

"The Teachings of Lord Caitanya"
by His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada.

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TEACHINGS OF LORD CAITANYA

The Golden Avatāra



His Divine Grace
A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda

FOUNDER-ĀCĀRYA OF THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR KRISHNA CONSCIOUSNESS

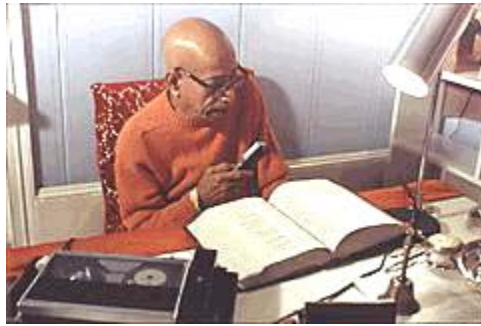
About Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu

Throughout the ages, many avatars, divinely inspired teachers and incarnations of God, have appeared in the world. But, none has ever distributed spiritual love as freely as the Golden Avatara, Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu.

Caitanya Mahaprabhu (Mahaprabhu means “the Great Master”) appeared in Bengal, India, in 1486, and He lived for only 48 years. Yet He began a revolution in spiritual consciousness that has profoundly affected the lives of millions. Renowned as a great saint even in His youth, Lord Caitanya left His family and friends at the age of 24 to teach the forgotten essence of the ancient Vedic wisdom throughout India. Although He Himself was a fully renounced mystic, He taught how one can act in spiritual consciousness even within one’s home, occupation and social affairs, Thus His teachings, although timeless, bear special relevance for today’s world. He taught a practical process that anyone can perform to directly feel the ecstasy of pure love of God. This book tells about the extraordinary life of this great saint and explains the essence of His teachings.

About the Author

His Divine Grace AC Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, the world's most distinguished teacher of Vedic religion and thought, is the author of Bhagavad-gita As It Is, Srimad-Bhagavatam, The Nector of Devotion and many other English versions of Vedic literature. He is the founder-acarya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness, which has hundreds of centers throughout the world.



Preface

There is no difference between the teachings of Lord Caitanya presented here and the teachings of Lord Kṛṣṇa in the Bhagavad-gītā. The teachings of Lord Caitanya are practical demonstrations of Lord Kṛṣṇa's teachings. Lord Kṛṣṇa's ultimate instruction in Bhagavad-gītā is that everyone should surrender unto Him, Lord Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa promises to take immediate charge of such a surrendered soul. The Lord, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, is already in charge of the maintenance of this creation by virtue of His plenary expansion, Kṣīrodakaśāyī Viṣṇu, but this maintenance is not direct. However, when the Lord says that He takes charge of His pure devotee, He actually takes direct charge. A pure devotee is a soul who is forever surrendered to the Lord, just as a child is surrendered to his parents or an animal to its master. In the surrendering process, one should: (1) accept things favorable for discharging devotional service, (2) reject things unfavorable, (3) believe firmly in the Lord's protection, (4) feel exclusively dependent on the mercy of the Lord, (5) have no interest separate from the interest of the Lord, and (6) always feel oneself meek and humble.

The Lord demands that one surrender unto Him by following these six guidelines, but the unintelligent so-called scholars of the world misunderstand these demands and urge the general mass of people to reject them. At the conclusion of the Ninth Chapter of Bhagavad-gītā, Lord Kṛṣṇa directly says: "Engage your mind always in thinking of Me, offer obeisances and worship Me. Being completely absorbed in Me, surely you will come to Me." (Bg. 9.34) However, the scholarly demons misguide the masses of people by directing them to the impersonal, unmanifest, eternal, unborn truth rather than the Personality of Godhead. The impersonalist Māyāvādī philosophers do not accept that the ultimate aspect of the Absolute Truth is the Supreme Personality of Godhead. If one desires to understand the sun as it is, one must first face the sunshine, then the sun globe and, after entering into that globe, come face to face with the predominating deity of the sun. Due to a poor fund of knowledge, the Māyāvādī philosophers cannot go beyond the

Brahman effulgence, which may be compared to the sunshine. The Upaniṣads confirm that one has to penetrate the dazzling effulgence of Brahman before one can see the real face of the Personality of Godhead. Lord Caitanya therefore teaches direct worship of Lord Kṛṣṇa, who appeared as the foster child of the King of Vraja. He also suggests that the place known as Vṛndāvana is as good as Lord Kṛṣṇa because there is no difference between the name, quality, form, pastimes, entourage and paraphernalia of Lord Kṛṣṇa and Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself. That is the absolute nature of the Absolute Truth.

