

## Introduction

The conception of God and the conception of Absolute Truth are not on the same level. The Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam hits on the target of the Absolute Truth. The conception of God indicates the controller, whereas the conception of the Absolute Truth indicates the summum bonum or the ultimate source of all energies. There is no difference of opinion about the personal feature of God as the controller because a controller cannot be impersonal. Of course modern government, especially democratic government, is impersonal to some extent, but ultimately the chief executive head is a person, and the impersonal feature of government is subordinate to the personal feature. So without a doubt whenever we refer to control over others we must admit the existence of a personal feature. Because there are different controllers for different managerial positions, there may be many small gods. According to the Bhagavad-gītā any controller who has some specific extraordinary power is called a vibhūtimat sattva, or controller empowered by the Lord. There are many vibhūtimat sattvas, controllers or gods with various specific powers, but the Absolute Truth is one without a second. This Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam designates the Absolute Truth or the summum bonum as the param̐ satyam.

The author of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, Śrīla Vyāsadeva, first offers his respectful obeisances unto the param̐ satyam (Absolute Truth), and because the param̐ satyam is the ultimate source of all energies, the param̐ satyam is the Supreme Person. The gods or the controllers are undoubtedly persons, but the param̐ satyam from whom the gods derive powers of control is the Supreme Person. The Sanskrit word īśvara (controller) conveys the import of God, but the Supreme Person is called the parameśvara, or the supreme īśvara. The Supreme Person, or parameśvara, is the supreme conscious personality, and because He does not derive any power from any other source, He is supremely independent. In the Vedic literatures Brahmā is described as the supreme god or the head of all other gods like Indra, Candra and Varuṇa, but the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam confirms that even Brahmā is not independent as far as his power and knowledge are concerned. He received knowledge in the form of the Vedas from the Supreme Person who resides within the heart of every living being. That Supreme Personality knows everything directly and indirectly. Individual infinitesimal persons, who are parts and parcels of the Supreme

Personality, may know directly and indirectly everything about their bodies or external features, but the Supreme Personality knows everything about both His external and internal features.

The words *janmādy asya* suggest that the source of all production, maintenance or destruction is the same supreme conscious person. Even in our present experience we can know that nothing is generated from inert matter, but inert matter can be generated from the living entity. For instance, by contact with the living entity, the material body develops into a working machine. Men with a poor fund of knowledge mistake the bodily machinery to be the living being, but the fact is that the living being is the basis of the bodily machine. The bodily machine is useless as soon as the living spark is away from it. Similarly, the original source of all material energy is the Supreme Person. This fact is expressed in all the Vedic literatures, and all the exponents of spiritual science have accepted this truth. The living force is called Brahman, and one of the greatest ācāryas (teachers), namely Śrīpāda Śaṅkarācārya, has preached that Brahman is substance whereas the cosmic world is category. The original source of all energies is the living force, and He is logically accepted as the Supreme Person. He is therefore conscious of everything past, present and future, and also of each and every corner of His manifestations, both material and spiritual. An imperfect living being does not even know what is happening within his own personal body. He eats his food but does not know how this food is transformed into energy or how it sustains his body. When a living being is perfect, he is aware of everything that happens, and since the Supreme Person is all-perfect, it is quite natural that He knows everything in all detail. Consequently the perfect personality is addressed in the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam as Vāsudeva, or one who lives everywhere in full consciousness and in full possession of His complete energy. All of this is clearly explained in the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, and the reader has ample opportunity to study this critically.

In the modern age Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu preached the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam by practical demonstration. It is easier to penetrate into the topics of the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam through the medium of Śrī Caitanya's causeless mercy. Therefore a short sketch of His life and precepts is inserted herein to help the reader understand the real merit of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam.

It is imperative that one learn the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam from the person Bhāgavatam. The person Bhāgavatam is one whose very life is Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam in practice. Since Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu is the Absolute Personality of Godhead, He is both Bhagavān and Bhāgavatam in person and in sound. Therefore His process of approaching the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam is practical for all people of the world. It was His wish that the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam be preached in every nook and corner of the world by those who happened to take their birth in India.

The Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam is the science of Kṛṣṇa, the Absolute Personality of Godhead of whom we have preliminary information from the text of the Bhagavad-gītā. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu has said that anyone, regardless of what he is, who is well versed in the science of Kṛṣṇa (Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam and Bhagavad-gītā) can become an authorized preacher or preceptor in the science of Kṛṣṇa.

There is a need for the science of Kṛṣṇa in human society for the good of all suffering humanity of the world, and we simply request the leaders of all nations to pick up this science of Kṛṣṇa for their own good, for the good of society and for the good of all the world's people.

A Short Sketch of the Life and Teachings of Lord Caitanya, the Preacher of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam

Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, the great apostle of love of God and the father of the congregational chanting of the holy name of the Lord, advented Himself at Śrīdhāma Māyāpura, a quarter in the city of Navadvīpa in Bengal, on the Phālgunī Pūrṇimā evening in the year 1407 Śakābda (corresponding to February 1486, by the Christian calendar).

His father, Śrī Jagannātha Miśra, a learned brāhmaṇa from the district of Sylhet, came to Navadvīpa as a student because at that time Navadvīpa was considered to be the center of education and culture. He domiciled on the banks of the Ganges after marrying Śrīmatī Śacīdevī, a daughter of Śrīla Nīlāmbara Cakravartī, the great learned scholar of Navadvīpa.

Jagannātha Miśra had a number of daughters by his wife, Śrīmatī Śacīdevī, and most of them expired at an early age. Two surviving sons, Śrī Viśvarūpa and Viśvambhara, became at last the object of their parental affection. The tenth and youngest son, who was named Viśvambhara, later

became known as Nimāi Paṇḍita and then, after accepting the renounced order of life, Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu exhibited His transcendental activities for forty-eight years and then disappeared from this mortal world in the year 1455 Śakābda at Purī.

For His first twenty-four years He remained at Navadvīpa as a student and householder. His first wife was Śrīmatī Lakṣmīpriyā, who died at an early age when the Lord was away from home. When He returned from East Bengal He was requested by His mother to accept a second wife, and He agreed. His second wife was Śrīmatī Viṣṇupriyā Devī, who bore the separation of the Lord throughout her life because the Lord took the order of sannyāsa at the age of twenty-four, when Śrīmatī Viṣṇupriyā was barely sixteen years old.

After taking sannyāsa, the Lord made His headquarters at Jagannātha Purī due to the request of His mother, Śrīmatī Śacīdevī. The Lord remained for twenty-four years at Purī. For six years of this time He traveled continuously all over India (and especially throughout southern India) preaching the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam.

Lord Caitanya not only preached the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam but propagated the teachings of the Bhagavad-gītā as well in the most practical way. In the Bhagavad-gītā Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa is depicted as the Absolute Personality of Godhead, and His last teachings in that great book of transcendental knowledge instruct that one should give up all the modes of religious activities and accept Him (Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa) as the only worshipable Lord. The Lord then assured that all His devotees would be protected from all sorts of sinful acts and that for them there would be no cause for anxiety.

Unfortunately, despite Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa's direct order and the teachings of the Bhagavad-gītā, less intelligent people misunderstand Him to be nothing but a great historical personality, and thus they cannot accept Him as the original Personality of Godhead. Such men with a poor fund of knowledge are misled by many nondevotees. Thus the teachings of the Bhagavad-gītā were misinterpreted even by great scholars. After the disappearance of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa there were hundreds of commentaries on

the Bhagavad-gītā by many erudite scholars, and almost every one of them was motivated by self-interest.

Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu is the selfsame Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa. This time, however, He appeared as a great devotee of the Lord in order to preach to the people in general, as well as to religionists and philosophers, about the transcendental position of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the primeval Lord and the cause of all causes. The essence of His preaching is that Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who appeared at Vrajabhūmi (Vṛndāvana) as the son of the King of Vraja (Nanda Mahārāja), is the Supreme Personality of Godhead and is therefore worshipable by all. Vṛndāvana-dhāma is nondifferent from the Lord because the name, fame, form and place where the Lord manifests Himself are all identical with the Lord as absolute knowledge. Therefore Vṛndāvana-dhāma is as worshipable as the Lord. The highest form of transcendental worship of the Lord was exhibited by the damsels of Vrajabhūmi in the form of pure affection for the Lord, and Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu recommends this process as the most excellent mode of worship. He accepts the Śrīmad-Bhāgavata Purāṇa as the spotless literature for understanding the Lord, and He preaches that the ultimate goal of life for all human beings is to attain the stage of premā, or love of God.

Many devotees of Lord Caitanya like Śrīla Vṛndāvana dāsa Ṭhākura, Śrī Locana dāsa Ṭhākura, Śrīla Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī, Śrī Kavikarṇapūra, Śrī Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī, Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī, Śrī Sanātana Gosvāmī, Śrī Raghunātha Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī, Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī, Śrī Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī, Śrī Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī and in this latter age within two hundred years, Śrī Viśvanātha Cakravartī, Śrī Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa, Śrī Śyāmānanda Gosvāmī, Śrī Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura, Śrī Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura and at last Śrī Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura (our spiritual master) and many other great and renowned scholars and devotees of the Lord have prepared voluminous books and literatures on the life and precepts of the Lord. Such literatures are all based on the śāstras like the Vedas, Purāṇas, Upaniṣads, Rāmāyaṇa, Mahābhārata and other histories and authentic literatures approved by the recognized ācāryas. They are unique in composition and unrivaled in presentation, and they are full of transcendental knowledge. Unfortunately the people of the world are still ignorant of them, but when these literatures, which are mostly in Sanskrit and Bengali, come to light the world and when they are

presented before thinking people, then India's glory and the message of love will overflow this morbid world, which is vainly searching after peace and prosperity by various illusory methods not approved by the ācāryas in the chain of disciplic succession.

The readers of this small description of the life and precepts of Lord Caitanya will profit much to go through the books of Śrīla Vṛndāvana dāsa Ṭhākura (Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata) and Śrīla Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī (Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta). The early life of the Lord is most fascinatingly expressed by the author of Caitanya-bhāgavata, and as far as the teachings are concerned, they are more vividly explained in the Caitanya-caritāmṛta. Now they are available to the English-speaking public in our Teachings of Lord Caitanya.

The Lord's early life was recorded by one of His chief devotees and contemporaries, namely Śrīla Murāri Gupta, a medical practitioner of that time, and the latter part of the life of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu was recorded by His private secretary Śrī Dāmodara Gosvāmī, or Śrīla Svarūpa Dāmodara, who was practically a constant companion of the Lord at Purī. These two devotees recorded practically all the incidents of the Lord's activities, and later on all the books dealing with the Lord, which are above mentioned, were composed on the basis of kaḍacās (notebooks) by Śrīla Dāmodara Gosvāmī and Murāri Gupta.

