caitanya if you can. If you want to be so merciful to Junior Haridāsa, *you* be in charge. I’m leaving.”

“No, no, please stay, please stay, sit down. You are the independent Personality of Godhead. You can do whatever You like. Who can say anything above You?” In this way, Paramānanda Purī managed to pacify the Lord, but all the devotees see that the Lord’s anger is such a threat that He will cut off His relationship with them in a moment.

This is a candid moment between the Lord and His devotees. It is said that a *sādhū* has no private life; we are able to witness his behavior at all times. By Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī’s mercy, we are able to witness Lord Caitanya’s behavior even in His intimate moments. We don’t see the Lord only when He is preaching to the crowds, but we are able to see His various moods—His anger, His softness, His playfulness, His gravity. Thus we can glimpse the Lord as a person. A person has many sides to his personality. Why should Lord Caitanya not express anger if He feels anger? Because He always remains the *ācārya*, each of His moods is instructive. The Lord’s treatment of Choṭa Haridāsa is consistent. Although the devotees try to

wear down His resolve, He refuses to be defeated. Therefore, we can understand how seriously Lord Caitanya viewed Choṭa Haridāsa's transgression and be careful not to commit it ourselves.

THE LORD AS TEACHER

Lord Caitanya's teachings to Sanātana Gosvāmī are presented comprehensively in the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*. In *Madhya-līlā*, Chapter 21, Lord Caitanya begins to describe the opulence and sweetness of Kṛṣṇa and the nature of the spiritual world. After explaining the unlimited nature of the Vaikuṇṭha planets, Lord Caitanya quotes a verse (*Bhāg.* 3.2.21), where Kṛṣṇa is described as *tryadhīśa*, the master of threes. Lord Caitanya first gives the general meaning: Lord Kṛṣṇa is the master of Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Maheśvara. As a scholar, however, the Lord examines the verse further and gives another meaning: Kṛṣṇa is the master of the three Viṣṇus, Mahā-Viṣṇu, Garbhodakaśāyī Viṣṇu, and Kṣīrodakaśāyī Viṣṇu. Then the Lord presents a more confidential meaning: Lord Kṛṣṇa has three places of residence, Goloka Vṛndāvana, the Viṣṇulokas, and the material world, and even further, He is the sole proprietor.

While describing Vṛndāvana, Lord Caitanya quotes the following verse: "Vṛndāvana-dhāma is very soft due to the mercy of the Supreme Lord, and it is especially opulent due to conjugal love. The transcendental glories of the son of Mahārāja Nanda are exhibited here. Under the circumstances, not the least anxiety is awakened within us." (*Madhya* 21.45)

This is typical of Lord Caitanya's teachings to almost anyone. That is, He begins with the basic understanding and progresses to more confidential topics. In this case, He distinguishes the different forms of God and then concludes that worship of Vraja-Kṛṣṇa in the conjugal mood is topmost.

Sometimes, however, Lord Caitanya became overwhelmed by ecstasy when He described Kṛṣṇa's nature, although He mainly remained in the role of a teacher. He most openly expressed His ecstasies only with Svarūpa Dāmodara and Rāmānanda Rāya. Until this point in their pastimes, Lord Caitanya has accepted the role of Sanātana Gosvāmī's guru. Now He will become carried away by His own ecstasy in front of Sanātana Gosvāmī and say things He does not intend to say.

"When Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu described the opulences and spiritual potencies of Kṛṣṇa this way, there was an awakening of love of Kṛṣṇa within Him. His mind was immersed in the sweetness of conjugal love, and He quoted the following verse from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*." (*Madhya* 21.99)

In this case, Lord Caitanya did not become stunned or silent. Instead, He entered a state of ecstasy similar to what He experienced with Rāmānanda Rāya in which He recited one verse after another and explained their meanings. He thus began to speak about Kṛṣṇa's beauty.

My dear Sanātana, the sweet, attractive transcendental form of Kṛṣṇa is so nice. Just try to understand it. Even a fractional understanding of Kṛṣṇa's beauty can merge all three worlds in the ocean of love. He attracts all the living entities within the three worlds. . . . Ornaments caress that body, but the transcendental body of Kṛṣṇa is so beautiful that it beautifies the ornaments He wears. . . . Despite the wonderful beauty of

Kṛṣṇa, there is His three-curved style of standing, which beautifies that form. . . . Kṛṣṇa wears a pearl necklace that appears like a chain of white ducks around His neck. The peacock feather in His hair appears like a rainbow, and His yellow garments appear like lightning in the sky. Kṛṣṇa appears like a newly risen cloud, and the *gopīs* appear like newly grown grains in the field. Constant rains of nectarean pastimes fall upon these newly grown grains, and it seems that the *gopīs* are receiving beams of life from Kṛṣṇa, exactly as grains receive life from the rains. The Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa, is full in all six opulences, including His attractive beauty, which engages Him in conjugal love with the *gopīs*. Such sweetness is the quintessence of His qualities.

—*Madhya* 21.102, 105, 109–10

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's description culminates in a description of the effect of Kṛṣṇa's flute: "The sound of Kṛṣṇa's flute spreads in four directions. Even though Kṛṣṇa vibrates His flute within this universe, its sound pierces the universal covering and goes to the spiritual sky. Thus the vibration enters the ears of all inhabitants. It especially enters Goloka Vṛndāvana-dhāma and attracts the minds of the young damsels of Vrajabhūmi, bringing them forcibly to where Kṛṣṇa is present." (*Madhya* 21.141)

Finally, Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī informs us, "Resuming His external consciousness, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu told Sanātana Gosvāmī, 'I have not spoken of what I intended. Lord Kṛṣṇa is very merciful to you because by bewildering My mind, He has exposed His personal opulence and sweetness. He has caused you to hear all these things from Me for your understanding.'"

This is Lord Caitanya's explanation of His own ecstasy: because Sanātana is so qualified, Kṛṣṇa wanted him to receive the topmost understanding. Therefore, Kṛṣṇa forced Lord Caitanya to lose control.

THE LORD VISITS VṚNDĀVANA

Even Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmi tells us that he can give only a sample of Lord Caitanya's Vṛndāvana pastimes because it is impossible to describe them all. Anantadeva with thousands of hoods has been describing the Lord's pastimes from time immemorial and still has not reached their limit.