Lord Caitanya also recommended that the highest mode of worship in the highest perfectional stage is the method practiced by the damsels of Vraja. These damsels (gopīs, or cowherd girls) simply loved Kṛṣṇa without a motive for material or spiritual gain. Caitanya also recommended Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam as the spotless narration of transcendental knowledge, and He pointed out that the highest goal in human life is to develop unalloyed love for Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

Lord Caitanya's teachings are identical to those given by Lord Kapila, the original propounder of sāṅkhya-yoga, the sāṅkhya system of philosophy. This authorized system of yoga recommends meditation on the transcendental form of the Lord. There is no question of meditating on something void or impersonal. One can meditate on the transcendental form of Lord Viṣṇu even without practicing involved sitting postures. Such meditation is called perfect samādhi. This perfect samādhi is verified at the end of the Sixth Chapter of Bhagavad-gītā where Lord Kṛṣṇa says: "And of all yogīs, he who always abides in Me with great faith, worshiping Me in transcendental loving service, is most intimately united with Me in yoga and is the highest of all." (Bg. 6.47) Lord Caitanya instructed the mass of people in the sāṅkhya philosophy of acintya-bhedābheda-tattva, which maintains that the Supreme Lord is simultaneously one with and different from His creation. Lord Caitanya taught this philosophy through the chanting of the holy name of the Lord. He taught that the holy name of the Lord is the sound incarnation of the Lord and that since the Lord is the absolute whole, there is no difference between His holy name and His transcendental form. Thus by chanting the holy name of the Lord one can directly

associate with the Supreme Lord by sound vibration. As one practices this sound vibration, he passes through three stages of development: the offensive stage, the clearing stage and the transcendental stage. In the offensive stage one may desire all kinds of material happiness, but in the second stage one becomes clear of all material contamination. When one is situated on the transcendental stage, he attains the most coveted position—the stage of loving God. Lord Caitanya taught that this is the highest stage of perfection for human beings.

Yoga practice is essentially meant for controlling the senses. The central controlling factor of all the senses is the mind; therefore one first has to practice controlling the mind by engaging it in Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

The gross activities of the mind are expressed through the external senses, either for the acquiring of knowledge or the functioning of the senses in accordance to the will. The subtle activities of the mind are thinking, feeling and willing. In accordance to one's consciousness, the individual is either polluted or clear. If one's mind is fixed on Kṛṣṇa (His name, quality, form, pastimes, entourage and paraphernalia), all one's activities—both subtle and gross—become favorable. The Bhagavad-gītā's process of purifying consciousness is the process of fixing one's mind on Kṛṣṇa by talking of His transcendental activities, cleansing His temple, going to His temple, seeing the beautiful transcendental form of the Lord nicely decorated, hearing His transcendental glories, tasting food offered to Him, associating with His devotees, smelling the flowers and tulasī leaves offered Him, engaging in activities for the Lord's interest, etc. No one can bring the activities of the mind and senses to a stop, but one can purify these activities through a change in consciousness. This change is indicated in Bhagavad-gītā when Kṛṣṇa tells Arjuna of the knowledge of yoga whereby one can work without fruitive results. "O son of Pṛthā, when you act by such intelligence, you can free yourself from the bondage of works." (Bg. 2.39) A human being is sometimes restricted in sense gratification due to certain circumstances such as disease, etc., but this is not the prescription.

Without knowing the actual process by which the mind and senses can be controlled, less intelligent men either try to stop the mind and senses by force, or they give in to them and are carried away by the waves of sense gratification.

The regulative principles and the rules of yoga, the various sitting postures and breathing exercises performed in an attempt to withdraw one's senses from the sense objects are methods meant for those who are too much engrossed in the bodily conception of life. The intelligent man who is situated in Kṛṣṇa consciousness does not try to forcibly stop his senses from acting. Rather, he engages his senses in the service of Kṛṣṇa. No one can stop a child from playing by leaving him inactive. A child can be stopped from engaging in nonsense by being engaged in superior activities. The forceful restraint of sense activities by the eight principles of yoga is recommended for inferior men. Being engaged in the superior activities of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, superior men naturally retire from the inferior activities of material existence.

In this way Lord Caitanya teaches the science of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. That science is absolute. Dry mental speculators try to restrain themselves from material attachment, but it is generally found that the mind is too strong to be controlled and that it drags them down to sensual activities. A person in Kṛṣṇa consciousness does not run this risk. One has to engage his mind and senses in Kṛṣṇa conscious activities, and Lord Caitanya teaches one how to do this in practice. Before accepting sannyāsa (the renounced order), Lord Caitanya was known as Viśvambhara. The word viśvambhara refers to one who maintains the entire universe and who leads all living entities. This maintainer and leader appeared as Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya to give humanity these sublime teachings. Lord Caitanya is the ideal teacher of life's prime necessities. He is the most munificent bestower of love of Kṛṣṇa. He is the complete reservoir of all mercies and good fortune. As confirmed in Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, Bhagavad-gītā, Mahābhārata and the Upaniṣads, He is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa Himself, and He is worshipable by everyone in this age of disagreement. Everyone can join in His saṅkīrtana movement. No previous qualification is necessary. Just by following His teachings, anyone can become a perfect human being. If one is fortunate enough to be attracted by His features, one is sure to be successful in one's life mission. In other words, those who are interested in attaining spiritual existence can be easily relieved from the clutches of māyā by the grace of Lord Caitanya. These teachings presented in this book are nondifferent from the Lord.

