

Jagat

This is a blog dedicated to the concept of prema-prayojana. I want to explore the meaning of this simple motto, which states that Divine Love is the goal of life.

সাধন স্মরণ লীলা, ইহাতে না কর হেলা, কায় মনে করিয়া সুসার

Discussion of Sahajiyaism on Nitai's Chaitanya Symposium



January 27, 2011

A friend sent me a few comments that were made about me over on Nitai's [Chaitanya Symposium](#). Nitai (Neal Delmonico) is an old friend, with whom I unfortunately do not keep in very close contact. Our approaches to bhakti and spiritual life differ somewhat, particularly where mood is concerned. For some reason, Nitai finds it necessary to find nothing positive in the Vaishnava movement that brought him to "Chaitanya Vaishnavism" and I do not agree with this, as I feel it impacts negatively on our *sādhana* when we do that kind of thing. But that is his business. He has a good brain and is well read, so I hope the best for him and his spiritual ambitions. And whether I agree with him or not is irrelevant to the fact that he is one of the foremost scholars of Gaudiya Vaishnavism in the world and deserves respect for that fact alone.

Here are some of the things that were said:

Nitai: What can I say about Jagat? He at present prefers sahaja-dharma to Vaishnava dharma. His struggles with sexuality may be more intense than the rest of us. Sahaja-dharma may help him conquer it. Long periods of copulation without ejaculation and that combined with japa and meditation on Radha and Krishna. Surely he will gain control of his urges.

He is still extraordinarily learned. He forgets more about CV in fifteen minutes than many of us will ever know. He is duly initiated by Sri Lalita Prasad Thakur and I am sure that his caitya-guru will guide him back into the fold eventually.

Malati: *I would like to talk about Jagat. He had done some good works in the past but I would like to talk about him and about the ideas he is presently pushing, based on what I have read from his blogs years ago (I've not visited it for years because the last time I was there, which was years ago, I fell asleep; too boring).*

In my opinion Jagat's ideas are backward, corruptive, shallow, parochial, no universal appeal.

What are the ideas that he's pushing? Take a sexual partner who is not your usual partner or wife, preferably someone's wife and engage in copulation sādhanā (without ejaculation) and make it as the lynchpin of your dharma? There's nothing progressive about that; it's backward. That has been going on in the backwaters of India for centuries.

In this modern world, Jagat's ideas are narrow-minded and parochial. Can 6-year-olds engage in the sexual sādhanās? What about the oldies, who can't do the sexual gymnastics? Or those who are just too lazy (just imagine the effort one has to put into the activity so as not to ejaculate) for this methodological copulation?

Jagat is sowing "immorality" and what he is proposing is anathema to a stable society. Think of the economic, psychological or moral issues that might arise from a botched sexual sādhanā! I'm sure you can imagine what I mean.

If Jagat is not careful, he might be counting the days when he gets punched on the nose from a disgruntled husband.

Malati Manjari: I don't know exactly what Jagat's ideas are, but I would say that most devotees have a misconception about Sahajiya, which is strongly influenced by IGM perception of it. We can see that in the books of A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami, who even though strongly preaching against it, was deeply influenced by it, as was Bhaktivinoda Thakur.

Unintentionally he promotes the same ideas as the Sahajiyas, namely that *kāma* and *prema* are not different in essence, only in their appearance.

Sahajiyas claim that *kāma* is inside us, but it is originally *prema*, and we only need to purify it to achieve *prema*. Which is exactly Srila Prabhupada's philosophy. Material lust is a perverted reflexion of spiritual love.

However, *prema* is Krishna's *svarūpa-śakti* and has absolutely nothing to do with *taṭastha-śakti's kāma*.

Nitai: I am not sure either of our Malatis know that much about *sahaja-dharma* and how it is practiced.

The *sahaja* tradition is at least as old as CV and probably older. After Mahaprabhu especially after his identification as the combined form of Radha and Krishna (in Kavi Karnapura and Krishnadas Kaviraja), many Buddhist *sahajiyas* and free-floating Vaishnava *sahajiyas* converted to CV and became proponents of Chaitanya Vaishnava Sahajiyaism.