Of course, besides describing the pastimes, we cannot presume to understand the intimate nature of Lord Caitanya's feelings when He sees the trees, animals, Yamunā, and Govardhana Hill. At least we can note His daily schedule while in Vṛndāvana, His relationships with the Vrajavāsis, and how simply He arrived and spent His time chanting *japa*.

There are a number of descriptions in the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* of Lord Caitanya wanting to be alone. He expressed His desire for solitude as He traveled through the Jhārikhaṇḍa forest, and He also asked for a solitary place in Jagannātha Purī. This chapter contains another such reference.

By following Lord Caitanya's mood in this regard, we can learn how to find the balance between *sādhana* and preaching. Śrīla Prabhupāda considered the *goṣṭhyānandī* to be superior to the *bhajanānandī*, but that does not mean that the *goṣṭhyānandī* must always be speaking on the telephone to prove his proactive nature. In order to preach effectively, the

goṣṭhyānandī has to have spent time cultivating his Kṛṣṇa conscious heart. Otherwise, what will the *goṣṭhyānandī* have to say to others?

Therefore, Śrīla Prabhupāda and all the *ācāryas* always tended to their personal *sādhana*—not because *they* needed to, but to set an example for us.

In our case, taking time to hear and chant is not an indulgence. Only by practicing attentive and dedicated *sādhana* will we have sufficient strength to preach. We cannot give others something that we ourselves do not possess.

Lord Caitanya visited many *tirthas* in Vṛndāvana, but He always returned in the evening to Akrūra-tirtha and took His meal there. Then He went to Imli-talā and sat on a platform beneath an old tamarind tree to chant the holy names. At noon, He would return to Akrūra-tirtha and take lunch.

“All the people who lived near Akrūra-tirtha came to see Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, and due to the large crowds, the Lord could not peacefully chant the holy name. Therefore Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu would go to Vṛndāvana and sit in a solitary place. It was there that He chanted the holy name until noon. In the afternoon, people were able to speak to Him. The Lord told everyone of the importance of chanting the holy name.”

Therefore, He followed the schedule of chanting alone until noon, and then preaching the glories of the holy name. We should follow the spirit of this example.

LORD CAITANYA'S TRANSCENDENTAL MADNESS IN SEPARATION

INTRODUCTION

When we speak of Lord Caitanya's "madness in separation," we refer to His feelings of separation from Kṛṣṇa in the mood of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī. Lord Caitanya introduced worship of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī into this world; before His appearance, Her mood of separation was unknown.

The fourth chapter of *Ādi-līlā* discusses the three confidential reasons for Lord Caitanya's descent. One of those reasons is to taste Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī's mood and to understand His own sweetness as it is enjoyed by Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī. His early pastimes reveal only occasional hints of this purpose, although we see full manifestations of His desire to save the conditioned souls and to inaugurate the *saṅkīrtana* movement. Lord Caitanya did not openly fulfill this purpose until His last years at Jagannātha Puri, and He shared these pastimes only

with His most confidential associates, Svarūpa Dāmodara and Rāmānanda Rāya.

Although these pastimes are intimate, Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī invites us to hear of them. He tells us that Lord Caitanya taught His devotees by His own behavior. *Antya* 14.11 states: “Please hear faithfully this description of Caitanya Mahāprabhu’s ecstatic emotions. Thus you will come to know of His ecstatic love, and ultimately you will achieve love of Godhead.”

What exactly is Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī’s invitation? He does not invite us to try and experience Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī’s mood ourselves, but to understand and follow the mood of separation. Prabhupāda writes in his purport to *Antya* 14.14:

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu manifested Himself to show that cultivation of love for Kṛṣṇa in separation is the easiest way of success for all living entities. Despite this fact, there are some theosophists who declare that because Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, such cultivation is easy for Him but difficult for the living entity and that one can therefore approach Kṛṣṇa in any way he likes. To nullify this idea, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu demonstrated practically how one can achieve love of Kṛṣṇa by adopting Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī’s mood in separation from Kṛṣṇa.

Devotees sometimes ask whether we can cultivate the same feelings of separation the *gopīs* feel for Kṛṣṇa. We must eventually culture such a mood. At present, we experience the separation of total forgetfulness of God. “O son of Mahārāja Nanda, I am Your eternal servitor, yet somehow or other I have fallen into the ocean of birth and death. Please pick me

up from this ocean of death and place me as one of the atoms at Your lotus feet.” Now we need to reconnect ourselves to Kṛṣṇa. We start that process by feeling regret for our forgetfulness. We cannot jump over such basic separation to understand the *gopīs*’ feelings of separation, yet one will eventually lead to the other.

The *gopīs* experience separation because they have experienced union (*sambhoga*) with Kṛṣṇa. To help us cultivate the first stages of separation, namely, regret for our past sinful activities and for our lack of devotion, etc., we should hear of Lord Caitanya’s pastimes from Śrīla Prabhupāda.

One might ask how one can cultivate feelings of regret for ignorance or past sinful activities. To do so takes self-awareness. If we are self-aware, we will notice the moments when we choose sense gratification over pure devotion. We may be guilty of only small infractions or neglect, but if our choice is based on selfish desire rather than Kṛṣṇa’s satisfaction, we will feel regret. Such regret spurs us on to reform our attitude and our service.

We can also assess the low state of our consciousness and aspire to be better. We become disgusted when we see subtle or gross manifestations of lingering sex desire. Why can’t we become free of such things once and for all? Because of our past sinful activities. Remembering this, we feel regret.

Prabhupāda writes in one purport that sometimes, out of His mercy, Kṛṣṇa allows a devotee to see all of his material desires at once. Then the devotee is able to put them aside, never to experience them again. (*Bhāg.* 4.29.69)

Until that mercy is offered to us, we may catch ourselves offending devotees. We may catch ourselves emotionless or

self-absorbed as we stand before the beautiful Deities in the temple. We may catch ourselves lusting after palatable foods. We may catch ourselves devoid of the bold preaching spirit. We should pray to improve.