Being engrossed in the material body, the conditioned soul increases the pages of history by all kinds of material activities. The teachings of Lord Caitanya can help human society stop such unnecessary and temporary activities. By these teachings, humanity can be elevated to the topmost platform of spiritual activity. These spiritual activities actually begin after liberation from material bondage. Such liberated activities in Kṛṣṇa consciousness constitute the goal of human perfection. The false prestige one acquires by attempting to dominate material nature is illusory. Illuminating knowledge can be acquired from the teachings of Lord Caitanya, and by such knowledge one can advance in spiritual existence.

Everyone has to suffer or enjoy the fruits of his activity; no one can check the laws of material nature which govern such things. As long as one is engaged in fruitive activity, he is sure to be baffled in an attempt to attain the ultimate goal of life. I sincerely hope that by understanding the teachings of Lord Caitanya, human society will experience a new light of spiritual life which will open the field of activity for the pure soul.

om tat sat

A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami

March 14, 1968

Birthday of Lord Caitanya

Śrī-Śrī-Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa Temple

New York, NY

Prologue

by Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura

[This account originally appeared in a short work by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura entitled, “Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu: His Life and Precepts.” (August 20, 1896)]

Caitanya Mahāprabhu was born in Māyāpur in the town of Nadia just after sunset on the evening of the 23rd Phālguna 1407 Śakābda, answering to the 18th of February, 1486, of the Christian Era. The moon was eclipsed at the time of his birth, and the people of Nadia were then engaged, as was usual on such occasions, in bathing in the Bhāgīrathī with loud cheers of *Haribol*. His father, Jagannātha Miśra, a poor *brāhmaṇa* of the Vedic order, and his mother, Śacī-devī, a model good woman, both descended from *brāhmaṇa* stock originally residing in Sylhet. Mahāprabhu was a beautiful child, and the ladies of the town came to see him with presents. His mother’s father, Paṇḍita Nīlāmbara Cakravartī, a renowned astrologer, foretold that the child would be a great personage in time; and he, therefore, gave him the name Viśvambhara. The ladies of the neighborhood styled him Gaurahari on account of his golden complexion, and his mother called him Nimāi on account of the *nimba* tree near which he was born. Beautiful as the lad was, everyone heartily loved to see him every day. As he grew up he became a whimsical and frolicsome lad. After his fifth year, he was admitted into a *pāṭhaśālā* where he picked up Bengali in a very short time.

Most of his contemporary biographers have mentioned certain anecdotes regarding Caitanya which are simple records of his early miracles. It is said that when he was an infant in his mother’s arms he wept continually, and when the neighboring ladies cried *Haribol* he used to stop. Thus there was a continuation of the utterance of *Haribol* in the house, foreshewing the future mission of the hero. It has also been stated that when his mother once gave him sweetmeats to eat, he ate clay instead of the food. His mother asking for the reason, he stated that as every sweetmeat was nothing but clay transformed, he could eat clay as

well. His mother, who was also the consort of a *paṇḍita*, explained that every article in a special state was adapted to a special use. Earth, while in the state of a jug, could be used as a water pot, but in the state of a brick such a use was not possible. Clay, therefore, in the form of sweetmeats was usable as food, but clay in its other states was not. The lad was convinced and admitted his stupidity in eating clay and agreed to avoid the mistake in the future. Another miraculous act has been related. It is said that a *brāhmaṇa* on pilgrimage became a guest in his house, cooked food and read grace with meditation upon Kṛṣṇa. In the meantime the lad came and ate up the cooked rice. The *brāhmaṇa*, astonished at the lad's act, cooked again at the request of Jagannātha Miśra. The lad again ate up the cooked rice while the *brāhmaṇa* was offering the rice to Kṛṣṇa with meditation. The *brāhmaṇa* was persuaded to cook for the third time. This time all the inmates of the house had fallen asleep, and the lad shewed himself as Kṛṣṇa to the traveler and blessed him. The *brāhmaṇa* was then lost in ecstasy at the appearance of the object of his worship. It has also been stated that two thieves stole away the lad from his father's door with a view to purloin his jewels and gave him sweetmeats on the way. The lad exercised his illusory energy and deceived the thieves back towards his own house. The thieves, for fear of detection, left the boy there and fled. Another miraculous act that has been described is the lad's demanding and getting from Hiraṇya and Jagadīśa all the offerings they had collected for worshiping Kṛṣṇa on the day of Ekādaśī. When only four years of age he sat on rejected cooking pots which were considered unholy by his mother. He explained to his mother that there was no question of holiness and unholiness as regards earthen pots thrown away after the cooking was over. These anecdotes relate to his tender age up to the fifth year.

In his eighth year, he was admitted into the *tola* of Gaṅgādāsa Paṇḍita in Gaṅgānagara close by the village of Māyāpur. In two years he became well read in Sanskrit grammar and rhetoric. His readings after that were of the nature of self-study in his own house, where he had found all-important books belonging to his father, who was a *paṇḍita* himself. It appears that he read the *smṛti* in his own study, and the *nyāya* also, in competition with his friends, who were then studying under the celebrated Paṇḍita Raghunātha Śiromaṇi.