So the Lord advented Himself on the Phālgunī Pūrṇimā evening of 1407 Śakābda, and it was by the will of the Lord that there was a lunar eclipse on that evening. During the hours of eclipse it was the custom of the Hindu public to take bath in the Ganges or any other sacred river and chant the Vedic mantras for purification. When Lord Caitanya was born during the lunar eclipse, all India was roaring with the holy sound of Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare. These sixteen names of the Lord are mentioned in many Purāṇas and Upaniṣads, and they are described as the Tāraka-brahma nāma of this age. It is recommended in the śāstras that offenseless chanting of these holy names of the Lord can deliver a fallen soul from material bondage. There are innumerable names of the Lord both in India and outside, and all of them are equally good because all of them indicate the Supreme Personality of Godhead. But because these sixteen are especially recommended for this age, people should take advantage of them and

follow the path of the great ācāryas who attained success by practicing the rules of the śāstras (revealed scriptures).

The simultaneous occurrence of the Lord's appearance and the lunar eclipse indicated the distinctive mission of the Lord. This mission was to preach the importance of chanting the holy names of the Lord in this Age of Kali (quarrel). In this present age quarrels take place even over trifles, and therefore the śāstras have recommended for this age a common platform for realization, namely chanting the holy names of the Lord. People can hold meetings to glorify the Lord in their respective languages and with melodious songs, and if such performances are executed in an offenseless manner, it is certain that the participants will gradually attain spiritual perfection without having to undergo more rigorous methods. At such meetings everyone, the learned and the foolish, the rich and the poor, the Hindus and the Muslims, the Englishmen and the Indians, and the caṇḍālas and the brāhmaṇas, can all hear the transcendental sounds and thus cleanse the dust of material association from the mirror of the heart. To confirm the Lord's mission, all the people of the world will accept the holy name of the Lord as the common platform for the universal religion of mankind. In other words, the advent of the holy name took place along with the advent of Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

When the Lord was on the lap of His mother, He would at once stop crying as soon as the ladies surrounding Him chanted the holy names and clapped their hands. This peculiar incident was observed by the neighbors with awe and veneration. Sometimes the young girls took pleasure in making the Lord cry and then stopping Him by chanting the holy name. So from His very childhood the Lord began to preach the importance of the holy name. In His early age Lord Śrī Caitanya was known as Nimāi. This name was given by His beloved mother because the Lord took His birth beneath a nimba tree in the courtyard of His paternal house.

When the Lord was offered solid food at the age of six months in the anna-prāśana ceremony, the Lord indicated His future activities. At this time it was customary to offer the child both coins and books in order to get some indication of the future tendencies of the child. The Lord was offered on one side coins and on the other the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam. The Lord accepted the Bhāgavatam instead of the coins.

When He was a mere baby crawling in the yard, one day a snake appeared before Him, and the Lord began to play with it. All the members of the house were struck with fear and awe, but after a little while the snake went away, and the baby was taken away by His mother. Once He was stolen by a thief who intended to steal His ornaments, but the Lord took a pleasure trip on the shoulder of the bewildered thief, who was searching for a solitary place in order to rob the baby. It so happened that the thief, wandering hither and thither, finally arrived just before the house of Jagannātha Miśra and, being afraid of being caught, dropped the baby at once. Of course the anxious parents and relatives were glad to see the lost child.

Once a pilgrim brāhmaṇa was received at the house of Jagannātha Miśra, and when he was offering food to the Godhead, the Lord appeared before him and partook of the prepared food. The eatables had to be rejected because the child touched them, and so the brāhmaṇa had to make another preparation. The next time the same thing happened, and when this happened repeatedly for the third time, the baby was finally put to bed. At about twelve at night when all the members of the house were fast asleep within their closed rooms, the pilgrim brāhmaṇa offered his specially prepared foods to the Deity, and, in the same way, the baby Lord appeared before the pilgrim and spoiled his offerings. The brāhmaṇa then began to cry, but since everyone was fast asleep, no one could hear him. At that time the baby Lord appeared before the fortunate brāhmaṇa and disclosed His identity as Kṛṣṇa Himself. The brāhmaṇa was forbidden to disclose this incident, and the baby returned to the lap of His mother.

There are many similar incidents in His childhood. As a naughty boy He sometimes used to tease the orthodox brāhmaṇas who used to bathe in the Ganges. When the brāhmaṇas complained to His father that He was splashing them with water instead of attending school, the Lord suddenly appeared before His father as though just coming from school with all His school clothes and books. At the bathing ghāṭa He also used to play jokes on the neighboring girls who engaged in worshipping Śiva in hopes of getting good husbands. This is a common practice amongst unmarried girls in Hindu families. While they were engaged in such worship, the Lord naughtily appeared before them and said, “My dear sisters, please give Me all the offerings you have just brought for Lord Śiva. Lord Śiva is My devotee, and Pārvatī is My maidservant. If you worship Me, then Lord



Śiva and all the other demigods will be more satisfied.” Some of them refused to obey the naughty Lord, and He would curse them that due to their refusal they would be married to old men who had seven children by their previous wives. Out of fear and sometimes out of love the girls would also offer Him various goods, and then the Lord would bless them and assure them that they would have very good young husbands and that they would be mothers of dozens of children. The blessings would enliven the girls, but they used often to complain of these incidents to their mothers.

In this way the Lord passed His early childhood. When He was just sixteen years old He started His own *catuṣpāṭhī* (village school conducted by a learned *brāhmaṇa*). In this school He would simply explain *Kṛṣṇa*, even in readings of grammar. Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī, in order to please the Lord, later composed a grammar in Sanskrit, in which all the rules of grammar were explained with examples that used the holy names of the Lord. This grammar is still current. It is known as *Hari-nāmāmṛta-vyākaraṇa* and is prescribed in the syllabus of schools in Bengal.

During this time a great Kashmir scholar named Keśava Kāśmīri came to Navadvīpa to hold discussions on the *śāstras*. The Kashmir *paṇḍita* was a champion scholar, and he had traveled to all places of learning in India. Finally he came to Navadvīpa to contest the learned *paṇḍitas* there. The *paṇḍitas* of Navadvīpa decided to match Nimāi Paṇḍita (Lord Caitanya) with the Kashmir *paṇḍita*, thinking that if Nimāi Paṇḍita were defeated, they would have another chance to debate with the scholar, for Nimāi Paṇḍita was only a boy. And if the Kashmir *paṇḍita* were defeated, then they would even be more glorified because people would proclaim that a mere boy of Navadvīpa had defeated a champion scholar who was famous throughout India. It so happened that Nimāi Paṇḍita met Keśava Kāśmīri while strolling on the banks of the Ganges. The Lord requested him to compose a Sanskrit verse in praise of the Ganges, and the *paṇḍita* within a short time composed a hundred *śloka*s, reciting the verses like a storm and showing the strength of his vast learning. Nimāi Paṇḍita at once memorized all the *śloka*s without an error. He quoted the sixty-fourth *śloka* and pointed out certain rhetorical and literary irregularities. He particularly questioned the *paṇḍita*’s use of the word *bhavānī-bhartuḥ*. He pointed out that the use of this word was redundant. *Bhavānī* means the wife of Śiva, and who else can be her *bhartā*, or husband? He also pointed out several other discrepancies, and the Kashmir *paṇḍita* was struck with wonder. He

was astonished that a mere student of grammar could point out the literary mistakes of an erudite scholar. Although this matter was ended prior to any public meeting, the news spread like wildfire all over Navadvīpa. But finally Keśava Kāśmīri was ordered in a dream by Sarasvatī, the goddess of learning, to submit to the Lord, and thus the Kashmir paṇḍita became a follower of the Lord.

The Lord was then married with great pomp and gaiety, and at this time He began to preach the congregational chanting of the holy name of the Lord at Navadvīpa. Some of the brāhmaṇas became envious of His popularity, and they put many hindrances on His path. They were so jealous that they finally took the matter before the Muslim magistrate at Navadvīpa. Bengal was then governed by Pathans, and the governor of the province was Nawab Hussain Shah. The Muslim magistrate of Navadvīpa took up the complaints of the brāhmaṇas seriously, and at first he warned the followers of Nimāi Paṇḍita not to chant loudly the name of Hari. But Lord Caitanya asked His followers to disobey the orders of the Kazi, and they went on with their saṅkīrtana (chanting) party as usual. The magistrate then sent constables who interrupted a saṅkīrtana and broke some of the mṛdaṅgas (drums). When Nimāi Paṇḍita heard of this incident He organized a party for civil disobedience. He is the pioneer of the civil disobedience movement in India for the right cause. He organized a procession of one hundred thousand men with thousands of mṛdaṅgas and karatālas (hand cymbals), and this procession passed over the roads of Navadvīpa in defiance of the Kazi who had issued the order. Finally the procession reached the house of the Kazi, who went upstairs out of fear of the masses. The great crowds assembled at the Kazi's house displayed a violent temper, but the Lord asked them to be peaceful. At this time the Kazi came down and tried to pacify the Lord by addressing Him as nephew. He pointed out that he referred to Nīlāmbara Cakravartī as uncle, and thus Śrīmatī Śacīdevī, Nimāi Paṇḍita's mother, was his cousin-sister. He asked the Lord whether his sister's son could be angry at His maternal uncle, and the Lord replied that since the Kazi was His maternal uncle he should receive his nephew well at his home. In this way the issue was mitigated, and the two learned scholars began a long discussion on the Koran and Hindu śāstras. The Lord raised the question of cow-killing, and the Kazi properly answered Him by referring to the Koran. In turn the Kazi also questioned the Lord about cow sacrifice in the Vedas, and the Lord replied that such sacrifice as mentioned in the Vedas is not actually cow-killing. In

that sacrifice an old bull or cow was sacrificed for the sake of receiving a fresh younger life by the power of Vedic mantras. But in the Kali-yuga such cow sacrifices are forbidden because there are no qualified brāhmaṇas capable of conducting such a sacrifice. In fact, in Kali-yuga all yajñas (sacrifices) are forbidden because they are useless attempts by foolish men. In Kali-yuga only the saṅkīrtana yajña is recommended for all practical purposes. Speaking in this way, the Lord finally convinced the Kazi, who became the Lord's follower. The Kazi thenceforth declared that no one should hinder the saṅkīrtana movement which was started by the Lord, and the Kazi left this order in his will for the sake of progeny. The Kazi's tomb still exists in the area of Navadvīpa, and Hindu pilgrims go there to show their respects. The Kazi's descendants are residents, and they never objected to saṅkīrtana, even during the Hindu-Muslim riot days.