By cultivating these early stages of separation, we can increase our desire to be with Kṛṣṇa again. Of course, in the early stage, we cannot have union with Kṛṣṇa as the residents of Goloka Vṛndāvana experience it, but we can feel Kṛṣṇa's presence more in our lives and increase our faith in Prabhupāda's words of assurance that this is true. We will come more to understand that Kṛṣṇa and His holy name are nondifferent and we will chant more conscientiously. We will come more to understand that Kṛṣṇa is nondifferent from the Deity and we will stop neglecting Him. We come to Kṛṣṇa after separation from Him. We first regret our misbehavior and our voluntary absence from Him, then we go to the Deity and the holy name and learn to associate with Kṛṣṇa with relish and determination. Even if bad thoughts come, we no longer let them hinder our progress.

These are some examples of tasting union with Kṛṣṇa after separation as can be experienced in the neophyte stage. After a bout with *māyā*, we are glad to be back with Kṛṣṇa and His devotees. Our happiness is then a testimony of Kṛṣṇa consciousness in union with the Lord and the Vaiṣṇavas.

THE PASTIMES BEGIN

During the final years of Lord Caitanya's pastimes, His mood suddenly intensifies. One day, while the Lord was resting, He dreamt that He saw Kṛṣṇa performing the *rāsa* dance. The

gopīs were dancing in a circle and in the middle of the circle were Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. He became overwhelmed with feelings of ecstasy: “Now I am with Kṛṣṇa in Vṛndāvana.” Because Govinda saw that the Lord was sleeping late, he woke Him. When the Lord realized He had only been dreaming, He felt morose.

He performed His daily duties and then went to see Lord Jagannātha in the temple. As He stood by the Garuḍa-stambha, observing the Deities from a distance,* a woman from Orissa climbed up the Garuḍa-stambha and put her foot on the Lord’s shoulder in order to be able to see Lord Jagannātha. The Lord had been seeing Kṛṣṇa in Vṛndāvana playing on His flute as He gazed at the Deities, but when He saw the woman, He returned to external consciousness and thought He had suddenly come to Kurukṣetra.

Suddenly He realized that He had lost Vṛndāvana. He returned to the Gambhīrā feeling morose and spoke with the feelings of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī. “I found Kṛṣṇa, the Lord of Vṛndāvana, but I have lost Him again. Who has taken My Kṛṣṇa? Where have I come?”

This pastime begins Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī’s discussion of the Lord’s intense madness in separation (*divyon-māda*). The remaining chapters of *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* will be taken up with information and pastimes describing Lord Caitanya’s pastimes in this mood. Prabhupāda again reminds us that although these descriptions and pastimes are advanced

* The first time Lord Caitanya went to the Jagannātha temple, He went up to the altar to see the Deities. He fell into an ecstatic trance. Later He said that that incident caused Him great inconvenience, so He would now only view the Deities from the back of the temple, beside the Garuḍa-stambha.

topics, we are meant to hear them. He writes, “The author of *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, however, has tried to explain this *divyon-māda* as far as possible, and it is our duty simply to appreciate it as far as possible.” (*Antya* 14.37, purport) Then he quotes *Antya* 14.11: “My dear readers, simply try to hear this description with faith and love. That will help you to understand transcendental ecstasy, and at last you will achieve love of God very easily.” Therefore, we can understand that hearing Kṛṣṇa’s pastimes purifies us and allows us to attain even the advanced levels of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

THE LORD’S ECSTATIC BODILY TRANSFORMATIONS

“Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī’s emotions after seeing Uddhava exactly correspond to those of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. He always conceived of Himself in Her position and sometimes thought that He was Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī Herself.” (*Antya* 14.14) In a later purport, Śrīla Prabhupāda lists the ten symptoms of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī’s *divyon-māda* and shows how Lord Caitanya’s moods were also present in Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī. The verse states: “The ten bodily transformations resulting from separation from Kṛṣṇa are anxiety, wakefulness, mental agitation, thinness, uncleanness, talking like a madman, disease, madness, illusion and death.” (Prabhupāda elaborately describes each of these states in his purport.) “Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu was overwhelmed night and day by these ten ecstatic conditions. Whenever such symptoms arose, His mind became unsteady.” (*Antya* 14.54)

Svarūpa Dāmodara and Rāmānanda Rāya helped the Lord in His changing moods by singing songs and quoting verses. Then His two companions would leave Him alone for some time and He would spend the night chanting Kṛṣṇa's holy names. Sometimes the Lord would become quiet and they would go to see if He was all right.

On one such night, Svarūpa Dāmodara went in to see Lord Caitanya, but the Lord had disappeared. They searched for Him using warning lamps and finally found Him unconscious outside the Simha-dvāra gate, His body elongated to eight feet long and all His joints slackened. The devotees brought Him back to external consciousness by chanting in His ear.

This is the first description we read of Lord Caitanya's extraordinary bodily transformations. Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī states: "No one has witnessed such bodily changes elsewhere, nor has anyone read of them in the revealed scriptures. Yet Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, the supreme *sannyāsī*, exhibited these ecstatic symptoms." (*Antya* 14.81) Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī witnessed all the Lord's ecstasies and recorded information about His ecstatic transformations. Therefore, Rūpa Gosvāmī was able to exactly delineate every kind of bodily symptom that one may have in transcendental ecstasy. Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī adds that because these transformations have not been described in the revealed scriptures, people in general tend to disbelieve them, but "I believe in them totally."

An unsteady devotee may become doubtful when reading these passages, even though Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī warns us not to disbelieve them. The doubter may say, "In a previous chapter of this book, you said that we should not

believe people's claims that someone is an *avatāra* of Kṛṣṇa if all their activities are not described in *śāstra*. Here you are telling us to accept Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī's account of Lord Caitanya's bodily transformations. You even say that Rūpa Gosvāmī was able to take these accounts and write a book such as *Ujjvala-nilamaṇi*, which describes all the bodily transformations in detail. Under which *ācārya*'s authority do you make these statements?"