Some have argued that the very move to interpret Mahaprabhu as the combined form of Radha and Krishna was influenced by a pre-existing Vaishnava

Sahajiya tradition associated with Chandidas (perhaps the author of the *śrī-kṛṣṇa-kīrtana*). So CV and CSV are very close to each other historically and in some cases very hard to distinguish from

each other. I wrote my master's thesis at the U of Chicago trying to do just that, mostly because I was appalled at the way Ed Dimock had confused them so thoroughly in his *Place of the Hidden Moon*.

Anyway, it is not as nasty and immoral a tradition as Malati makes it out to be. We should be reluctant to apply westernized moral judgments (which are really cultural and therefore quite arbitrary) to such practices. It is a set of religious practices (*sādhana*) that is, in part, meant to free us from such arbitrary moral ideologies in the first place. Like all *sādhana*s it is undertaken with a spiritual goal in mind (not for the sake of immorality) and requires training and guidance to learn to do it well.

I myself cannot imagine how it would be possible to engage in prolonged coitus without being swept away by ejaculation. But there are breathing methods, rhythms, visualizations and other methods to keep that from happening and to help the practitioners to learn to control their desires. I once met a Sahajiya guru in Navadvip named Atalbihari (Unmoving Coitus) Das who claimed that he had practiced for over 12 years every night with various partners (yes married to other men) without ever dropping his seed.

He was bragging of course, but if true that is quite an achievement. Naturally orthodox CV frowns upon it, well more than frowns; it condemns it. But it is still our nearest neighbor and shares many common practices and much theology.

Malati: I have read about Jagat's ideas; I used to follow his blog. and I've read about it on the net, different takes from different people, not just from

ex-GV devotees/students. Of course, they try to philosophize their path.

To be honest what irritates me about Jagat is that he seems to pass off his system as a GV system. I've read your brief note on the history of Sahaja.

In my opinion, to those who are really interested in the GV path, you need not take a detour to Jagat's hut. My simple opinion is this: just understand the way the GV foundational acharyas lived their lives and relate that to what they wrote (read from neutral sources, preferably). You will then have a robust understanding of their intentions for a GV sangha (community of devotees).

Nitaidas, I didnt grow up in the west and so I'm not applying a westernized moral concepts on Jagat. I see "immorality" when I see one. Btw, the topic of morality/ethics is a huge topic, it's still being debated today as from the day of Aristotle.

However, I have shown in my previous post the questionable utilitarian value of the sahajiya practices.

One SP disciple who is a friend of mine told me that when he saw Jagat's erstwhile sexual partner's husband, he was really screwed-up. How is that for a utilitarian value to the sahajiya dharma , what to speak of to the transcendental goal?

If I have to call someone phony, it will be Jagat.

Nitai: One does not need to have been born in the West to be influenced by westernized ethics. It has spread all over the world. Monogamy and all the

rules that go with it are largely a Western (Roman) style of marriage. Polyandry and Polygamy were perfectly good, moral options for large portions of humankind in the past (and even at present among small groups). I am surprised that you are so judgmental with respect to Jagat and also surprised that you are not more self-aware (ie, aware of your own biases) than you are.

Jagat could well be sincere in his representation of his sahaja dharma as GV or CV. There are texts in the sahaja tradition that make that kind of claim, that it is the real CV. One text called the *Bibartta-bilāsa* claims that all the Goswamis had their partners (*sādhikās*) and even names them! Mahaprabhu too had his, according to this text! Anyway, we don't accept that text as authentic. Nor do we recommend that anyone visit Jagat's hut. But I don't think that calls for judging Jagat severely. It is a different tradition.

IGM is phony because they claim to be part of a tradition that they are not part of. Jagat is part of the sahaja dharma tradition which claims to be the real CV tradition. You might call the tradition phony, but not necessarily Jagat. Many of the members of the sahaja tradition are in fact initiated in genuine lineages. They generally trace their diksa lineages back to Mukunda Goswami, a disciple of Krishnadas Kaviraja.