This incident shows clearly that the Lord was not a so-called timid Vaiṣṇava. A Vaiṣṇava is a fearless devotee of the Lord, and for the right cause he can take any step suitable for the purpose. Arjuna was also a Vaiṣṇava devotee of Lord Kṛṣṇa, and he fought valiantly for the satisfaction of the Lord. Similarly, Vajrāṅgajī, or Hanumān, was also a devotee of Lord Rāma, and he gave lessons to the nondevotee party of Rāvaṇa. The principles of Vaiṣṇavism are to satisfy the Lord by all means. A Vaiṣṇava is by nature a nonviolent, peaceful living being, and he has all the good qualities of God, but when the nondevotee blasphemes the Lord or His devotee, the Vaiṣṇava never tolerates such impudency.

After this incident the Lord began to preach and propagate His Bhāgavata-dharma, or saṅkīrtana movement, more vigorously, and whoever stood against this propagation of the yuga-dharma, or duty of the age, was properly punished by various types of chastisement. Two brāhmaṇa gentlemen named Cāpala and Gopāla, who also happened to be maternal uncles of the Lord, were inflicted with leprosy by way of chastisement, and later, when they were repentant, they were accepted by the Lord. In the course of His preaching work, He used to send daily all His followers, including Śrīla Nityānanda Prabhu and Ṭhākura Haridāsa, two chief whips of His party, from door to door to preach the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam. All of Navadvīpa was surcharged with His saṅkīrtana movement, and His headquarters were situated at the house of Śrīvāsa Ṭhākura and Śrī Advaita Prabhu, two of His chief householder disciples. These two learned heads of the brāhmaṇa community were the most ardent supporters of Lord

Caitanya's movement. Śrī Advaita Prabhu was the chief cause for the advent of the Lord. When Advaita Prabhu saw that the total human society was full of materialistic activities and devoid of devotional service, which alone could save mankind from the threefold miseries of material existence, He, out of His causeless compassion for the age-worn human society, prayed fervently for the incarnation of the Lord and continually worshiped the Lord with water of the Ganges and leaves of the holy tulasī tree. As far as preaching work in the saṅkīrtana movement was concerned, everyone was expected to do his daily share according to the order of the Lord.

Once Nityānanda Prabhu and Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura were walking down a main road, and on the way they saw a roaring crowd assembled. Upon inquiring from passersby, they understood that two brothers, named Jagāi and Mādhāi, were creating a public disturbance in a drunken state. They also heard that these two brothers were born in a respectable brāhmaṇa family, but because of low association they had turned into debauchees of the worst type. They were not only drunkards but also meat-eaters, woman-hunters, dacoits and sinners of all description. Śrīla Nityānanda Prabhu heard all of these stories and decided that these two fallen souls must be the first to be delivered. If they were delivered from their sinful life, then the good name of Lord Caitanya would be even still more glorified. Thinking in this way, Nityānanda Prabhu and Haridāsa pushed their way through the crowd and asked the two brothers to chant the holy name of Lord Hari. The drunken brothers became enraged upon this request and attacked Nityānanda Prabhu with filthy language. Both brothers chased them a considerable distance. In the evening the report of the preaching work was submitted to the Lord, and He was glad to learn that Nityānanda and Haridāsa had attempted to deliver such a stupid pair of fellows.

The next day Nityānanda Prabhu went to see the brothers, and as soon as He approached them one of them threw a piece of earthen pot at Him. This struck Him on the forehead, and immediately blood began to flow. But Nityānanda Prabhu was so kind that instead of protesting this heinous act, He said, "It does not matter that you have thrown this stone at Me. I still request you to chant the holy name of Lord Hari."

One of the brothers, Jagāi, was astonished to see this behavior of Nityānanda Prabhu, and he at once fell down at His feet and asked Him to pardon his sinful brother. When Mādhāi again attempted to hurt Nityānanda Prabhu, Jagāi stopped him and implored him to fall down at His feet. In the meantime the news of Nityānanda's injury reached the Lord, who at once hurried to the spot in a fiery and angry mood. The Lord immediately invoked His Sudarśana cakra (the Lord's ultimate weapon, shaped like a wheel) to kill the sinners, but Nityānanda Prabhu reminded Him of His mission. The mission of the Lord was to deliver the hopelessly fallen souls of Kali-yuga, and the brothers Jagāi and Mādhāi were typical examples of these fallen souls. Ninety percent of the population of this age resembles these brothers, despite high birth and mundane respectability. According to the verdict of the revealed scriptures, the total population of the world in this age will be of the lowest śūdra quality, or even lower. It should be noted that Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu never acknowledged the stereotyped caste system by birthright; rather, He strictly followed the verdict of the śāstras in the matter of one's svarūpa, or real identity.

When the Lord was invoking His Sudarśana cakra and Śrīla Nityānanda Prabhu was imploring Him to forgive the two brothers, both the brothers fell down at the lotus feet of the Lord and begged His pardon for their gross behavior. The Lord was also asked by Nityānanda Prabhu to accept these repenting souls, and the Lord agreed to accept them on one condition, that they henceforward completely give up all their sinful activities and habits of debauchery. Both the brothers agreed and promised to give up all their sinful habits, and the kind Lord accepted them and did not again refer to their past misdeeds.

This is the specific kindness of Lord Caitanya. In this age no one can say that he is free from sin. It is impossible for anyone to say this. But Lord Caitanya accepts all kinds of sinful persons on the one condition that they promise not to indulge in sinful habits after being spiritually initiated by the bona fide spiritual master.

There are a number of instructive points to be observed in this incident of the two brothers. In this Kali-yuga practically all people are of the quality of Jagāi and Mādhāi. If they want to be relieved from the reactions of their misdeeds, they must take shelter of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu and after spiritual initiation thus refrain from those things which are prohibited in

the śāstras. The prohibitory rules are dealt with in the Lord's teachings to Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī.

During His householder life, the Lord did not display many of the miracles which are generally expected from such personalities, but He did once perform a wonderful miracle in the house of Śrīnivāsa Ṭhākura while saṅkīrtana was in full swing. He asked the devotees what they wanted to eat, and when He was informed that they wanted to eat mangoes, He asked for a seed of a mango, although this fruit was out of season. When the seed was brought to Him He sowed it in the yard of Śrīnivāsa, and at once a creeper began to grow out of the seed. Within no time this creeper became a full-grown mango tree heavy with more ripened fruits than the devotees could eat. The tree remained in Śrīnivāsa's yard, and from then on the devotees used to take as many mangoes from the tree as they wanted.

The Lord had a very high estimation of the affections of the damsels of Vrajabhūmi (Vṛndāvana) for Kṛṣṇa, and in appreciation of their unalloyed service to the Lord, once Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu chanted the holy names of the gopīs (cowherd girls) instead of the names of the Lord. At this time some of His students, who were also disciples, came to see Him, and when they saw that the Lord was chanting the names of the gopīs, they were astonished. Out of sheer foolishness they asked the Lord why He was chanting the names of the gopīs and advised Him to chant the name of Kṛṣṇa. The Lord, who was in ecstasy, was thus disturbed by these foolish students. He chastised them and chased them away. The students were almost the same age as the Lord, and thus they wrongly thought of the Lord as one of their peers. They held a meeting and resolved that they would attack the Lord if He dared to punish them again in such a manner. This incident provoked some malicious talks about the Lord on the part of the general public.

When the Lord became aware of this, He began to consider the various types of men found in society. He noted that especially the students, professors, fruitive workers, yogīs, nondevotees and different types of atheists were all opposed to the devotional service of the Lord. "My mission is to deliver all the fallen souls of this age," He thought, "but if they commit offenses against Me, thinking Me to be an ordinary man, they will not benefit. If they are to begin their life of spiritual realization, they must some way or another offer obeisances unto Me." Thus the Lord

decided to accept the renounced order of life (sannyāsa) because people in general were inclined to offer respects to a sannyāsī.

Five hundred years ago the condition of society was not as degraded as it is today. At that time people would show respects to a sannyāsī, and the sannyāsī was rigid in following the rules and regulations of the renounced order of life. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu was not very much in favor of the renounced order of life in this Age of Kali, but that was only for the reason that very few sannyāsīs in this age are able to observe the rules and regulations of sannyāsa life. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu decided to accept the order and become an ideal sannyāsī so that the general populace would show Him respect. One is duty-bound to show respect to a sannyāsī, for a sannyāsī is considered to be the master of all varṇas and āśramas.

While He was contemplating accepting the sannyāsa order, it so happened that Keśava Bhāratī, a sannyāsī of the Māyāvādī school and resident of Katwa (in Bengal), visited Navadvīpa and was invited to dine with the Lord. When Keśava Bhāratī came to His house, the Lord asked him to award Him the sannyāsa order of life. This was a matter of formality. The sannyāsa order is to be accepted from another sannyāsī. Although the Lord was independent in all respects, still, to keep up the formalities of the śāstras, He accepted the sannyāsa order from Keśava Bhāratī, although Keśava Bhāratī was not in the Vaiṣṇava sampradāya (school).

After consulting with Keśava Bhāratī, the Lord left Navadvīpa for Katwa to formally accept the sannyāsa order of life. He was accompanied by Śrīla Nityānanda Prabhu, Candrasekhara Ācārya and Mukunda Datta. These three assisted Him in the details of the ceremony. The incident of the Lord's accepting the sannyāsa order is very elaborately described in the Caitanya-bhāgavata by Śrīla Vṛndāvana dāsa Ṭhākura.