We accept the threefold authority of *guru*, *śāstra*, and *sādhū*. The Six Gosvāmīs are *sādhū*s of the highest class. Their conclusions are nondifferent from the scriptural conclusions. As Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura said of his *guru*, Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura, "His songs are nondifferent from Vedic conclusions." If the *ācāryas* sometimes tell us something so confidential that it is not detailed in the revealed scriptures, we should not disbelieve their words. We should trust the previous *ācāryas* and understand that Kṛṣṇa can reveal information to them directly in their hearts and not only by reading *śāstric* texts. Thus it is said, *yasya deve parā bhaktir, yathā-deve tathā gurau*: "Only to one who has implicit faith in *guru* and Kṛṣṇa are the Vedic truths revealed." Because the *ācāryas* are full of faith, these truths have been revealed to them. Unless we have faith in them, we will not be able to understand the Vedic conclusions, no matter how well read we are.

Śrīla Prabhupāda assured us that Śrīla Vyāsadeva would not put fairy tales into the *śāstra*. Therefore, we should accept Kṛṣṇa's *līlās* as literal facts. Similarly, Lord Caitanya's followers would not concoct descriptions of the Lord's ecstatic symptoms to sensationalize their audience. The Lord's associates are *grave*, *scholarly*, and *truthful sādhū*s. Beyond that,

they are eternally liberated souls. Therefore, their statements are as good as Vedic evidence.

One day while Lord Caitanya was going to bathe in the sea, He saw a sand dune named Caṭaka-parvata, and He mistook it for Govardhana Hill. He began to run toward the hill so fast that His companions could not keep up. The *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* tells us that the Lord ran “with the speed of the wind.” Then Lord Caitanya became stunned in ecstasy and “lost all strength to proceed further.”

The flesh at each of His pores erupted like pimples, and His hair, standing on end, appeared like *kadamba* flowers. Blood and perspiration flowed incessantly from every pore of His body, and He could not speak a word but simply produced a gargling sound within His throat. The Lord’s eyes filled up and overflowed with unlimited tears, like the Ganges and Yamunā meeting in the sea. His entire body faded to the color of a white conchshell, and then He began to quiver, like the waves in the ocean. While quivering in this way, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu fell down on the ground.

—*Antya* 14.92–6

The devotees felt great anxiety to see Lord Caitanya in this astonishing condition. These pastimes are not relishable for the devotees in the sense that they have to see Lord Caitanya in what appears to be such pain. Again, the devotees tried to bring Him back to external consciousness by chanting loudly into His ear, “Hare Kṛṣṇa, Haribol!” Then He returned to partial consciousness.

Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī explains that the Lord was always in one of three states of consciousness: external, in-

ternal, or half-external. In His external consciousness, He carried on His duties in communication with the other devotees. In His internal state, He was absorbed in seeing Kṛṣṇa's pastimes and did not communicate with His devotees. It was at these times that His body would undergo ecstatic transformation. In His half-external consciousness, the Lord would speak like a madman, but also question, "Where am I? Who are you? I was with Kṛṣṇa and you have all taken Me away from Him."

In this half-external consciousness, the Lord asked, "Who has brought Me here from Govardhana Hill? I was seeing Lord Kṛṣṇa's pastimes, but now I cannot see them. Today I went from here to Govardhana Hill to find out if Kṛṣṇa were tending His cows there. I saw Lord Kṛṣṇa climbing Govardhana Hill and playing His flute, surrounded on all sides by grazing cows. Hearing the vibration of Kṛṣṇa's flute, Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī and all Her *gopī* friends came there to meet Him. . . . When Kṛṣṇa and Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī entered a cave together, the other *gopīs* asked Me to pick some flowers." (*Antya*, 14.105–9)

The significance of this *lilā* is that Lord Caitanya participated in it in the mood of a *mañjarī*. Lord Caitanya is actually Kṛṣṇa in the mood of Rādhā, but sometimes, because He wants to taste all the different mellows, He becomes a *mañjarī* assistant of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī. This mellow is possible for *jīvas* to attain, although they cannot attain Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī's mood. Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī will explain more about this point in the last chapters of his book.

LORD CAITANYA TASTES THE MOOD OF THE GOPĪS

One day while going to the beach, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu saw a flower garden and mistook it for Vṛndāvana. He entered the garden and began to search for Kṛṣṇa. He experienced the same mood of separation the *gopīs* felt when they searched for Kṛṣṇa after He left the *rāsa* dance arena. In that mood, He recited verses from the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*: “O *cūta* tree, *priyāla* tree, *panasa*, *āsana* and *kovidāra*! O *jambu* tree, O *arka* tree, O *bel*, *bakula* and *mango*! O *kadamba* tree, O *nipa* tree and all other trees living on the bank of the Yamunā for the welfare of others, please let us know where Kṛṣṇa has gone. We have lost our minds and are almost dead.” (*Antya* 15.32) Lord Caitanya then addressed the *tulasī* plant, and the *mālātī*, *mallikā*, *jāti* and *yūthikā* flowers, the creepers and the she-deer, “‘Have you seen Kṛṣṇa coming this way? Kindly tell us . . . ’” Saying this, the *gopīs* stepped onto the beach by the Yamunā River. There they saw Lord Kṛṣṇa beneath a *kadamba* tree.”

In the same way, Lord Caitanya suddenly also saw Kṛṣṇa. As soon as the Lord received Kṛṣṇa’s *darśana*, He fell unconscious. “At that time, all the devotees, headed by Svarūpa Dāmodara Gosvāmī, joined Him in the garden. . . . Once again all the devotees brought Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu back to consciousness by a concerted effort. Then the Lord got up and began wandering here and there, looking all around. . . . ‘Where has My Kṛṣṇa gone? I saw Him just now, and His beauty has captured My eyes and mind.’” (*Antya* 15.57, 59–60)

We say that Lord Caitanya exhibited these moods so that devotees can learn to follow His mood of separation in

worshipping Kṛṣṇa. One may ask, therefore, whether we should try to see Vṛndāvana wherever we go and whether that is a good meditation for a devotee.

We should not do anything artificial. It is possible to see Vṛndāvana-dhāma wherever we go, and the best way to do this is to actually visit Vṛndāvana-dhāma in India. Then our minds will carry the actual impressions and wherever we are in the world, we will be able to recall them.