I am sure Lalita Prasad Thakur would not be happy with Jagat's choice. But that is between them. I still prefer Jagat to any IGM blowhard.

Malati Manjari: I am glad that you "disagree with the opinion that the difference between prema and

kāma is in the form only but not in essence."

Frankly, I hope none of us agrees with it. These sahaḥjiya ideas are obviously asiddhānta, but we find such statements also in Srila Prabhupada's books. That was the whole point. I agree with Nitai that we need to be aware of these differences and know the teachings of our acharyas. That doesn't mean that we should create camps and hate each other, it just means that we need to be very clear about our philosophy and our goal, and then just pursue that. And we can still appreciate other Vaishnavas by doing that.

Saragrahi (Karapurnam): *Greetings, I took Harinam and Gayatri Diksha from A.C.Bhaktivedanta Swami in 1973 and 1975. I left ISKCON in 1983. After that, I read some Gaudiya Math books, then some of Bhaktivinode Thakur. With the internet, I am learning about the history of the Chaitanya Vaishnava Sampradaya, its theology, philosophy and sociology, etc. I recently started to study logic, and have a copy of Gautama's Nyaya. I might attempt sanskrit in the future. At the present moment, I am not connected to any organization nor do I subscribe to anyone's particular interpretation or understanding of anything. I am seeking my own personal realizations with the assistance of shastra, logic, association and sādhanā. I am considering the idea of meeting someone like Ananta Das Babaji in person. Due to the internet, I have some of his writings and am also looking at the current Gurus in other branches and seeking dialog with their disciples.*

I have concluded that material sex cannot be a transformation of spiritual sex. If eternally conditioned means what it means, the conditioned

soul cannot possibly have ever experienced prema, having always been under the jurisdiction of matter, or asleep in Maha Vishnu between breaths.

Transformation would mean that prema existed, then was mixed with something else, ie., the mode of passion, to become kāma. Since prema is eternal, the transformed identity would still have to be active with its source, but only appearing like kāma in the material world. Considering that, Krishna and His Prema would be subject to material affect, which is not possible.

My current understanding is that the soul has the eternally existent capacity to experience material sex or spiritual sex. The experience of material sex is imposed by the various structures of the material energy. The experience of spiritual sex is brought to the liberated soul by Lord Krishna and is a distinct characteristic of The Lord. As such, the jiva does not "have" prema as a constituent part of its nature, transformed to kāma, then revealed by sādhanā cum ragatmika.

Rather, as material sex is put upon the soul by material nature as a perverted replica of spiritual sex, prema is put upon the soul that is eligible to experience it. Prema is not a separate commodity that is taken away from The Lord, it is a characteristic of His, that He shares with the jiva by direct contact. As such, the sahajiya idea of using material sex experience to raise the soul to spiritual sex seems to have no support in terms of this logic.

The experience of material energy and spiritual energy are totally separate and so, material experiences could not cause or attract spiritual experiences.

At this point, I don't accept that the Guru is a reservoir of prema who goes around giving it away like a commodity in exchange for absolute surrender and sentimental, codependent adoration. The Guru may be experiencing prema, and be kind enough to instruct a disciple how to experience it via the same path he followed. The guru, having personal experience can help the disciple along the way, pointing out pitfalls, etc. He does not wave a magic wand and "presto" the disciple now has prema.

Also, I don't think the esoteric mystery of direct purified perception and experience of The Lord can be found by reading any amount of shastra or by expert use of logic. My current understanding is that Authority and Logic are assistants to purified direct perception gradually attained by proper sādhanā.

The above are some of my current understandings, which I hope to explore and realize more deeply, or change, as my search reveals other aspects, or entirely new ones. Consider me a dry sponge full of active memes of all kinds, obtained from everywhere, endeavoring to remove the inauspicious and derive guidance from the auspicious. I am wide open to anything anyone has to say on any topic.