Thus at the end of His twenty-fourth year the Lord accepted the sannyāsa order of life in the month of Māgha. After accepting this order He became a full-fledged preacher of the Bhāgavata-dharma. Although He was doing the same preaching work in His householder life, when He experienced some obstacles to His preaching He sacrificed even the comfort of His home life for the sake of the fallen souls. In His householder life His chief assistants were Śrīla Advaita Prabhu and Śrīla Śrīvāsa Ṭhākura, but after He accepted the sannyāsa order His chief assistants became Śrīla

Nityānanda Prabhu, who was deputed to preach specifically in Bengal, and the Six Gosvāmīs (Rūpa Gosvāmī, Sanātana Gosvāmī, Jīva Gosvāmī, Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī, Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī and Raghunātha Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī), headed by Śrīla Rūpa and Sanātana, who were deputed to go to Vṛndāvana to excavate the present places of pilgrimage. The present city of Vṛndāvana and the importance of Vrajabhūmi were thus disclosed by the will of Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

The Lord, after accepting the sannyāsa order, at once wanted to start for Vṛndāvana. For three continuous days He traveled in the Rāḍha-deśa (places where the Ganges does not flow). He was in full ecstasy over the idea of going to Vṛndāvana. However, Śrīla Nityānanda diverted His path and brought Him instead to the house of Advaita Prabhu in Śāntipura. The Lord stayed at Śrī Advaita Prabhu's house for a few days, and knowing well that the Lord was leaving His hearth and home for good, Śrī Advaita Prabhu sent His men to Navadvīpa to bring mother Śacī to have a last meeting with her son. Some unscrupulous people say that Lord Caitanya met His wife also after taking sannyāsa and offered her His wooden slipper for worship, but the authentic sources give no information about such a meeting. His mother met Him at the house of Advaita Prabhu, and when she saw her son in sannyāsa dress, she lamented. By way of compromise, she requested her son to make His headquarters in Purī so that she would easily be able to get information about Him. The Lord granted this last desire of His beloved mother. After this incident the Lord started for Purī, leaving all the residents of Navadvīpa in an ocean of lamentation over His separation.

The Lord visited many important places on the way to Purī. He visited the temple of Gopīnāthajī, who had stolen condensed milk for His devotee Śrīla Mādhavendra Purī. Since then Deity Gopīnāthajī is well known as Kṣīra-corā-gopīnātha. The Lord relished this story with great pleasure. The propensity of stealing is there even in the absolute consciousness, but because this propensity is exhibited by the Absolute, it loses its perverted nature and thus becomes worshipable even by Lord Caitanya on the basis of the absolute consideration that the Lord and His stealing propensity are one and identical. This interesting story of Gopīnāthajī is vividly explained in the Caitanya-caritāmṛta by Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī.



After visiting the temple of Kṣīra-corā-gopīnātha of Remuṇā at Balasore in Orissa, the Lord proceeded towards Purī and on the way visited the temple of Sākṣi-gopāla, who appeared as a witness in the matter of two brāhmaṇa devotees' family quarrel. The Lord heard the story of Sākṣi-gopāla with great pleasure because He wanted to impress upon the atheists that the worshipable Deities in the temples approved by the great ācāryas are not idols, as alleged by men with a poor fund of knowledge. The Deity in the temple is the arcā incarnation of the Personality of Godhead, and thus the Deity is identical with the Lord in all respects. He responds to the proportion of the devotee's affection for Him. In the story of Sākṣi-gopāla, in which there was a family misunderstanding by two devotees of the Lord, the Lord, in order to mitigate the turmoil as well as to show specific favor to His servitors, traveled from Vṛndāvana to Vidyānagara, a village in Orissa, in the form of His arcā incarnation. From there the Deity was brought to Cuttack, and thus the temple of Sākṣi-gopāla is even today visited by thousands of pilgrims on the way to Jagannātha Purī. The Lord stayed overnight there and began to proceed toward Purī. On the way, His sannyāsa rod was broken by Nityānanda Prabhu. The Lord became apparently angry with Him about this and went alone to Purī, leaving His companions behind.

At Purī, when He entered the temple of Jagannātha, He became at once saturated with transcendental ecstasy and fell down on the floor of the temple unconscious. The custodians of the temple could not understand the transcendental feats of the Lord, but there was a great learned paṇḍita named Sārvabhauma Bhaṭṭācārya, who was present, and he could understand that the Lord's losing His consciousness upon entering the Jagannātha temple was not an ordinary thing. Sārvabhauma Bhaṭṭācārya, who was the chief appointed paṇḍita in the court of the King of Orissa, Mahārāja Pratāparudra, was attracted by the youthful luster of Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and could understand that such a transcendental trance was only rarely exhibited and only then by the topmost devotees who are already on the transcendental plane in complete forgetfulness of material existence. Only a liberated soul could show such a transcendental feat, and the Bhaṭṭācārya, who was vastly learned, could understand this in the light of the transcendental literature with which he was familiar. He therefore asked the custodians of the temple not to disturb the unknown sannyāsī. He asked them to take the Lord to his home so He could be further observed in His unconscious state. The Lord was at once carried to

the home of Sārvabhauma Bhaṭṭācārya, who at that time had sufficient power of authority due to his being the sabhā-panḍita, or the state dean of faculty in Sanskrit literatures. The learned panḍita wanted to scrutinizingly test the transcendental feats of Lord Caitanya because often unscrupulous devotees imitate physical feats in order to flaunt transcendental achievements just to attract innocent people and take advantage of them. A learned scholar like the Bhaṭṭācārya can detect such imposters, and when he finds them out he at once rejects them.

In the case of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu, the Bhaṭṭācārya tested all the symptoms in the light of the śāstras. He tested as a scientist, not as a foolish sentimentalist. He observed the movement of the stomach, the beating of the heart and the breathing of the nostrils. He also felt the pulse of the Lord and saw that all His bodily activities were in complete suspension. When he put a small cotton swab before the nostrils, he found that there was a slight breathing as the fine fibers of cotton moved slightly. Thus he came to know that the Lord's unconscious trance was genuine, and he began to treat Him in the prescribed fashion. But Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu could only be treated in a special way. He would respond only to the resounding of the holy names of the Lord by His devotees. This special treatment was unknown to Sārvabhauma Bhaṭṭācārya because the Lord was still unknown to him. When the Bhaṭṭācārya saw Him for the first time in the temple, he simply took Him to be one of many pilgrims.

In the meantime the companions of the Lord, who reached the temple a little after Him, heard of the Lord's transcendental feats and of His being carried away by the Bhaṭṭācārya. The pilgrims at the temple were still gossiping about the incident. But by chance, one of these pilgrims had met Gopīnātha Ācārya, who was known to Gadādhara Paṇḍita, and from him it was learned that the Lord was lying in an unconscious state at the residence of Sārvabhauma Bhaṭṭācārya, who happened to be the brother-in-law of Gopīnātha Ācārya. All the members of the party were introduced by Gadādhara Paṇḍita to Gopīnātha Ācārya, who took them all to the house of Bhaṭṭācārya, where the Lord was lying unconscious in a spiritual trance. All the members then chanted loudly the holy name of the Lord Hari as usual, and the Lord regained His consciousness. After this, Bhaṭṭācārya received all the members of the party, including Lord Nityānanda Prabhu, and asked them to become his guests of honor. The party, including the Lord, went for a bath in the sea, and the Bhaṭṭācārya

arranged for their residence and meals at the house of Kāśī Mīśra. Gopīnātha Ācārya, his brother-in-law, also assisted. There were some friendly talks about the Lord's divinity between the two brothers-in-law, and in this argument Gopīnātha Ācārya, who knew the Lord before, now tried to establish the Lord as the Personality of Godhead, and the Bhaṭṭācārya tried to establish Him as one of the great devotees. Both of them argued from the angle of vision of authentic śāstras and not on the strength of sentimental vox populi. The incarnations of God are determined by authentic śāstras and not by popular votes of foolish fanatics. Because Lord Caitanya was an incarnation of God in fact, foolish fanatics have proclaimed so many so-called incarnations of God in this age without referring to authentic scriptures. But Sārvabhauma Bhaṭṭācārya or Gopīnātha Ācārya did not indulge in such foolish sentimentalism; on the contrary, both of them tried to establish or reject His divinity on the strength of authentic śāstras.

Later it was disclosed that Bhaṭṭācārya also came from the Navadvīpa area, and it was understood from him that Nīlāmbara Cakravartī, the maternal grandfather of Lord Caitanya, happened to be a class fellow of the father of Sārvabhauma Bhaṭṭācārya. In that sense, the young sannyāsī Lord Caitanya evoked paternal affection from Bhaṭṭācārya. Bhaṭṭācārya was the professor of many sannyāsīs in the order of the Śāṅkarācārya sampradāya, and he himself also belonged to that cult. As such, the Bhaṭṭācārya desired that the young sannyāsī Lord Caitanya also hear from him about the teachings of Vedānta.

Those who are followers of the Śāṅkara cult are generally known as Vedāntists. This does not, however, mean that Vedānta is a monopoly study of the Śāṅkara sampradāya. Vedānta is studied by all the bona fide sampradāyas, but they have their own interpretations. But those in the Śāṅkara sampradāya are generally known to be ignorant of the knowledge of the Vedāntist Vaiṣṇavas. For this reason the Bhaktivedānta title was first offered to the author by the Vaiṣṇavas.

The Lord agreed to take lessons from Bhaṭṭācārya on the Vedānta, and they sat together in the temple of Lord Jagannātha. The Bhaṭṭācārya went on speaking continually for seven days, and the Lord heard him with all attention and did not interrupt. The Lord's silence raised some doubts in

Bhaṭṭācārya's heart, and he asked the Lord how it was that He did not ask anything or comment on his explanations of Vedānta.

The Lord posed Himself before the Bhaṭṭācārya as a foolish student and pretended that He heard the Vedānta from him because the Bhaṭṭācārya felt that this was the duty of a sannyāsī. But the Lord did not agree with his lectures. By this the Lord indicated that the so-called Vedāntists amongst the Śāṅkara sampradāya, or any other sampradāya who do not follow the instructions of Śrīla Vyāsadeva, are mechanical students of the Vedānta. They are not fully aware of that great knowledge. The explanation of the Vedānta-sūtra is given by the author himself in the text of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam. One who has no knowledge of the Bhāgavatam will hardly be able to know what the Vedānta says.

The Bhaṭṭācārya, being a vastly learned man, could follow the Lord's sarcastic remarks on the popular Vedāntist. He therefore asked Him why He did not ask about any point which He could not follow. The Bhaṭṭācārya could understand the purpose of His dead silence for the days He heard him. This showed clearly that the Lord had something else in mind; thus the Bhaṭṭācārya requested Him to disclose His mind.

Upon this, the Lord spoke as follows: "My dear sir, I can understand the meaning of the sūtras like janmādy asya yataḥ, śāstra-yonitvāt, and athāto brahma-jijñāsā of the Vedānta-sūtra, but when you explain them in your own way it becomes difficult for Me to follow them. The purpose of the sūtras is already explained in them, but your explanations are covering them with something else. You do not purposely take the direct meaning of the sūtras but indirectly give your own interpretations."