Prabhupāda promises that if we go to Vṛndāvana even today, we will find it so beautiful that we will be immediately Kṛṣṇa conscious. If this is true, why can't we retain a simple memory of Vṛndāvana when we are elsewhere? One day when Prabhupāda took a morning walk near Bhaktivedanta Manor, he looked out at the fields over Letchmore Heath and said it was just like Vṛndāvana.

We were surprised to hear Prabhupāda say that. It indicated, of course, his elevated Vṛndāvana consciousness. But when we looked in the same direction Prabhupāda was looking, we could see that even in terms of topography, the land resembled the topography of Vṛndāvana—the fields, the low hills. Prabhupāda was able to awaken Vṛndāvana consciousness in us by such remarks. If we also remember Vṛndāvana wherever we are, we can take it as a good sign, but we should not do it sentimentally. Nor should we attempt to imitate the *gopīs* or Lord Caitanya in His intense separation from Kṛṣṇa. A devotee walking in a Pennsylvanian forest should not concoct and think that he should look for secret rendezvous spots for Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa in the forest or other such “meditations.”

The Lord spent twelve years tasting the ecstasy of separation, and His condition grew more and more intense.

Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī tells us that the Lord performed His outer activities “just as a potter’s wheel turns without the potter touching it.” His bathing, eating, and going to the temple were all performed automatically because He remained always absorbed in the ecstatic emotion of “Where is Kṛṣṇa? Why has He left Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī and all the devotees of Vraja?” This *vipralambha* is the transcendental madness that Lord Caitanya experienced.

Both Svarūpa Dāmodara and Rāmānanda Rāya were expert in relishing these *rasas*. Lord Caitanya would speak to them as Rādhārāṇī speaking to Her friends, “My dear friend, please tell Me what I should do. Kṛṣṇa is as attractive as a wonderful cloud, and My eyes are just like *cātaka* birds, which are dying of thirst because they do not see such a cloud.” (*Antya* 15.65)

When Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī was experiencing *vipralambha*, Her friends maintained Her life. Her friends thought that Rādhārāṇī could die at any moment. Therefore, they tried to solace Her in Her separation and give Her hope that Kṛṣṇa would return from Mathurā. Similarly, Svarūpa Dāmodara, who is Lalitā in his eternal identity, and Rāmānanda Rāya, who is Viśākhā, tried to solace Lord Caitanya.

Svarūpa Dāmodara would sing beautiful songs to the Lord. He knew exactly which songs would enhance the mood that Lord Caitanya was currently tasting. Rāmānanda Rāya was expert in selecting *ślokas* from *Gītā-govinda*, *Bhāgavatam*, and other sources that would plunge the Lord further into Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī’s *mahā-bhāva*.

The Lord’s entrance into the garden was summed up in a verse by Rūpa Gosvāmī in his *Caitanyāṣṭaka*: “Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu is the topmost of all devotees. Sometimes, while

walking on the beach, He would see a beautiful garden nearby and mistake it for the forest of Vṛndāvana. Thus He would be completely overwhelmed by ecstatic love of Kṛṣṇa and begin to dance and chant the holy name. His tongue worked incessantly as He chanted, 'Kṛṣṇa! Kṛṣṇa!' Will He again become visible before the path of my eyes?"

THE LORD TASTES NECTAR

Chapter 16 of the *Antya-līlā* is titled, "Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu Tastes Nectar from the Lips of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa" and describes how the Lord tastes that nectar by tasting Jagannātha *prasādam*.

One day, Lord Caitanya went to the Jagannātha temple. The doorkeeper approached Him and offered His obeisances. Lord Caitanya caught the doorkeeper's hand and asked, "Where is Kṛṣṇa, My life and soul? Please show Me Kṛṣṇa." The doorkeeper became caught up in the Lord's mood and said, "The son of Mahārāja Nanda is here; please come along with me, and I shall show You."

Then the servants of Lord Jagannātha offered Lord Caitanya the Lord's *prasādam*. "The *prasāda* was so nice that its aroma alone, to say nothing of its taste, would drive the mind mad." He took a portion of that *prasādam* and Govinda took the rest, wrapped it up, and brought it back to the other devotees. As soon as Lord Caitanya tasted the *prasādam*, His hair stood on end and incessant tears flowed from His eyes because it tasted millions and millions of times better than any nectar. He asked, "Where has such a taste in this *prasāda* come from?"

Certainly it is due to having been touched by the nectar of Kṛṣṇa's lips."

Throughout the day, Lord Caitanya constantly remembered the taste of that *prasādam*. After finishing His evening duties, He gathered all His associates and distributed that same *prasādam* to them. "These ingredients, such as sugar, camphor, black pepper, cardamom, cloves, butter, and spices and licorice, are all material. Everyone has tasted these material substances before. However, in these ingredients there are extraordinary tastes and uncommon fragrances. Just taste them and see the difference in the experience . . . Therefore, it is to be understood that the spiritual nectar of Kṛṣṇa's lips has touched these ordinary ingredients and transferred to them all their spiritual qualities. An uncommon, greatly enchanting fragrance and taste that make one forget all other experiences are attributes of Kṛṣṇa's lips." (*Antya* 16.108–113)

Understanding the Lord's mood, Rāmānanda Rāya began to recall appropriate verses. Thus he recited verses from the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and the *Gopī-gīta* about the *adhara-amṛtam*, the nectar of Kṛṣṇa's lips. Then Lord Caitanya also began to recite verses. When Lord Caitanya recited verses, He often spontaneously gave His own elaboration on them, speaking in the mood of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī.

Finally, as the Lord's mood changed from anger at Kṛṣṇa's attempt to kill the *gopīs* with the vibration of His flute to increased mental agitation, Rāmānanda Rāya quoted the famous verse from the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (10.21.9): "My dear *gopīs*, what auspicious activities must the flute have performed to enjoy the nectar of Kṛṣṇa's lips independently and leave only a taste for the *gopīs* for whom that nectar is actually

meant. The forefathers of the flute, the bamboo trees, shed tears of pleasure. His mother, the river, on whose bank the bamboo was born, feels jubilation, and therefore her blooming lotus flowers are standing like hair on her body.”