*Thank you Nitai das Prabhu, for setting up this symposium. With respect and appreciation,
Prabhupad Das Karapurnam*

I will only comment briefly, even though some of the issues mentioned here are deserving of more profound deliberation.

(1) With regards to immorality. Prema is always moral. In the absence of prema, the next best thing is the sincere desire to attain it. In that case, any moral failures will be internally corrected.

Pārakīyā does not mean having sex with a different woman every night. I would ask anyone who ascribes this opinion to me to kindly show me where and when I did. This is not what I say. I say that prema is attained through the *sāadhanā* of two committed partners. *Pārakīyā* simply means that love does not obey social rules but transcends them. If one wants prema, he or she may be obliged to break the socially acceptable moral code. But it is not a license to do so indiscriminately, nor is breaking the social code a necessary or integral part of the *sāadhanā*, nor the *siddha* state.

I do not believe that this is a question of moral relativism, which ultimately I do not believe in. It is good to remember that our own ideas may be conditioned by various cultural factors. This does not mean that one is as good as another.

(2) With regards to the question of withholding ejaculation, the limitations of this practice where children, the old and infirm are concerned. People are frequently mystified by this aspect of the *sāadhanā*. What can I say? Those who don't know should perhaps find out. It is not as difficult as all that and actually has an overall beneficial effect on physical and mental health that are worth investigating.

I no longer talk of ejaculation, which is only the male's problem, but withholding orgasm in both partners. This is because both must be *sādhakas* with the same goal of prema.

But as far as I am concerned, it is the fifth and necessary final step of the *sāadhanā*, which goes through shanta, dasya, sakhya and vatsalya, without which insight into madhura-rasa is all but impossible to attain.

It is true that some people are restricted in their capacity. The power of love actually transcends physical sexuality and two lovers, through meditation, can achieve something close to the same result. This is of course most highly enhanced in those who do share physical intimacy but not restricted to them.

The biggest handicap is to not have a loving partner, and this is indeed a lamentable misfortune. What can I say for the unfortunate? Engage in the practices you have been given by guru and pray for worthy sat-sanga. Without sat-sanga in madhura-rasa *sāadhanā*, which is intensely personal, you will have great difficulty making further progress.

(3) With regards to the historical associations with Bengal Sahajiyism, such as *Bibartta-bilāsa*, etc. I have some connection through the *śikṣā* line, as I have stated. Nevertheless, I am not committed to all aspects of the tradition and teaching as found in Bengal Sahajiyism, nor do I claim that this is the original Chaitanya Vaishnavism as taught by the

Goswamis, etc.

I do believe that there is a sufficient level of ambiguity in the original texts that there application to Sahajiya teachings is a relatively simple matter, something that I am doing on this blog. I will not detail these points here.

Nitai's statement that I "prefer *sahaja-dharma* to Vaishnava dharma" is somewhat disingenuous. My goal is prema, as taught by Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. I hope that is sufficiently clear.

I have stated that the Sahajiya and Orthodox schools exist in symbiosis. I could as easily have said that the poetic and Orthodox schools exist in mutual tension and enhancement, i.e. of dialectic. Dialectic means an inseparable relationship (*avinā-bhāva*). Simply stated, it means that the symbolism of Radha and Krishna cannot be separated from the existence and experience of sexual love in this world. Unless one understands this mutual relationship and uses it in the service of one's spiritual culture, taking only half of the hen, so to speak, one will be severely hampered in their attempts to fly.

But I am also particularly troubled by one aspect of the Sahajiya tradition as it currently exists, namely the possibility of immorality concentrated in guru traditions such as that of Atal Bihari Das Babaji, named by Nitai above. I also met Atal Bihari on several occasions since I would pass his ashram in Nabadwip on my daily walk to the Ganges. I agree with Karnapuram that the belief that "prema" can be transmitted by touch or *śakti-pāta*, etc., has the potential to be misleading. Human sexuality requires preparatory intimacies that impersonal and mechanical meetings with a guru who is busy servicing different women every night are extremely unlikely to produce. I am therefore against any such practice.