The Lord thus attacked all Vedāntists who interpret the Vedānta-sūtra fashionably, according to their limited power of thinking, to serve their own purpose. Such indirect interpretations of the authentic literatures like the Vedānta-sūtra are hereby condemned by the Lord.

The Lord continued: "Śrīla Vyāsadeva has summarized the direct meanings of the mantras in the Upaniṣads in the Vedānta-sūtra. Unfortunately you do not take their direct meaning. You indirectly interpret them in a different way.

“The authority of the Vedas is unchallengeable and stands without any question of doubt. And whatever is stated in the Vedas must be accepted completely, otherwise one challenges the authority of the Vedas.

“The conchshell and cow dung are bone and stool of two living beings. But because they have been recommended by the Vedas as pure, people accept them as such because of the authority of the Vedas.”

The idea is that one cannot set his imperfect reason above the authority of the Vedas. The orders of the Vedas must be obeyed as they stand, without any mundane reasoning. The so-called followers of the Vedic injunctions make their own interpretations of the Vedic injunctions, and thus they establish different parties and sects of the Vedic religion. Lord Buddha directly denied the authority of the Vedas, and he established his own religion. Only for this reason, the Buddhist religion was not accepted by the strict followers of the Vedas. But those who are so-called followers of the Vedas are more harmful than the Buddhists. The Buddhists have the courage to deny the Vedas directly, but the so-called followers of the Vedas have no courage to deny the Vedas, although indirectly they disobey all the injunctions of the Vedas. Lord Caitanya condemned this.

The examples given by the Lord of the conchshell and the cow dung are very much appropriate in this connection. If one argues that since cow dung is pure, the stool of a learned brāhmaṇa is still more pure, his argument will not be accepted. Cow dung is accepted, and the stool of a highly posted brāhmaṇa is rejected. The Lord continued:

“The Vedic injunctions are self-authorized, and if some mundane creature adjusts the interpretations of the Vedas, he defies their authority. It is foolish to think of oneself as more intelligent than Śrīla Vyāsadeva. He has already expressed himself in his sūtras, and there is no need of help from personalities of lesser importance. His work, the Vedānta-sūtra, is as dazzling as the midday sun, and when someone tries to give his own interpretations on the self-effulgent sunlike Vedānta-sūtra, he attempts to cover this sun with the cloud of his imagination.

“The Vedas and Purāṇas are one and the same in purpose. They ascertain the Absolute Truth, which is greater than everything else. The Absolute Truth is ultimately realized as the Absolute Personality of Godhead with

absolute controlling power. As such, the Absolute Personality of Godhead must be completely full of opulence, strength, fame, beauty, knowledge and renunciation. Yet the transcendental Personality of Godhead is astonishingly ascertained as impersonal.

“The impersonal description of the Absolute Truth in the Vedas is given to nullify the mundane conception of the absolute whole. Personal features of the Lord are completely different from all kinds of mundane features. The living entities are all individual persons, and they are all parts and parcels of the supreme whole. If the parts and parcels are individual persons, the source of their emanation must not be impersonal. He is the Supreme Person amongst all the relative persons.

“The Vedas inform us that from Him [Brahman] everything emanates, and on Him everything rests. And after annihilation, everything merges in Him only. Therefore, He is the ultimate dative, causative and accommodating cause of all causes. And these causes cannot be attributed to an impersonal object.

“The Vedas inform us that He alone became many, and when He so desires He glances over material nature. Before He glanced over material nature there was no material cosmic creation. Therefore, His glance is not material. Material mind or senses were unborn when the Lord glanced over material nature. Thus evidence in the Vedas proves that beyond a doubt the Lord has transcendental eyes and a transcendental mind. They are not material. His impersonality therefore is a negation of His materiality, but not a denial of His transcendental personality.

“Brahman ultimately refers to the Personality of Godhead. Impersonal Brahman realization is just the negative conception of the mundane creations. Paramātmā is the localized aspect of Brahman within all kinds of material bodies. Ultimately the Supreme Brahman realization is the realization of the Personality of Godhead according to all evidence of the revealed scriptures. He is the ultimate source of viṣṇu-tattvas.

“The Purāṇas are also supplementary to the Vedas. The Vedic mantras are too difficult for an ordinary man. Women, śūdras and the so-called twice-born higher castes are unable to penetrate into the sense of the Vedas. And thus the Mahābhārata and the Purāṇas are made easy to explain the truths

of the Vedas. In his prayers before the boy Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Brahmā said that there is no limit to the fortune of the residents of Vrajabhūmi headed by Śrī Nanda Mahārāja and Yaśodāmayī, because the eternal Absolute Truth has become their intimate relative.

“The Vedic mantra maintains that the Absolute Truth has no legs and no hands and yet goes faster than all and accepts everything that is offered to Him in devotion. The latter statements definitely suggest the personal features of the Lord, although His hands and legs are distinguished from mundane hands and legs or other senses.

“Brahman, therefore, is never impersonal, but when such mantras are indirectly interpreted, it is wrongly thought that the Absolute Truth is impersonal. The Absolute Truth Personality of Godhead is full of all opulences, and therefore He has a transcendental form of full existence, knowledge and bliss. How then can one establish that the Absolute Truth is impersonal?

“Brahman, being full of opulences, is understood to have manifold energies, and all these energies are classified under three headings under the authority of Viṣṇu Purāṇa, which says that the transcendental energies of Lord Viṣṇu are primarily three. His spiritual energy and the energy of the living entities are classified as superior energy, whereas the material energy is an inferior one, which is sprouted out of ignorance.

“The energy of the living entities is technically called kṣetrajña energy. This kṣetrajña-śakti, although equal in quality with the Lord, becomes overpowered by material energy out of ignorance and thus suffers all sorts of material miseries. In other words, the living entities are located in the marginal energy between the superior (spiritual) and inferior (material) energies, and in proportion to the living being’s contact with either the material or spiritual energies, the living entity is situated in proportionately higher and lower levels of existence.

“The Lord is beyond the inferior and marginal energies as above mentioned, and His spiritual energy is manifested in three different phases: as eternal existence, eternal bliss and eternal knowledge. As far as eternal existence is concerned, it is conducted by the sandhinī potency; similarly, bliss and knowledge are conducted by the hlādinī and saṁvit potencies

respectively. As the supreme energetic Lord, He is the supreme controller of the spiritual, marginal and material energies. And all these different types of energies are connected with the Lord in eternal devotional service.

“The Supreme Personality of Godhead is thus enjoying in His transcendental eternal form. Is it not astounding that one dares to call the Supreme Lord nonenergetic? The Lord is the controller of all energies, and the living entities are parts and parcels of one of the energies. Therefore there is a gulf of difference between the Lord and the living entities. How then can one say that the Lord and the living entities are one and the same? In the Bhagavad-gītā also the living entities are described as belonging to the superior energy of the Lord. According to the principles of intimate correlation between the energy and the energetic, both of them are nondifferent also. Therefore, the Lord and the living entities are nondifferent as the energy and the energetic.

“Earth, water, fire, air, ether, mind, intelligence and ego are all inferior energies of the Lord, but the living entities are different from all as superior energy. This is the version of Bhagavad-gītā (7.4-5).

“The transcendental form of the Lord is eternally existent and full of transcendental bliss. How then can such a form be a product of the material mode of goodness? Anyone, therefore, who does not believe in the form of the Lord is certainly a faithless demon and as such is untouchable, a not to be seen persona non grata fit to be punished by the Plutonic king.

“The Buddhists are called atheists because they have no respect for the Vedas, but those who defy the Vedic conclusions, as above mentioned, under the pretense of being followers of the Vedas are verily more dangerous than the Buddhists.

“Śrī Vyāsadeva very kindly compiled the Vedic knowledge in his Vedānta-sūtra, but if one hears the commentation of the Māyāvāda school (as represented by the Śāṅkara sampradāya) certainly he will be misled on the path of spiritual realization.

“The theory of emanations is the beginning subject of the Vedānta-sūtra. All the cosmic manifestations are emanations from the Absolute



Personality of Godhead by His inconceivable different energies. The example of the touchstone is applicable to the theory of emanation. The touchstone can convert an unlimited quantity of iron into gold, and still the touchstone remains as it is. Similarly, the Supreme Lord can produce all manifested worlds by His inconceivable energies, and yet He is full and unchanged. He is pūrṇa [complete], and although an unlimited number of pūrṇas emanate from Him, He is still pūrṇa.

“The theory of illusion of the Māyāvāda school is advocated on the ground that the theory of emanation will cause a transformation of the Absolute Truth. If that is the case, Vyāsadeva is wrong. To avoid this, they have skillfully brought in the theory of illusion. But the world or the cosmic creation is not false, as maintained by the Māyāvāda school. It simply has no permanent existence. A nonpermanent thing cannot be called false altogether. But the conception that the material body is the self is certainly wrong.

“Praṇava [om], or the oṃkāra in the Vedas, is the primeval hymn. This transcendental sound is identical with the form of the Lord. All the Vedic hymns are based on this praṇava oṃkāra. Tat tvam asi is but a side word in the Vedic literatures, and therefore this word cannot be the primeval hymn of the Vedas. Śrīpāda Śaṅkarācārya has given more stress on the side word tat tvam asi than on the primeval principle oṃkāra.”

The Lord thus spoke on the Vedānta-sūtra and defied all the propaganda of the Māyāvāda school.\* The Bhaṭṭācārya tried to defend himself and his Māyāvāda school by jugglery of logic and grammar, but the Lord defeated him by His forceful arguments. He affirmed that we are all related with the Personality of Godhead eternally and that devotional service is our eternal function in exchanging the dealings of our relations. The result of such exchanges is to attain premā, or love of Godhead. When love of Godhead is attained, love for all other beings automatically follows because the Lord is the sum total of all living beings.

The Lord said that but for these three items — namely, eternal relation with God, exchange of dealings with Him and the attainment of love for Him — all that is instructed in the Vedas is superfluous and concocted.

The Lord further added that the Māyāvāda philosophy taught by Śrīpāda Śaṅkarācārya is an imaginary explanation of the Vedas, but it had to be taught by him (Śaṅkarācārya) because he was ordered to teach it by the Personality of Godhead. In the Padma Purāṇa it is stated that the Personality of Godhead ordered His Lordship Śiva to deviate the human race from Him (the Personality of Godhead). The Personality of Godhead was to be so covered so that people would be encouraged to generate more and more population. His Lordship Śiva said to Devī: “In the Kali-yuga, I shall preach the Māyāvāda philosophy, which is nothing but clouded Buddhism, in the garb of a brāhmaṇa.”