“While thus speaking like a madman, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu became full of ecstatic emotion. In the company of His two friends, Svarūpa Dāmodara Gosvāmī and Rāmānanda Rāya, He sometimes danced, sometimes sang and sometimes became unconscious in ecstatic love. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu passed His days and nights in this way.” (*Antya* 16.150)

A devotee may ask how we may practice to understand that *prasādam* is indeed *adhara-āmṛtam* and not sense gratification. Is there some practical method we can follow?

Prabhupāda encouraged us to understand that *prasādam* is spiritual. We can have some appreciation, even if we have not yet attained the higher levels of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Prabhupāda liked to quote the verse, *ataḥ śrī-kṛṣṇa-nāmādi*, and then comment on how odd it sounds that spiritual life begins with the tongue and not some other part of the body. Yet it is a fact, because with our tongue we chant Hare Kṛṣṇa and taste *kṛṣṇa-prasādam*. Śrīla Prabhupāda encouraged us to “taste *kṛṣṇa-prasādam*,” but not to engage in sense gratification. Therefore, we are supposed to taste it as spiritual.

In recent years in *Back To Godhead* magazine, Viśākhā Prabhu wrote an article describing Śacīdevī’s offering of *bhoga* to her household Deity. Śacīdevī cooked all kinds of preparations dear to her son, Nimāi. She took the food upon her lap and cried as she remembered how dear all this food was to her son. Lord Caitanya related this story to Śrīvāsa Ṭhākura in *Madhya-līla*, 15.57–63. The Lord told Śrīvāsa, “My mother was

thinking, 'Nimāi is not here. Who will accept all this food?' As she meditated upon Me in this way, her eyes filled with tears. While she was thinking thus and crying, I immediately went there with great haste and ate everything. Seeing the dish empty, she wiped her tears away. She then began to wonder who had eaten all that food. 'Why is the plate empty?' she wondered . . .

"She began to wonder if there was actually anything on the plate in the first place. Then again she thought that some animal might have come and eaten everything. She thought, 'Perhaps by mistake I did not put any food on the plate. . . . ' When she saw that all the pots were still filled with rice and vegetables, there was some doubt in her mind, and she was astonished. . . . She then offered another plate to Gopāla."

Viśākhā Prabhu comments:

Atheists and impersonalists, who think that the Supreme Lord is nonexistent or has no senses, cannot understand this pastime. To them it is simply mythology. But in actuality, Lord Caitanya's pastimes are transcendental and thus inconceivable to mundane philosophers. The Lord promises in the *Bhagavad-gītā* that 'If one offers Me with love and devotion a leaf, a flower, fruit, or water, I will accept it.' He is not speaking metaphorically. Because He is absolute, His hearing, seeing, and smelling are wholly identical with His eating and tasting . . . the fortunate devotee who makes an offering of love directly relishes the Lord's association, just as the Lord directly relishes the love of His devotee. . . . If our attempt is serious and sincere—wherever and whoever we are—the Lord will surely come, for He is not hindered by time, place, circumstance,

or any other material condition. When the simple, transcendental ingredients of love and devotion are in the offering, Lord Caitanya is present.

Śrīla Prabhupāda writes in his purport to *Bhagavad-gītā* 2.63: “. . . for an impersonalist, the Lord, or the Absolute, being impersonal, cannot eat. Whereas an impersonalist tries to avoid good eatables, a devotee knows that Kṛṣṇa is the supreme enjoyer and that He eats all that is offered to Him in devotion. So, after offering good eatables to the Lord, the devotee takes the remnants, called *prasādam*. Thus everything becomes spiritualized, and there is no danger of a downfall. The devotee takes *prasādam* in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, whereas the nondevotee rejects it as material. The impersonalist, therefore, cannot enjoy life, due to his artificial renunciation; and for this reason, a slight agitation of the mind pulls him down again into the pool of material existence.”

It is important not to fall into sense gratification when we cook for Kṛṣṇa and then taste His *prasādam*. The offering shouldn't be rubber-stamped “*kṛṣṇa-prasādam*,” but should be made and honored with love.

Offering *prasādam* should come from the heart. An empty ritual does not magically transform ordinary food into *adhara-amṛtam*. It is no small thing to offer food to God and thus free the food and ourselves from association with sin. Almost no other religion in the world understands this principle. They think only of thanksgiving; they have no concept of actually preparing food to please God's senses and then offering it to Him. This practice is Śrīla Prabhupāda's sublime gift to us. “The tongue is the most voracious of all the senses, but Kṛṣṇa is very

kind to give us His *mahā-prasādam*. Now let us take this *prasādam* to our full satisfaction and glorify Their Lordships, Śrī Śrī Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa.”

How can a devotee ensure that his offering is not ritualistic? I remember showing slides once to a college class. One slide showed devotees offering *prasādam*. I told the class that we never eat food to satisfy our senses. Rather, we cook for Kṛṣṇa and then offer the preparations to Him. Only when Kṛṣṇa is satisfied do we honor the food. The professor mocked, “I bet there’s only a minute separating Kṛṣṇa’s eating from your eating.” The class laughed and I felt hurt and offended. Later, however, I examined my feelings and saw that maybe I was guilty of what the professor said. That is, thinking of my own eating while making the offering.

I realized that it is important to make the offering in a sanctified atmosphere, and that atmosphere is cultivated in all aspects of our lives—how we chant, how we read, how we go about our Kṛṣṇa conscious duties, how we live our home life. The more we live in the mode of goodness, the more sanctified the atmosphere will become and the more devotional our offerings.

ISKCON’s wide *prasādam* distribution should similarly be carried on in a sanctified way. Then we will be certain that we are distributing potent spiritual *prasādam* to the people. And when we sit down to eat in devotee gatherings, we will be able to taste the *adhara-āmṛtam*, the nectar of Kṛṣṇa’s lips, and not the processed flavorings of Breyer’s ice cream and Coca-cola.

MORE PASTIMES

One night, Lord Caitanya was chanting and then again fell silent. All the doors to His room were locked, but the devotees discovered that somehow, the Lord had left the room. This time, they found Him lying unconscious at the southern gate of the temple, His body contracted like a tortoise. Cows were sniffing at His body.