Now, after the tenth year of his age, Caitanya became a passable scholar in grammar, rhetoric, the *smṛti* and the *nyāya*. It was after this that his elder brother Viśvarūpa left his house and accepted the *āśrama* (status) of a *sannyāsī* (ascetic). Caitanya, though a very young boy, consoled his parents, saying that he would serve them with a view to please God. Just after that, his father left this world. His mother was exceedingly sorry, and Mahāprabhu, with his usual contented appearance, consoled his widowed mother.

It was at the age of 14 or 15 that Mahāprabhu was married to Lakṣmīdevī, the daughter of Vallabhācārya, also of Nadia. He was at this age considered one of the best scholars of Nadia, the renowned seat of *nyāya* philosophy and Sanskrit learning. Not to speak of the *smārta paṇḍitas*, the Naiyāyikas were all afraid of confronting him in literary discussions. Being a married man, he went to Eastern Bengal on the banks of the Padma for acquirement of wealth. There he displayed his learning and obtained a good sum of money. It was at this time that he preached Vaiṣṇavism at intervals. After teaching him the principles of Vaiṣṇavism, he ordered Tapanā Miśra to go to and live in Benares. During his residence in East Bengal, his wife Lakṣmīdevī left this world from the effects of snakebite. On returning home, he found his mother in a mourning state. He consoled her with a lecture on the uncertainty of human affairs. It was at his mother's request that he married Viṣṇupriyā, the daughter of Rāja Paṇḍita Sanātana Miśra. His comrades joined him on his return from *pravāsa* or sojourn. He was now so renowned that he was considered to be the best *paṇḍita* in Nadia. Keśava Miśra of Kashmir, who had called himself the Great *Digvijayī*, came to Nadia with a view to discuss with the *paṇḍitas* of that place. Afraid of the so-called conquering *paṇḍita*, the *tola* professors of Nadia left their town on pretence of Invitation. Keśava met Mahāprabhu at the *Barokona-ghāṭā* in Māyāpur, and after a very short discussion with him he was defeated by the boy, and mortification obliged him to decamp. Nimāi Paṇḍita was now the most important *paṇḍita* of his times. It was at the age of 16 or 17 that he traveled to Gayā with a host to sing the holy name of Hari in the streets and bazaars. This created a sensation and roused different feelings in different quarters. The *bhaktas* were highly pleased. The *smārta brāhmaṇas* became jealous of Nimāi

Paṇḍita's success and complained to Chand Kazi against the character of Caitanya as un-Hindu. The Kazi came to Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita's house and broke a *mṛdaṅga* (*khola* drum) there and declared that unless Nimāi Paṇḍita ceased to make noise about his queer religion he would be obliged to enforce Mohammedanism on him and his followers. This was brought to Mahāprabhu's notice. He ordered the townspeople to appear in the evening, each with a torch in his hand. This groups, and on his arrival in the Kazi's house, he held a long conversation with the Kazi and in the end communicated into his heart his Vaiṣṇava influence by touching his body. The Kazi then wept and admitted that he had felt a keen spiritual influence which had cleared up his doubts and produced in him a religious sentiment which gave him the highest ecstasy. The Kazi then joined the *saṅkīrtana* party. The world was astonished at the spiritual power of the Great Lord, and hundreds and hundreds of heretics converted and joined the banner of Viśvambhara after this affair.

It was after this that some of the jealous and low-minded *brāhmaṇas* of Kulia picked a quarrel with Mahāprabhu and collected a party to oppose him. Nimāi Paṇḍita was naturally a soft-hearted person, though strong in his principles. He declared that party feelings and sectarianism were the two great enemies of progress and that as long as he should continue to be an inhabitant of Nadia belonging to a certain family, his mission would not meet with complete success. He then resolved to be a citizen of the world by cutting his connection with his particular family, caste and creed, and with this resolution he embraced the position of a *sannyāsī* at Katwa, under the guidance of Keśava Bhāratī of that town, on the 24th year of his age. His mother and wife wept bitterly for his separation, but our hero, though soft in heart, was a strong person in principle. He left his little world in his house for the unlimited spiritual world of Kṛṣṇa with man in general.