The ability to control ejaculation is not itself prema, but in a loving relationship, it enhances the pleasure of both partners, thereby increasing the love felt by each for the other. It makes the sexual act meditative and brings one to a state of *samādhī* very quickly, especially with the help of sankirtan of the Divine Couple's names.

Since there is no orgasm, the pleasure has a way of entering into every cell of the body and brain and remaining lodged there, with far reaching effects on physical and mental health. It imbues the Holy Name with associations that inevitably lead to *smaraṇa* of the most intimate Radha-Krishna's pastimes, the *raho-līlā*. These things are described elsewhere on this blog in many places and I recommend reading them. I am sure that not everyone will be as bored as Malati.

(4) With regards to the opinion of Malati Manjari and the comments of Karnapuram about the relation of *kāma* to prema. This is an interesting problem. Malati Manjari blames Srila Prabhupada for planting the seed of sahajiyaism, which I am sure would surprise Prabhupada no end! This of course arises out of the debates related to the "fall of the jiva"

that have resulted in some hard positions being taken. I think that Malati Manjari has fallen into the trap of attachment to a verbal argument without really thinking through what it means on an experiential level.

Actually, I hate to say it, but most people just simply don't know what they are talking about when it comes to Sahaja *sāadhanā*. They haven't experienced it; most of them have not even experienced intimate association with a loving *sādhaka* partner, what to speak of mastering some simple techniques to enhance that relationship and turn it into a *sāadhanā*. So this leads to all manner of confusion and guesswork.

My thinking on the question is that ultimately God and his energies form a single unitary Being. There is nothing outside the system, and any attempt to radically separate the individual conscious entity in his conditioned state from the state in perfection is wrong. In other words, what exists in the pure consciousness is present in the conditioned state also, only it is filtered through the material qualities. In the transcendental state, that same consciousness manifests in various forms in the *svarūpa-śakti*.

But there has to be some continuity. You will be the same being once you are liberated and in the *svarūpa-śakti* as you were in the conditioned state. You will not be a different entity. If you were there would be no meaning to liberation. Who would be liberated? Would it be any different from complete annihilation? And when would it happen? Gradually or suddenly? How could it happen gradually? Suddenly would mean instant death. If you transplant a tree from barren to fertile soil, does the tree become a different entity entirely?

So there is a continuity of being, consciousness and bliss through all states. We don't say that consciousness does not exist in the conditioned state. We can say the consciousness is covered. This does not mean that uncovering it leads to any specific transcendental state in the *svarūpa-śakti*. At best, it would mean the kaivalya state of the yogis. So the *svarūpa-śakti* expressed in the infinite forms of the Godhead are indeed the result of grace, etc.

Now the continuity of the jiva is in his being, consciousness and bliss. *kāma* and prema both belong to the category of "bliss," depending on the jiva's particular state or level of consciousness. This is because ananda is fundamentally relational. Since it is relational, it relates either to the external or internal energy to realize its potential. In the external energy that potential is covered due to relation to unconscious matter, in the internal energy, it is always illumined by the variegated being of the Divine Consciousness.

Desire for relationship is expressed as *kāma* in the ego-centered consciousness which depersonalizes the Other. That same desire for relationship is Love when it responds fully to the personality of the Other. These are called "I-It" and "I-Thou" respectively in the language of [Martin Buber](#).

The *sāadhanā* of prema is based on recognizing the presence of the Other in the other. Just

as one is advised to think of the guru, one should also have exactly the same attitude to the *sādhana* partner, who is even as a *sādhaka* an illuminated being, by virtue of cultivating his or her identity as a servant of Radha and Krishna. In other words, the *svarūpa-śakti* is directly present in the *sādhana* partner.

If you have the good fortune to have a *sādhaka* or *sādhikā* partner, you will quickly see how this works.

Jai Shri Radhe!



A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami

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