After hearing all these speeches of the Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, the Bhaṭṭācārya was struck with wonder and awe and regarded Him in dead silence. The Lord then encouraged him with assurance that there was no cause to wonder. “I say that devotional service unto the Personality of Godhead is the highest goal of human life.” He then quoted a śloka from the Bhāgavatam (1.7.10), and assured him that even the liberated souls who are absorbed in the spirit and spiritual realization also take to the devotional service of the Lord Hari because the Personality of Godhead has such transcendental qualities that He attracts the heart of the liberated soul too.

Then the Bhaṭṭācārya desired to listen to the explanation of the “ātmārāma” śloka from the Bhāgavatam (1.7.10). The Lord first of all asked Bhaṭṭācārya to explain it, and after that He would explain it. The Bhaṭṭācārya then explained the śloka in a scholarly way with special reference to logic. He explained the śloka in nine different ways chiefly based on logic because he was the most renowned scholar of logic of the time.

The Lord, after hearing the Bhaṭṭācārya, thanked him for the scholarly presentation of the śloka, and then, at the request of the Bhaṭṭācārya, the Lord explained the śloka in sixty-four different ways without touching the nine explanations given by the Bhaṭṭācārya.

Thus after hearing the explanation of the ātmārāma śloka from the Lord, the Bhaṭṭācārya was convinced that such a scholarly presentation is impossible for an earthly creature.\* Before this, Śrī Gopīnātha Ācārya had tried to convince him of the divinity of the Lord, but at the time he could

not so accept Him. But the Bhaṭṭācārya was astounded by the Lord's exposition of the Vedānta-sūtra and explanations of the ātmārāma śloka, and thus he began to think that he had committed a great offense at the lotus feet of the Lord by not recognizing Him to be Kṛṣṇa Himself. He then surrendered unto Him, repenting for his past dealings with Him, and the Lord was kind enough to accept the Bhaṭṭācārya. Out of His causeless mercy, the Lord manifested before him first as four-handed Nārāyaṇa and then again as two-handed Lord Kṛṣṇa with a flute in His hand.

The Bhaṭṭācārya at once fell down at the lotus feet of the Lord and composed many suitable ślokas in praise of the Lord by His grace. He composed one hundred ślokas in praise of the Lord. The Lord then embraced him, and out of transcendental ecstasy the Bhaṭṭācārya lost consciousness of the physical state of life. Tears, trembling, throbbing of the heart, perspiration, emotional waves, dancing, singing, crying and all the eight symptoms of trance were manifested in the body of the Bhaṭṭācārya. Śrī Gopīnātha Ācārya became very glad and astonished by this marvelous conversion of his brother-in-law by the grace of the Lord.

Out of the hundred celebrated ślokas composed by the Bhaṭṭācārya in praise of the Lord, the following two are most important, and these two ślokas explain the mission of the Lord in gist.

1. Let me surrender unto the Personality of Godhead who has appeared now as Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. He is the ocean of all mercy and has now come down to teach us material detachment, learning and devotional service to Himself.

2. Since pure devotional service of the Lord has been lost in the oblivion of time, the Lord has appeared to renovate the principles, and therefore I offer my obeisances unto His lotus feet.

The Lord explained the word mukti to be equivalent to the word Viṣṇu, or the Personality of Godhead. To attain mukti, or liberation from the bondage of material existence, is to attain to the service of the Lord.

The Lord then proceeded towards South India for some time and converted all He met on the way to become devotees of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Such devotees also converted many others to the cult of devotional service, or to

the Bhāgavata-dharma of the Lord, and thus He reached the bank of the Godāvarī, where He met Śrīla Rāmānanda Rāya, the governor of Madras on behalf of Mahārāja Pratāparudra, the King of Orissa. His talks with Rāmānanda Rāya are very important for higher realization of transcendental knowledge, and the conversation itself forms a small booklet. We shall, however, give herewith a summary of the conversation.

Śrī Rāmānanda Rāya was a self-realized soul, although outwardly he belonged to a caste lower than the brāhmaṇa in social status. He was not in the renounced order of life, and besides that he was a high government servant in the state. Still, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu accepted him as a liberated soul on the strength of the high order of his realization of transcendental knowledge. Similarly, the Lord accepted Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura, a veteran devotee of the Lord coming from a Mohammedan family. And there are many other great devotees of the Lord who came from different communities, sects and castes. The Lord's only criterion was the standard of devotional service of the particular person. He was not concerned with the outward dress of a man; He was concerned only with the inner soul and its activities. Therefore all the missionary activities of the Lord are to be understood to be on the spiritual plane, and as such the cult of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, or the cult of Bhāgavata-dharma, has nothing to do with mundane affairs, sociology, politics, economic development or any such sphere of life. Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam is the purely transcendental urge of the soul.

When He met Śrī Rāmānanda Rāya on the bank of the Godāvarī, the varṇāśrama-dharma followed by the Hindus was mentioned by the Lord. Śrīla Rāmānanda Rāya said that by following the principles of varṇāśrama-dharma, the system of four castes and four orders of human life, everyone could realize Transcendence. In the opinion of the Lord, the system of varṇāśrama-dharma is superficial only, and it has very little to do with the highest realization of spiritual values. The highest perfection of life is to get detached from the material attachment and proportionately realize the transcendental loving service of the Lord. The Personality of Godhead recognizes a living being who is progressing in that line. Devotional service, therefore, is the culmination of the culture of all knowledge. When Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, appeared for the deliverance of all fallen souls, He advised the deliverance of all living entities as follows. The Supreme Absolute Personality of Godhead, from

whom all living entities have emanated, must be worshiped by all their respective engagements, because everything that we see is also the expansion of His energy. That is the way of real perfection, and it is approved by all bona fide ācāryas past and present. The system of varṇāśrama is more or less based on moral and ethical principles. There is very little realization of the Transcendence as such, and Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu rejected it as superficial and asked Rāmānanda Rāya to go further into the matter.

Śrī Rāmānanda Rāya then suggested renunciation of fruitive actions unto the Lord. The Bhagavad-gītā (9.27) advises in this connection: “Whatever you do, whatever you eat and whatever you give, as well as whatever you perform in penance, offer to Me alone.” This dedication on the part of the worker suggests that the Personality of Godhead is a step higher than the impersonal conception of the varṇāśrama system, but still the relation of the living being and the Lord is not distinct in that way. The Lord therefore rejected this proposition and asked Rāmānanda Rāya to go further.

Rāya then suggested renunciation of the varṇāśrama-dharma and acceptance of devotional service. The Lord did not approve of this suggestion also for the reason that all of a sudden one should not renounce his position, for that may not bring in the desired result.

It was further suggested by Rāya that attainment of spiritual realization freed from the material conception of life is the topmost achievement for a living being. The Lord rejected this suggestion also because on the plea of such spiritual realization much havoc has been wrought by unscrupulous persons; therefore all of a sudden this is not possible. The Rāya then suggested sincere association of self-realized souls and hearing submissively the transcendental message of the pastimes of the Personality of Godhead. This suggestion was welcomed by the Lord. This suggestion was made following in the footsteps of Brahmājī, who said that the Personality of Godhead is known as ajita, or the one who cannot be conquered or approached by anyone. But such ajita also becomes jita (conquered) by one method, which is very simple and easy. The simple method is that one has to give up the arrogant attitude of declaring oneself to be God Himself. One must be very meek and submissive and try to live peacefully by lending the ear to the speeches of the transcendently self-realized soul who speaks on the message of Bhāgavata-dharma, or the

religion of glorifying the Supreme Lord and His devotees. To glorify a great man is a natural instinct for living beings, but they have not learned to glorify the Lord. Perfection of life is attained simply by glorifying the Lord in association with a self-realized devotee of the Lord.\* The self-realized devotee is he who surrenders unto the Lord fully and who does not have attachment for material prosperity. Material prosperity and sense enjoyment and their advancement are all activities of ignorance in human society. Peace and friendship are impossible for a society detached from the association of God and His devotees. It is imperative, therefore, that one sincerely seek the association of pure devotees and hear them patiently and submissively from any position of life. The position of a person in the higher or lower status of life does not hamper one in the path of self-realization. The only thing one has to do is to hear from a self-realized soul with a routine program. The teacher may also deliver lectures from the Vedic literatures, following in the footsteps of the bygone ācāryas who realized the Absolute Truth. Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu recommended this simple method of self-realization generally known as Bhāgavata-dharma. Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam is the perfect guide for this purpose.

Above these topics discussed by the Lord and Śrī Rāmānanda Rāya, there were still more elevated spiritual talks between the two great personalities, and we purposely withhold those topics for the present because one has to come to the spiritual plane before further talks with Rāmānanda Rāya can be heard. We have presented further talks of Śrīla Rāmānanda Rāya with the Lord in another book (Teachings of Lord Caitanya).

At the conclusion of this meeting, Śrī Rāmānanda Rāya was advised by the Lord to retire from service and come to Purī so that they could live together and relish a transcendental relationship. Some time later, Śrī Rāmānanda Rāya retired from the government service and took a pension from the King. He returned to his residence in Purī, where he was one of the most confidential devotees of the Lord. There was another gentleman at Purī of the name Śikhi Māhiti, who was also a confidant like Rāmānanda Rāya. The Lord used to hold confidential talks on spiritual values with three or four companions at Purī, and He passed eighteen years in that way in spiritual trance. His talks were recorded by His private secretary Śrī Dāmodara Gosvāmī, one of the four most intimate devotees.

The Lord extensively traveled all over the southern part of India. The great saint of Mahārāṣṭra known as Saint Tukārāma was also initiated by the Lord. Saint Tukārāma, after initiation by the Lord, overflowed the whole of the Mahārāṣṭra Province with the saṅkīrtana movement, and the transcendental flow is still rolling on in the southwestern part of the great Indian peninsula.

The Lord excavated from South India two very important old literatures, namely the Brahma-saṁhitā\* and Kṛṣṇa-karṇāmṛta, and these two valuable books are authorized studies for the person in the devotional line. The Lord then returned to Purī after His South Indian tour.