After his *sannyāsa*, he was induced to visit the house of Advaita Prabhu in Śāntipura. Advaita managed to invite all his friends and admirers from Nadia and brought Śacīdevī to see her son. Both pleasure and pain invaded her heart when she saw her son in the attire of a *sannyāsī*. As a *sannyāsī*, Kṛṣṇa Caitanya put on nothing but a *kaupīna* and a *bahirvāsa* (outer covering). His head was without hair, and his hands bore a *daṇḍa*

(stick) and a *kamaṇḍalu* (hermit's water pot). The holy son fell at the feet of his beloved mother and said, "Mother! This body is yours, and I must obey your orders. Permit me to go to Vṛndāvana for my spiritual attainments." The mother, in consultation with Advaita and others, asked her son to reside in Purī (the town of Jagannātha) so that she might obtain his information now and then. Mahāprabhu agreed to that proposition and in a few days left Śāntipura for Orissa. His biographers have described the journey of Kṛṣṇa Caitanya (that was the name he got after his *sannyāsa*) from Śāntipura to Purī in great detail. He traveled along the side of the Bhāgīrathī as far as Chatrabhoga, situated now in Thānā Mathurāpura, Diamond Harbour, 24 Parganas. There he took a boat and went as far as Prayāga-ghāṭa in the Midnapura District. Thence he walked through Balasore and Cuttack to Purī, seeing the temple of Bhūvaneśvara on his way. Upon his arrival at Purī he saw Jagannātha in the temple and resided with Sārvabhauma at the request of the latter. Sārvabhauma was a gigantic *paṇḍita* of the day. His readings knew no bounds. He was the best *naiyāyika* of the times and was known as the most erudite scholar in the Vedānta philosophy of the school of Śāṅkarācārya. He was born in Nadia (Vidyānagara) and taught innumerable pupils in the *nyāya* philosophy in his *tola* there. He had left for Purī some time before the birth of Nimāi Paṇḍita. His brother-in-law Gopīnātha Miśra introduced our new *sannyāsī* to Sārvabhauma, who was astonished at his personal beauty and feared that it would be difficult for the young man to maintain *sannyāsa-dharma* during the long run of his life. Gopīnātha, who had known Mahāprabhu from Nadia, had a great reverence for him and declared that the *sannyāsī* was not a common human being. On this point Gopīnātha and Sārvabhauma had a hot discussion. Sārvabhauma then requested Mahāprabhu to hear his recitation of the *Vedānta-sūtras*, and the latter tacitly submitted. Caitanya heard with silence what the great Sārvabhauma uttered with gravity for seven days, at the end of which the latter said, "Kṛṣṇa Caitanya! I think you do not understand the *Vedānta*, for you do not say anything after hearing my recitation and explanations." The reply of Caitanya was that he understood the *sūtras* very well, but he could not make out what Śāṅkarācārya meant by his commentaries. Astonished at this, Sārvabhauma said, "How is it that you understand the meanings of

the *sūtras* and do not understand the commentaries which explain the *sūtras*? All well! If you understand the *sūtras*, please let me have your interpretations.” Mahāprabhu thereon explained all the *sūtras* in his own way without touching the pantheistic commentary of Śaṅkara. The keen understanding of Sārvabhauma saw the truth, beauty and harmony of arguments in the explanations given by Caitanya and obliged him to utter that it was the first time that he had found one who could explain the *Brahma-sūtras* in such a simple manner. He admitted also that the commentaries of Śaṅkara never gave such natural explanations of the *Vedānta-sūtras* as he had obtained from Mahāprabhu. He then submitted himself as an advocate and follower. In a few days Sārvabhauma turned out to be one of the best Vaiṣṇavas of the time. When reports of this came out, the whole of Orissa sang the praise of Kṛṣṇa Caitanya, and hundreds and hundreds came to him and became his followers. In the meantime Mahāprabhu thought of visiting Southern India, and he started with one Kṛṣṇadāsa Brāhmaṇa for the journey.

His biographers have given us a detail of the journey. He went first to Kūrmakṣetra, where he performed a miracle by curing a leper named Vāsudeva. He met Rāmānanda Rāya, the Governor of Vidyānagara, on the banks of the Godāvarī and had a philosophical conversation with him on the subject of *prema-bhakti*. He worked another miracle by touching (making them immediately disappear) the seven *tāla* trees through which Rāmacandra, the son of Daśaratha, had shot his arrow and killed the great Bali Rāja. He preached Vaiṣṇavism and *nāma-saṅkīrtana* throughout the journey. At Raṅgakṣetra he stayed for four months in the house of one Veṅkata Bhaṭṭa in order to spend the rainy season. There he converted the whole family of Veṅkata from Rāmānuja Vaiṣṇavism to *Kṛṣṇa-bhakti*, along with the son of Veṅkata, a boy of ten years named Gopāla, who afterwards came to Vṛndāvana and became one of the six Gosvāmīs or prophets serving under their leader Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya. Trained up in Sanskrit by his uncle Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī, Gopāla wrote several books on Vaiṣṇavism.

Caitanya visited numerous places in Southern India as far as Cape Comorin and returned to Purī in two years by Pandepura on the Bhīma. In this latter place he spiritualized one Tukārāma, who became from that time a religious preacher himself. This fact has been admitted in his

ābhāṅgas, which have been collected in a volume by Mr. Satyendra Nāth Tagore of the Bombay Civil Service. During his journey he had discussions with the Buddhists, the Jains and the Māyāvādīs in several places and converted his opponents to Vaiṣṇavism.