The devotees were horrified to see their Lord in this condition and they chanted into His ear to bring Him back to external consciousness. Again, He only came to half-external consciousness. “Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu stood up, and then sat down again. Looking here and there, He inquired from Svarūpa Dāmodara, ‘Where have you brought Me? After hearing the vibration of a flute, I went to Vṛndāvana, and there I saw that Kṛṣṇa, the son of Mahārāja Nanda, was playing on His flute in the pasturing grounds. He brought Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī to a bower by signaling with His flute. Then He entered that bower to perform pastimes with Her. I entered the bower just behind Kṛṣṇa, My ears captivated by the sound of His ornaments. I saw Kṛṣṇa and the *gopīs* enjoying . . . Just then, all of you made a tumultuous sound and brought Me back here by force . . . I could no longer hear their nectarean voices . . .” (Antya 17.22–28)

Once again, Lord Caitanya was watching Kṛṣṇa’s pastimes in the mood of a *mañjarī*.

“On an autumn evening when the moon was full, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu walked along the seashore near the Āiṭoṭā temple.”

We can still visit these places in Jagannātha Puri. Although Jagannātha Puri has become somewhat materialistic due to having become a vacation spot, we can still study these pastimes and try to remember them as we walk the beach or see the various gardens. When Lord Caitanya brought the body of Haridāsa Ṭhākura into that ocean to bathe him, He proclaimed that the ocean would become a *tīrtha* from that day forward. We can also remember this pastime where the Lord saw the moon over the ocean, mistook it for the Yamunā River, and entered the water to participate in Kṛṣṇa's water sports with the *gopis*.

Externally, Lord Caitanya was carried away by the ocean's waves which washed Him miles away to Koṇārka, where the sun temple is. The devotees could not find the Lord anywhere and they all began to lament that Lord Caitanya had finally disappeared. They searched along the beach all night. Finally, Svarūpa Dāmodara came upon a fisherman who was in great distress because he thought he had been possessed by a ghost. He thought that he had caught some object in his net which had possessed him. Because the fisherman was constantly chanting "Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa!" Svarūpa Dāmodara understood that this man must have come in contact with Lord Caitanya.

Svarūpa Dāmodara assured the fisherman that he was a famous exorcist and that he could free him from the ghost. Then he chanted some mantras and slapped him three times. The fisherman was relieved, but when Svarūpa Dāmodara told him that he wanted to see the person he had caught in his net, the fisherman again became afraid. Svarūpa Dāmodara said, "My dear sir, the person whom you are thinking a ghost is not

actually a ghost but the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Mahāprabhu.”

Śrīla Prabhupāda spoke about this fisherman with amusement in a lecture he gave in Māyāpur in 1974. He was speaking on *Bhāg.* 1.8.47, “King Yudhiṣṭhira, son of Dharma, overwhelmed by the death of his friends, was aggrieved just like a common, materialistic man. O sages, thus deluded by affection, he began to speak.” He then explained the difference between *moha*, illusion, and *sneha*, real affection. *Sneha* is not on the bodily concept. Then Prabhupāda said:

This morning I was reading the statement of a fisherman who caught Caitanya Mahāprabhu in His trance, and by touching Caitanya Mahāprabhu he became spiritually ecstatic, but he thought that he had become ghostly haunted: “Here is a ghost.” He was thinking, “I am ghostly haunted, so if I become mad, who will take care of my wife and children?” This is the position. The fisherman simply by touching Him, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, he was so much spiritually advanced that he was chanting, dancing, crying—all the symptoms of spiritual ecstatic transformation were visible in his body. But he thought that he had gone mad on account of touching the body, ghost. . . . This is *sneha*.

This fisherman appears to be an odd person in Lord Caitanya’s *līlā*. Although his love of God was awakened by his contact with the Lord’s body, he continued to meditate on his ordinary affairs. In the same lecture, Prabhupāda then told a story about a mother monkey and her baby.

Even the lower animals, they are also thinking of giving protection to the children. I have got personal experience in Kanpur. I was sitting in my room, and one monkey was outside

the door with her kitty to take something out of my eating. But by chance the small kitty entered through the bars of the window within the room, and I saw the mother became almost mad immediately. "Oh, my son has gone inside and it will not be allowed to come again." Anyway, I managed to push the small kitty to go away; then she was relieved. So this affection for children, for wife, for family members, increase, then to society, to country, even to the whole human society . . . all these activities are simply *moha*, illusion. Only *moha*.

Like the fisherman, we too may sometimes have a peak experience, but then it is followed by ridiculous materialistic considerations. We go from the sublime to the ridiculous. When this happens, it is proof that we are still actually on a lower level. If one actually "sees" Kṛṣṇa, then he is changed forever and no longer worries about the life he is leaving behind.

This fisherman's behavior instructs us about the unsteady platform. If we are on such a platform where we sometimes taste nectar and sometimes fall into ridiculous thoughts, we have no alternative but to continue practicing Kṛṣṇa consciousness and hoping to attain more steadiness.

The fisherman said, "I have seen the Lord many times, but this is not He. This body is very deformed." Svarūpa Dāmodara explained that the Lord's body becomes transformed in His ecstatic moods. The fisherman then led the devotees to Lord Caitanya.

The devotees revived Lord Caitanya after first cleaning the sand from His body. Lord Caitanya told them that He had been participating in Kṛṣṇa's water sports.

"In his half-external consciousness, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu talked like a madman. . . . 'Seeing the river Yamunā, I

went to Vṛndāvana. There I saw the son of Nanda Mahārāja performing His sporting pastimes in the water.” This is again the Lord tasting the mood of the *gopī-mañjarīs*, Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī’s assistants. While Rādhā and Her friends are playing with Kṛṣṇa in the water, the *mañjarīs* watch and assist from the shore. Their *bhāva* is not to seek direct union with Kṛṣṇa as the *sakhīs* do, but to assist the *gopīs*, especially Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī’s party, in their service to Kṛṣṇa.

Then the Lord returned to external consciousness. He spoke to His devotees. With great care, they wiped the sea water and sand from His body and carried Him back to His residence.