On His return to Purī, all the anxious devotees of the Lord got back their life, and the Lord remained there with continued pastimes of His transcendental realizations. The most important incident during that time was His granting audience to King Pratāparudra. King Pratāparudra was a great devotee of the Lord, and he considered himself to be one of the servants of the Lord entrusted with sweeping the temple. This submissive attitude of the King was very much appreciated by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. The King requested both Bhaṭṭācārya and Rāya to arrange his meeting with the Lord. When, however, the Lord was petitioned by His two stalwart devotees, He flatly refused to grant the request, even though it was put forward by personal associates like Rāmānanda Rāya and Sārvabhauma Bhaṭṭācārya. The Lord maintained that it is dangerous for a sannyāsī to be in intimate touch with worldly money-conscious men and with women. The Lord was an ideal sannyāsī. No woman could approach the Lord even to offer respects. Women's seats were accommodated far away from the Lord. As an ideal teacher and ācārya, He was very strict in the routine work of a sannyāsī. Apart from being a divine incarnation, the Lord was an ideal character as a human being. His behavior with other persons was also above suspicion. In His dealing as ācārya, He was harder than the thunderbolt and softer than the rose. One of His associates, Junior Haridāsa, committed a great mistake by lustfully glancing at a young woman. The Lord as Supersoul could detect this lust in the mind of Junior Haridāsa, who was at once banished from the Lord's association and was never accepted again, even though the Lord was implored to excuse Haridāsa for the mistake. Junior Haridāsa afterwards committed suicide due to being disassociated from the company of the Lord, and the news of suicide was duly related to the Lord. Even at that time the Lord was not

forgetful of the offense, and He said that Haridāsa had rightly met with the proper punishment.

On the principles of the renounced order of life and discipline, the Lord knew no compromise, and therefore even though He knew that the King was a great devotee, He refused to see the King, only because the King was a dollar-and-cent man. By this example the Lord wanted to emphasize the proper behavior for a transcendentalist. A transcendentalist has nothing to do with women and money. He must always refrain from such intimate relations. The King was, however, favored by the Lord by the expert arrangement of the devotees. This means that the beloved devotee of the Lord can favor a neophyte more liberally than the Lord. Pure devotees, therefore, never commit an offense at the feet of another pure devotee. An offense at the lotus feet of the Lord is sometimes excused by the merciful Lord, but an offense at the feet of a devotee is very dangerous for one who actually wants to make progress in devotional service.

As long as the Lord remained at Purī, thousands of His devotees used to come to see Him during the Ratha-yātrā car festival of Lord Jagannātha. And during the car festival, the washing of the Guṇḍicā temple under the direct supervision of the Lord was an important function. The Lord's congregational saṅkīrtana movement at Purī was a unique exhibition for the mass of people. That is the way to turn the mass mind towards spiritual realization. The Lord inaugurated this system of mass saṅkīrtana, and leaders of all countries can take advantage of this spiritual movement in order to keep the mass of people in a pure state of peace and friendship with one another. This is now the demand of the present human society all over the world.

After some time the Lord again started on His tour towards northern India, and He decided to visit Vṛndāvana and its neighboring places. He passed through the jungles of Jharikhaṇḍa (Madhya Bhārata), and all the wild animals also joined His saṅkīrtana movement. The wild tigers, elephants, bears and deer all together accompanied the Lord, and the Lord accompanied them in saṅkīrtana. By this He proved that by the propagation of the saṅkīrtana movement (congregational chanting and glorifying of the name of the Lord) even the wild animals can live in peace and friendship, and what to speak of men who are supposed to be civilized. No man in the world will refuse to join the saṅkīrtana movement. Nor is



the Lord's saṅkīrtana movement restricted to any caste, creed, color or species. Here is direct evidence of His great mission: He allowed even the wild animals to partake in His great movement.

On His way back from Vṛndāvana He first came to Prayāga, where He met Rūpa Gosvāmī along with his younger brother, Anupama. Then He came down to Benares (Vārāṇasī). For two months, He instructed Śrī Sanātana Gosvāmī in the transcendental science. The instruction to Sanātana Gosvāmī is in itself a long narration, and full presentation of the instruction will not be possible here. The main ideas are given as follows.

Sanātana Gosvāmī (formerly known as Sākara Mallika) was in the cabinet service of the Bengal government under the regime of Nawab Hussain Shah. He decided to join with the Lord and thus retired from the service. On His way back from Vṛndāvana, when He reached Vārāṇasī, the Lord became the guest of Śrī Tapana Miśra and Candraśekhara, assisted by a Mahārāṣṭra brāhmaṇa. At that time Vārāṇasī was headed by a great sannyāsī of the Māyāvāda school named Śrīpāda Prakāśānanda Sarasvatī. When the Lord was at Vārāṇasī, the people in general became more attracted to Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu on account of His mass saṅkīrtana movement. Wherever He visited, especially the Viśvanātha temple, thousands of pilgrims would follow Him. Some were attracted by His bodily features, and others were attracted by His melodious songs glorifying the Lord.

The Māyāvādī sannyāsīs designate themselves as Nārāyaṇa. Vārāṇasī is still overflowed with many Māyāvādī sannyāsīs. Some people who saw the Lord in His saṅkīrtana party considered Him to be actually Nārāyaṇa, and this report reached the camp of the great sannyāsī Prakāśānanda.

In India there is always a kind of spiritual rivalry between the Māyāvāda and Bhāgavata schools, and thus when the news of the Lord reached Prakāśānanda he knew that the Lord was a Vaiṣṇava sannyāsī, and therefore he minimized the value of the Lord before those who brought him the news. He deprecated the activities of the Lord because of His preaching the saṅkīrtana movement, which was in his opinion nothing but religious sentiment. Prakāśānanda was a profound student of the Vedānta, and he advised his followers to give attention to the Vedānta and not to indulge in saṅkīrtana.

One devotee brāhmaṇa, who became a devotee of the Lord, did not like the criticism of Prakāśānanda, and he went to the Lord to express his regrets. He told the Lord that when he uttered the Lord's name before the sannyāsī Prakāśānanda, the latter strongly criticized the Lord, although the brāhmaṇa heard Prakāśānanda uttering several times the name Caitanya. The brāhmaṇa was astonished to see that the sannyāsī Prakāśānanda could not vibrate the sound Kṛṣṇa even once, although he uttered the name Caitanya several times.

The Lord smilingly explained to the devotee brāhmaṇa why the Māyāvādī cannot utter the holy name of Kṛṣṇa. “The Māyāvādīs are offenders at the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa, although they utter always brahma, ātmā or caitanya, etc. And because they are offenders at the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa, they are actually unable to utter the holy name of Kṛṣṇa. The name Kṛṣṇa and the Personality of Godhead Kṛṣṇa are identical. There is no difference in the absolute realm between the name, form or person of the Absolute Truth because in the absolute realm everything is transcendental bliss. There is no difference between the body and the soul for the Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa. Thus He is different from the living entity, who is always different from his outward body. Because of Kṛṣṇa's transcendental position, it is very difficult for a layman to actually know the Personality of Godhead Kṛṣṇa, His holy name and fame, etc. His name, fame, form and pastimes all are one and the same transcendental identity, and they are not knowable by the exercise of the material senses.

“The transcendental relationship of the pastimes of the Lord is the source of still more bliss than one can experience by realization of Brahman or by becoming one with the Supreme. Had it not been so, then those who are already situated in the transcendental bliss of Brahman would not have been attracted by the transcendental bliss of the pastimes of the Lord.”

After this, a great meeting was arranged by the devotees of the Lord in which all the sannyāsīs were invited, including the Lord and Prakāśānanda Sarasvatī. In this meeting both the scholars (the Lord and Prakāśānanda) had a long discourse on the spiritual values of the saṅkīrtana movement, and a summary is given below.

The great Māyāvādī sannyāsī Prakāśānanda inquired from the Lord as to the reason for His preferring the saṅkīrtana movement to the study of the Vedānta-sūtra. Prakāśānanda said that it is the duty of a sannyāsī to read the Vedānta-sūtra. What caused the Lord to indulge in saṅkīrtana?

After this inquiry, the Lord submissively replied: “I have taken to the saṅkīrtana movement instead of the study of Vedānta because I am a great fool.” The Lord thus represented Himself as one of the numberless fools of this age who are absolutely incapable of studying the Vedānta philosophy. The fools’ indulgence in the study of Vedānta has caused so much havoc in society. The Lord thus continued: “And because I am a great fool, My spiritual master forbade Me to play with Vedānta philosophy. He said that it is better that I chant the holy name of the Lord, for that would deliver Me from material bondage.

“In this Age of Kali there is no other religion but the glorification of the Lord by utterance of His holy name, and that is the injunction of all the revealed scriptures. And My spiritual master has taught Me one śloka [from the Bṛhan-nārādīya Purāṇa]:

harer nāma harer nāma harer nāmaiva kevalam  
kalau nāsty eva nāsty eva nāsty eva gatiḥ anyathā

“So on the order of My spiritual master, I chant the holy name of Hari, and I am now mad after this holy name. Whenever I utter the holy name I forget Myself completely, and sometimes I laugh, cry and dance like a madman. I thought that I had actually gone mad by this process of chanting, and therefore I asked My spiritual master about it. He informed Me that this was the real effect of chanting the holy name, which produces a transcendental emotion that is a rare manifestation. It is the sign of love of God, which is the ultimate end of life. Love of God is transcendental to liberation [mukti], and thus it is called the fifth stage of spiritual realization, above the stage of liberation. By chanting the holy name of Kṛṣṇa one attains the stage of love of God, and it was good that fortunately I was favored with the blessing.”

On hearing this statement from the Lord, the Māyāvādī sannyāsī asked the Lord what was the harm in studying the Vedānta along with chanting the holy name. Prakāśānanda Sarasvatī knew well that the Lord was formerly known as Nimāi Paṇḍita, a very learned scholar of Navadvīpa, and His

posing as a great fool was certainly to some purpose. Hearing this inquiry by the sannyāsī, the Lord smiled and said, “My dear sir, if you do not mind, I will answer your inquiry.”

All the sannyāsīs there were very much pleased with the Lord for His honest dealings, and they unanimously replied that they would not be offended by whatever He replied. The Lord then spoke as follows:

“Vedānta-sūtra consists of transcendental words or sounds uttered by the transcendental Personality of Godhead. As such, in the Vedānta there cannot be any human deficiencies like mistake, illusion, cheating or inefficiency. The message of the Upaniṣads is expressed in the Vedānta-sūtra, and what is said there directly is certainly glorified. Whatever interpretations have been given by Śaṅkarācārya have no direct bearing on the sūtra, and therefore such commentation spoils everything.