Upon his return to Purī, Rāja Pratāparudra-deva and several *paṇḍita brāhmaṇas* joined the banner of Caitanya Mahāprabhu. He was now twenty-seven years of age. In his twenty-eighth year he went to Bengal as far as Gauḍa in Malda. There he picked up two great personages named Rūpa and Sanātana. Though descended from the lines of the Karṇātic *brāhmaṇas*, these two brothers turned demi-Moslems by their continual contact with Hussain Shah, the then Emperor of Gauḍa. Their names had been changed by the Emperor into Dabira Khāsa and Sākara Mallika, and their master loved them heartily since they were both learned in Persian, Arabic and Sanskrit and were loyal servants of the state. The two gentlemen had found no way to come back as regular Hindus and had written to Mahāprabhu for spiritual help while he was at Purī. Mahāprabhu had written in reply that he would come to them and extricate them from their spiritual difficulties. Now that he had come to Gauḍa, both the brothers appeared before him with their long-standing prayer. Mahāprabhu ordered them to go to Vṛndāvana and meet him there.

Caitanya returned to Purī through Śāntipura, where he again met his dear mother. After a short stay at Purī he left for Vṛndāvana. This time he was accompanied by one Balabhadra Bhaṭṭācārya. He visited Vṛndāvana and came down to Prayāga (Allahabad), converting a large number of Mohammedans to Vaiṣṇavism by argument from the Koran. The descendants of those converts are still known as Pāṭhāna Vaiṣṇavas. Rūpa Gosvāmī met him at Allahabad. Caitanya trained him up in spirituality in ten days and directed him to go to Vṛndāvana on missions. His first mission was to write theological works explaining scientifically pure *bhakti* and *premā*. The second mission was to revive the places where Kṛṣṇacandra had in the end of Dvāpara-yuga exhibited His spiritual *līlā* (pastimes) for the benefit of the religious world. Rūpa Gosvāmī left Allahabad for Vṛndāvana, and Mahāprabhu came down to Benares. There he resided in the house of Candraśekhara and accepted his daily *bhikṣā* (meal) in the house of Tapana Miśra. Here it was that

Sanātana Gosvāmī joined him and took instruction for two months in spiritual matters. The biographers, especially Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja, have given us details of Caitanya’s teachings to Rūpa and Sanātana. Kṛṣṇadāsa was not a contemporary writer, but he gathered his information from the Gosvāmīs themselves, the direct disciples of Mahāprabhu. Jīva Gosvāmī, who was nephew of Sanātana and Rūpa and who has left us his invaluable work the *Ṣaṭ-sandarbha*, has philosophized on the precepts of his great leader. We have gathered and summarized the precepts of Caitanya from the books of those great writers.

While at Benares, Caitanya had an interview with the learned *sannyāsīs* of that town in the house of a Maratha *brāhmaṇa* who had invited all the *sannyāsīs* for entertainment. At this interview, Caitanya shewed a miracle which attracted all the *sannyāsīs* to him. Then ensued reciprocal conversation. The *sannyāsīs* were headed by their most learned leader Prakāśānanda Sarasvatī. After a short controversy, they submitted to Mahāprabhu and admitted that they had been misled by the commentaries of Śaṅkarācārya. It was impossible even for learned scholars to oppose Caitanya for a long time, for there was some spell in him which touched their hearts and made them weep for their spiritual improvement. The *sannyāsīs* of Benares soon fell at the feet of Caitanya and asked for his grace (*kṛpā*). Caitanya then preached pure *bhakti* and instilled into their hearts spiritual love for Kṛṣṇa which obliged them to give up sectarian feelings. The whole population of Benares, on this wonderful conversion of the *sannyāsīs*, turned Vaiṣṇavas, and they made a master *saṅkīrtana* with their new Lord. After sending Sanātana to Vṛndāvana, Mahāprabhu went to Purī again through the jungles with his comrade Balabhadra. Balabhadra reported that Mahāprabhu had shown a good many miracles on his way to Purī, such as making tigers and elephants dance on hearing the name of Kṛṣṇa.

From this time, that is, from his 31 st year, Mahāprabhu continually lived in Purī in the house of Kāśī Miśra until his disappearance in his forty-eight year at the time of *saṅkīrtana* in the temple of Ṭoṭā-gopinātha. During these 18 years, his life was one of settled love and piety. He was surrounded by numerous followers, all of whom were of the highest order of Vaiṣṇavas and who were distinguished from the common people by their purest character and learning, firm religious principles and