It is touching for us to see the extent of the devotees’ anxiety for their Lord. Only Svarūpa Dāmodara Gosvāmī and Rāmānanda Rāya and perhaps a few others can understand the depth of the Lord’s ecstasy, but each devotee knows that Lord Caitanya is the Lord of their lives. They express their devotion for Him in these loving exchanges of finding Him wherever His ecstasy has taken Him and bringing Him back to the Gambhirā.

Sometimes devotees wonder why the devotees brought Lord Caitanya out of His ecstatic trances at all, since tasting such feelings is the confidential purpose of His advent.

Actually, this shows the love the devotees felt for Lord Caitanya. It gave the devotees great pain to see the Lord’s body stretch to eight feet long and all His bones separated from their joints. If we were to see someone dear to us in such a condition, we would be similarly distressed. It was more than the devotees could bear. They could not simply think that Lord Caitanya was relishing the ecstasies internally; they only wanted to bring Him back to life.

THE FINAL PASTIMES

Every year, the devotees from Bengal would come to see Lord Caitanya, led by Advaita Ācārya and Lord Nityānanda. Around this time, Lord Caitanya asked them not to come anymore. Although the Lord told the devotees that they should not undertake so much austerity to visit Him, His deeper reason was that His ecstasies and internal mood were so dominant that He was unable to reciprocate with them.

One year, Lord Caitanya sent Jagadānanda Paṇḍita with gifts for His mother and asked him to visit all the devotees on His behalf. Before leaving, Jagadānanda visited Advaita Ācārya, who gave him a message to deliver to Lord Caitanya. The message was written in the form of a four-lined poem. Śrīla Prabhupāda refers to it as an “equivocal sonnet” because its meaning was hidden.

The poem is as follows: “Please inform Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, who is acting like a madman, that everyone here has become mad like Him. Inform Him also that in the marketplace, rice is no longer in demand. Those now mad in ecstatic love are no longer interested in the material world. Tell Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu that Advaita Prabhu, who has also become a madman in ecstatic love, has spoken these words.” (*Antya* 19.20–1)

Jagadānanda Paṇḍita laughed when he heard these words because he did not understand their inner meaning. Thus he carried the message back to Lord Caitanya.

The third chapter of *Ādi-līlā* describes that Advaita Ācārya was one of the causes of the Lord’s descent. Similarly, He is one of the causes of the Lord’s disappearance. Therefore, He

sent Him notice through this sonnet that because Lord Caitanya has distributed love of Godhead so freely, “rice is no longer in demand in the marketplace.” If someone is so successful in business that he manages to sell large stocks of rice and fill all the demand, then the business is successful but it is also finished. Lord Caitanya’s agents had been distributing “rice” (*kṛṣṇa-prema*) all over Gauḍa-deśa. All the *jīvas* were satisfied. The Lord’s agents now had no more work to perform. Therefore, there was no point in remaining in the material world. In this way, Advaita Ācārya suggested that Lord Caitanya could return to the spiritual world.

Lord Caitanya said only, “That is His order,” upon hearing the message, and smiling quietly, fell silent. Although Svarūpa Dāmodara understood Advaita Ācārya’s meaning, he asked the Lord to explain the meaning of the sonnet.

Lord Caitanya replied: “Advaita Ācārya is a great worshiper of the Lord and is very expert in the regulative principles enjoined in the Vedic literatures. Advaita Ācārya invites the Lord to come and be worshiped, and to perform the worship. He keeps the Deity for some time. After the worship is completed, He sends the Deity somewhere else. I do not know the meaning of this sonnet, nor do I know what is in Advaita Prabhu’s mind. . . .’ Hearing this, all the devotees were astonished, especially Svarūpa Dāmodara, who became somewhat morose.”

The metaphors are obvious: Lord Caitanya is the Deity and Advaita Ācārya is “sending the Deity away.”

After that incident, the Lord’s mood changed drastically and became more intense. In His mind, He began to meditate on Akrūra coming to take Kṛṣṇa away from Vṛndāvana. “Oh, how cruel you are, Providence, to take Kṛṣṇa away!” He recited

verse after verse and immersed Himself in the mood of the *gopīs*' separation.

As the intensity of His mood increased, Lord Caitanya began to injure Himself by rubbing against the walls of the Gambhirā. Therefore, the devotees asked Śaṅkara Paṇḍita to sleep in the Lord's room because Lord Caitanya would be too embarrassed to rub His face against the walls in his presence. Lord Caitanya would rest His legs on Śaṅkara's body and Śaṅkara would massage Him.

One of the last pastimes the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* records takes place in April–May in the Jagannātha-vallabha gardens. The moon was full and Lord Caitanya was dancing and reciting verses in the garden. Suddenly He saw Kṛṣṇa under an *aśoka* tree. He ran toward Kṛṣṇa, but then He fainted. Kṛṣṇa reappeared under another tree and then another, and Lord Caitanya got up and ran from tree to tree. Although He could no longer see Kṛṣṇa, the aroma of Kṛṣṇa's body filled the garden. The Lord then recited many beautiful verses about the fragrance of Kṛṣṇa's transcendental body.

Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī states: "The activities of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu are undoubtedly uncommon, especially His talking like a madman. Therefore, one who hears of these pastimes should not put forward mundane arguments. He should simply hear the pastimes with full faith. The evidence of the truth of these talks is found in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. There, in the section of the Tenth Canto known as the *Bhramara-gītā*, 'The Song to the Bumblebee,' Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī speaks insanely in ecstatic love for Kṛṣṇa." This is Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī's way of providing evidence that the Lord's ecstasies

are bona fide: they have been recorded in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

“If one becomes a servant of the servants of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and Lord Nityānanda Prabhu and is favored by Them, he can believe in all these discourses. Just try to hear these topics with faith, for there is great pleasure even in hearing them. That hearing will destroy all miseries pertaining to the body, mind and other living entities, and the unhappiness of false arguments as well. *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* is ever-increasingly fresh. Continuously hearing it pacifies one’s heart and ear.”

In this way, all of Lord Caitanya’s purposes were fulfilled. Although the confidential reasons for the Lord’s descent are not easily understood even by *bhaktas*, Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī shares them with us and asks us simply to hear with faith and become purified.

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