“The word Brahman indicates the greatest of all, which is full with transcendental opulences, superior to all. Brahman is ultimately the Personality of Godhead, and He is covered by indirect interpretations and established as impersonal. Everything that is in the spiritual world is full of transcendental bliss, including the form, body, place and paraphernalia of the Lord. All are eternally cognizant and blissful. It is not the fault of the Ācārya Śaṅkara that he has so interpreted Vedānta, but if someone accepts it, then certainly he is doomed. Anyone who accepts the transcendental body of the Personality of Godhead as something mundane certainly commits the greatest blasphemy.”

The Lord thus spoke to the sannyāsī almost in the same way that He spoke to the Bhaṭṭācārya of Purī, and by forceful arguments He nullified the Māyāvāda interpretations of the Vedānta-sūtra. All the sannyāsīs there claimed that the Lord was the personified Vedas and the Personality of Godhead. All the sannyāsīs were converted to the cult of bhakti, all of them accepted the holy name of the Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and they dined together with the Lord in the midst of them. After this conversion of the sannyāsīs, the popularity of the Lord increased at Vārāṇasī, and thousands of people assembled to see the Lord in person. The Lord thus established the primary importance of Śrīmad-Bhāgavata-dharma, and He defeated all other systems of spiritual realization. After that everyone at Vārāṇasī was overwhelmed with the transcendental saṅkīrtana movement.

While the Lord was camping at Vārāṇasī, Sanātana Gosvāmī also arrived after retiring from office. He was formerly one of the state ministers in the government of Bengal, then under the regime of Nawab Hussain Shah. He had some difficulty in getting relief from the state service, for the Nawab was reluctant to let him leave. Nonetheless he came to Vārāṇasī, and the Lord taught him the principles of devotional service. He taught him about the constitutional position of the living being, the cause of his bondage under material conditions, his eternal relation with the Personality of Godhead, the transcendental position of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, His expansions in different plenary portions of incarnations, His control of different parts of the universe, the nature of His transcendental abode, devotional activities, their different stages of development, the rules and regulations for achieving the gradual stages of spiritual perfection, the symptoms of different incarnations in different ages, and how to detect them with reference to the context of revealed scriptures.

The Lord's teachings to Sanātana Gosvāmī form a big chapter in the text of Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, and to explain the whole teachings in minute details will require a volume in itself. These are treated in detail in our book Teachings of Lord Caitanya.

At Mathurā, the Lord visited all the important places; then He reached Vṛndāvana. Lord Caitanya appeared in the family of a high-caste brāhmaṇa, and over and above that, as a sannyāsī He was the preceptor for all the varṇas and āśramas. But He used to accept meals from all classes of Vaiṣṇavas. At Mathurā the Sanoḍiyā brāhmaṇas are considered to be in the lower status of society, but the Lord accepted meals in the family of such a brāhmaṇa also because His host happened to be a disciple of the Mādhavendra Purī family.

At Vṛndāvana the Lord took bath in twenty-four important bathing places, or ghātas. He traveled to all the twelve important vanas (forests). In these forests all the cows and birds welcomed Him, as if He were their very old friend. The Lord also began to embrace all the trees of those forests, and by doing so He felt the symptoms of transcendental ecstasy. Sometimes He fell unconscious, but He was made to regain consciousness by the chanting of the holy name of Kṛṣṇa. The transcendental symptoms that were visible

on the body of the Lord during His travel within the forest of Vṛndāvana were all unique and inexplicable, and we have just given a synopsis only.

Some of the important places that were visited by the Lord in Vṛndāvana were Kāmyavana, Ādiśvara, Pāvana-sarovara, Khadiravana, Śeṣaśāyī, Khela-tīrtha, Bhāṇḍīravana, Bhadravana, Śrīvāna, Lauhavana, Mahāvana, Gokula, Kāliya-hrada, Dvādaśāditya, Keśī-tīrtha, etc. When He saw the place where the rāsa dance took place, He at once fell down in trance. As long as He remained at Vṛndāvana, He made His headquarters at Akrūra-ghāṭa.

From Vṛndāvana His personal servitor Kṛṣṇadāsa Vipra induced Him to go back to Prayāga to take bath during the Māgha Mela. The Lord acceded to this proposal, and they started for Prayāga. On the way they met with some Pathans, amongst whom there was a learned Moulana. The Lord had some talks with the Moulana and his companions, and the Lord convinced the Moulana that in the Koran also there are descriptions of Bhāgavata-dharma and Kṛṣṇa. All the Pathans were converted to His cult of devotional service.

When He returned to Prayāga, Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī and his youngest brother met Him near Bindu-mādhava temple. This time the Lord was welcomed by the people of Prayāga more respectfully. Vallabha Bhaṭṭa, who resided on the other bank of Prayāga in the village of Āḍāila, was to receive Him at his place, but while going there the Lord jumped in the River Yamunā. With great difficulty He was picked up in an unconscious state. Finally He visited the headquarters of Vallabha Bhaṭṭa. This Vallabha Bhaṭṭa was one of His chief admirers, but later on he inaugurated his own party, the Vallabha sampradāya.

On the bank of the Daśāśvamedha-ghāṭa at Prayāga for ten days continually the Lord instructed Rūpa Gosvāmī in the science of devotional service to the Lord. He taught the Gosvāmī the divisions of the living creatures in the 8,400,000 species of life. Then He taught him about the human species. Out of them He discussed the followers of the Vedic principles, out of them the fruitive workers, out of them the empiric philosophers, and out of them the liberated souls. He said that there are only a few who are actually pure devotees of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī was the younger brother of Sanātana Gosvāmī, and when he retired from service he brought with him two boatfuls of gold coins. This means that he brought with him some hundreds of thousands of rupees accumulated by the labor of his service. And before leaving home for Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu, he divided the wealth as follows: fifty percent for the service of the Lord and His devotees, twenty-five percent for relatives and twenty-five percent for his personal needs in case of emergency. In that way he set an example for all householders.

The Lord taught the Gosvāmī about devotional service, comparing it to a creeper, and advised him to protect the bhakti creeper most carefully against the mad elephant offense against the pure devotees. In addition, the creeper has to be protected from the desires of sense enjoyment, monistic liberation and perfection of the haṭha-yoga system. They are all detrimental on the path of devotional service. Similarly, violence against living beings, and desire for worldly gain, worldly reception and worldly fame are all detrimental to the progress of bhakti, or Bhāgavata-dharma.

Pure devotional service must be freed from all desires for sense gratification, fruitive aspirations and culture of monistic knowledge. One must be freed from all kinds of designations, and when one is thus converted to transcendental purity, one can then serve the Lord by purified senses.

As long as there is the desire to enjoy sensually or to become one with the Supreme or to possess the mystic powers, there is no question of attaining the stage of pure devotional service.

Devotional service is conducted under two categories, namely primary practice and spontaneous emotion. When one can rise to the platform of spontaneous emotion, he can make further progress by spiritual attachment, feeling, love, and many higher stages of devotional life for which there are no English words. We have tried to explain the science of devotional service in our book *The Nectar of Devotion*, based on the authority of *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* by Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī.

Transcendental devotional service has five stages of reciprocation:

1. The self-realization stage just after liberation from material bondage is called the śānta, or neutral, stage.
2. After that, when there is development of transcendental knowledge of the Lord's internal opulences, the devotee engages himself in the dāśya stage.
3. By further development of the dāśya stage, a respectful fraternity with the Lord develops, and above that a feeling of friendship on equal terms becomes manifest. Both these stages are called the sakhya stage, or devotional service in friendship.
4. Above this is the stage of parental affection toward the Lord, and this is called the vātsalya stage.
5. And above this is the stage of conjugal love, and this stage is called the highest stage of love of God, although there is no difference in quality in any of the above stages. The last stage of conjugal love of God is called the mādhyama stage.

Thus He instructed Rūpa Gosvāmī in devotional science and deputed him to Vṛndāvana to excavate the lost sites of the transcendental pastimes of the Lord. After this, the Lord returned to Vārāṇasī and delivered the saṁnyāsīs and instructed the elder brother of Rūpa Gosvāmī. We have already discussed this.

The Lord left only eight ślokaś of His instructions in writing, and they are known as the Śikṣāṣṭaka. All other literatures of His divine cult were extensively written by the Lord's principal followers, the Six Gosvāmīs of Vṛndāvana, and their followers. The cult of Caitanya philosophy is richer than any other, and it is admitted to be the living religion of the day with the potency for spreading as viśva-dharma, or universal religion. We are glad that the matter has been taken up by some enthusiastic sages like Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Mahārāja and his disciples. We shall eagerly wait for the happy days of Bhāgavata-dharma, or prema-dharma, inaugurated by the Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

The eight ślokaś completed by the Lord are:



1

Glory to the Śrī Kṛṣṇa saṅkīrtana, which cleanses the heart of all the dust accumulated for years and extinguishes the fire of conditional life, of repeated birth and death. This saṅkīrtana movement is the prime benediction for humanity at large because it spreads the rays of the benediction moon. It is the life of all transcendental knowledge. It increases the ocean of transcendental bliss, and it enables us to fully taste the nectar for which we are always anxious.

2

O my Lord, Your holy name alone can render all benediction to living beings, and thus You have hundreds and millions of names like Kṛṣṇa and Govinda. In these transcendental names You have invested all Your transcendental energies. There are not even hard and fast rules for chanting these names. O my Lord, out of kindness You enable us to easily approach You by chanting Your holy names, but I am so unfortunate that I have no attraction for them.

3

One should chant the holy name of the Lord in a humble state of mind, thinking oneself lower than the straw in the street; one should be more tolerant than a tree, devoid of all sense of false prestige, and ready to offer all respect to others. In such a state of mind one can chant the holy name of the Lord constantly.

4

O almighty Lord, I have no desire to accumulate wealth, nor do I desire beautiful women, nor do I want any number of followers. I only want Your causeless devotional service birth after birth.

5

O son of Mahārāja Nanda [Kṛṣṇa], 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 of Your lotus feet.

6

O my Lord, when will my eyes be decorated with tears of love flowing constantly when I chant Your holy name? When will my voice choke up, and when will the hairs of my body stand on end at the recitation of Your name?

7

O Govinda! Feeling Your separation, I am considering a moment to be like twelve years or more. Tears are flowing from my eyes like torrents of rain, and I am feeling all vacant in the world in Your absence.

8

I know no one but Kṛṣṇa as my Lord, and He shall remain so even if He handles me roughly in His embrace or makes me brokenhearted by not being present before me. He is completely free to do anything and everything, for He is always my worshipful Lord unconditionally.