spiritual love of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa. Svarūpa Dāmodara, who had been known by the name of Puruṣottamācārya while Mahāprabhu was in Nadia, joined him from Benares and accepted service as his secretary. No production of any poet or philosopher could be laid before Mahāprabhu unless Svarūpa had passed it as pure and useful. Rāya Rāmānanda was his second mate. Both he and Svarūpa would sing while Mahāprabhu expressed his sentiments on a certain point of worship. Paramānanda Purī was his minister in matters of religion. There are hundreds of anecdotes described by his biographers which we do not think it meet here to reproduce. Mahāprabhu slept short. His sentiments carried him far and wide in the firmament of spirituality every day and night, and all his admirers and followers watched him throughout. He worshiped, communicated with his missionaries at Vṛndāvana, and conversed with those religious men who newly came to visit him. He sang and danced, took no care of himself and oft-times lost himself in religious beatitude. All who came to him believed in him as the all-beautiful God appearing in the nether world for the benefit of mankind. He loved his mother all along and sent her *mahāprasāda* now and then with those who went to Nadia. He was most amiable in nature. Humility was personified in him. His sweet appearance gave cheer to all who came in contact with him. He appointed Prabhu Nityānanda as the missionary in charge of Bengal. He dispatched six disciples (Gosvāmīs) to Vṛndāvana to preach love in the upcountry. He punished all of his disciples who deviated from a holy life. This he markedly did in the case of Junior Haridāsa. He never lacked in giving proper instructions in life to those who solicited them. This will be seen in his teachings to Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī. His treatment to Haridāsa (senior) will show how he loved spiritual men and how he defied caste distinction in spiritual brotherhood

Lord Caitanya's Mission

Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu instructed His disciples to write books on the Science of Kṛṣṇa, a task which those who follow Him have continued to carry out down to the present day. The elaborations and expositions on the philosophy taught by Lord Caitanya are in fact most voluminous, exacting and consistent due to the system of disciplic succession. Although Lord Caitanya was widely renowned as a scholar in His youth, He left only eight verses, called *Śikṣāṣṭaka*. These eight verses clearly reveal His mission and precepts. These supremely valuable prayers are translated herein.

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 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 should be 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 at 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 by 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.

Introduction

[Originally delivered as five morning lectures on *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*—the authoritative biography of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu, by Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī—before the International Society for Krishna Consciousness, New York City, April 10–14, 1967.]

The word *caitanya* means living force. As living entities, we can move, but a table cannot because it does not possess living force. Movement and activity may be considered to be signs or symptoms of the living force. Indeed, it may be said that there can be no activity without the living force. Although the living force is present in the material condition, it is not *amṛta*, immortal. The words *caitanya-caritāmṛta*, then, may be translated as “the character of the living force in immortality.”

But how is this living force displayed immortally? It is not displayed by man or any other creature in this material universe, for none of us are immortal in these bodies. We possess the living force, we perform activities, and we are immortal by our nature and constitution, but the material condition into which we have been put does not allow our immortality to be displayed. It is stated in the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* that eternality and the living force belong both to ourselves and God. Although this is true in that both God and ourselves are immortal, there is a difference. As living entities, we perform many activities, but we have a tendency to fall down into material nature. God has no such tendency. Being all-powerful, He never comes under the control of material nature. Indeed, material nature is but one display of His inconceivable energies.

On the ground we may see only clouds in the sky, but if we fly above the clouds we can see the sun shining. From the sky, skyscrapers and cities seem very tiny; similarly, from God’s position this entire material creation is insignificant. The tendency of the conditioned living entity is to come down from the heights where everything can be seen in perspective. God, however, does not have this tendency. The Supreme Lord is not subject to fall down into illusion (*māyā*) any more than the

sun is subject to fall beneath the clouds. Because the Supreme Lord is not subject to illusion, He is unconditioned; because we, as finite living entities, are prone to fall into illusion, we are called conditioned. Impersonalist philosophers (Māyāvādīs) maintain that both the living entity and God Himself are under the control of *māyā* when they come into this material world. This may be true of the living entity, but it is not true of God, for in all instances the material energy is working under His direction. Those who consider the Supreme Lord to be subject to material conditioning are called fools by Kṛṣṇa Himself in *Bhagavad-gītā*:

*avajānanti mām mūḍhā
mānuṣīm tanum āśritam
param bhāvam ajānanto
mama bhūta-maheśvaram*

“Fools deride Me when I descend in the human form. They do not know My transcendental nature and My supreme dominion over all that be.”
(Bg. 9.11)

Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu should not be considered to be one of us. He is Kṛṣṇa Himself, the supreme living entity, and as such He never comes under the cloud of *māyā*. Kṛṣṇa, His expansions, and even His higher devotees never fall into the clutches of illusion. Lord Caitanya came to earth simply to preach *Kṛṣṇa-bhakti*, love of Kṛṣṇa. In other words, He is Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself teaching the living entities the proper way to approach Kṛṣṇa. He is like a teacher who, seeing a student doing poorly, takes up a pencil and writes, saying, “Do it like this: A, B, C.” By this, one must not foolishly think that the teacher is learning his ABC’s. Although He appears in the guise of a devotee, we should always remember that Lord Caitanya is Kṛṣṇa (God) Himself teaching us how to become Kṛṣṇa conscious, and we must study Him in that light. In *Bhagavad-gītā* Lord Kṛṣṇa sets forth the highest religious principle in this way:

*sarva-dharmān parityajya
mām ekaṁ śaraṇam vraja
ahaṁ tvām sarva-pāpēbhyo*

“Abandon all varieties of religion and just surrender unto Me. I shall deliver you from all sinful reaction. Do not fear.” (Bg. 18.66)

This may seem to be a simple instruction to follow, but invariably our reaction is, “Oh, surrender? Give up? But I have so many responsibilities.” And *māyā*, illusion, says to us, “Don’t do it, or you’ll be out of my clutches. Just stay in my clutches, and I’ll kick you.” It is a fact that we are constantly being kicked by *māyā*, just as the male ass is kicked in the face by the she-ass when he comes for sex. Similarly, cats and dogs are always fighting and whining when they have sex. These are the tricks of nature. Even an elephant in the jungle is caught by the use of a trained she-elephant who leads him into a pit. *Māyā* has many activities, and in the material world her strongest shackle is the female. Of course in actuality we are neither male nor female—for these designations refer only to the outer dress, the body. We are all actually Kṛṣṇa’s servants. In conditioned life, however, we are shackled by the iron chains which take the form of beautiful women. Thus every male is bound by sex life, and therefore when one attempts to gain liberation from the material clutches, he must first learn to control the sex urge. Unrestricted sex puts one fully in the clutches of illusion. Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu officially renounced this illusion at the age of twenty-four, although His wife was sixteen and His mother seventy, and He was the only male member of the family. Although He was a *brāhmaṇa* and was not rich, He took *sannyāsa*, the renounced order of life, and thus extricated Himself from family entanglement.

If we wish to become fully Kṛṣṇa conscious, we have to give up the shackles of *māyā*, or, if we remain with *māyā*, we should live in such a way that we will not be subject to illusion. It is not necessary for one to abandon his family, for there were many householders amongst Lord Caitanya’s closest devotees. What must be renounced is the propensity for material enjoyment. Although Lord Caitanya approved of a householder having regulated sex in marriage, He was very strict with those in the renounced order, and He even banished junior Haridāsa for glancing lustfully at a young woman. The point is that one must take up a particular path and stick to it, obeying all the rules and regulations

necessary for success in spiritual life. It was Lord Caitanya's mission that He teach the path of Kṛṣṇa consciousness to all men and thereby enable them to partake of the immortality of spiritual life.

From *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* we learn how Caitanya taught people to become immortal, and thus the title may be properly translated as "the immortal character of the living force." The supreme living force is the Supreme Personality of Godhead. He is also the supreme entity. There are innumerable living entities, and all of them are individual. This is very easy to understand: We are all individual in thought and desires, and the Supreme Lord is also an individual person. He is different, though, in that He is the leader, the one whom no one can excel. Amongst the created living entities, one being can excel another in one capacity or another. The Lord is an individual, just as the living entities are individual, but He is different in that He is the supreme individual. God is also infallible, and in *Bhagavad-gītā* He is addressed as Acyuta, which means, "He who never falls down." This is indicated because in *Bhagavad-gītā* Arjuna had fallen into delusion but Kṛṣṇa had not. We often hear it said that God is infallible, and in *Bhagavad-gītā* Kṛṣṇa states:

*nānyam guṇebhyaḥ kartāram
yadā draṣṭānupaśyati
guṇebhyaś ca param vetti
mad-bhāvaṁ so 'dhigacchati*

"When you see that there is nothing beyond these modes of nature in all activities and that the Supreme Lord is transcendental to all these modes, then you can know My spiritual nature." (Bg. 14.19)

Thus we should not think that Kṛṣṇa is overpowered by the material potency when He is in the material world. Kṛṣṇa and His incarnations are not under the control of material nature. They are totally free. Indeed, in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* one who has a godly nature is actually defined as one who is not affected by the modes of material nature, although in material nature. If even a devotee can attain this freedom, then what to speak of the Supreme?

The real question is how can we remain unpolluted by material contamination while in the material world. It was Rūpa Gosvāmī who

explained that we can remain uncontaminated while in the world if we simply make it our ambition to serve Kṛṣṇa. One may then justifiably ask, “How can I serve?” Obviously this is not simply a matter of meditation, which is just an activity of the mind, but of practical work. Love of Kṛṣṇa’s service can only be attained by working for Kṛṣṇa. In such work, we should leave no resource unused. Whatever is there, whatever we have, should be used for Kṛṣṇa. We can use everything: typewriters, automobiles, airplanes, missiles—anything. If we simply speak to people about Kṛṣṇa consciousness, we are also rendering service. If our minds, senses, speech, money and energies are thus engaged in the service of Kṛṣṇa, we cannot be considered to be existing in material nature. By virtue of spiritual consciousness, or Kṛṣṇa consciousness, we transcend the platform of material nature. It is a fact that Kṛṣṇa, His expansions and His devotees—that is, those who work for Him—are not in material nature, although people with a poor fund of knowledge think that they are.

Caitanya-caritāmṛta teaches that the spirit soul is immortal and that our activities in the spiritual world are also immortal. The Māyāvādīs, who hold to the view that the Absolute is impersonal and formless, contend that a realized soul has no need to talk. However, the Vaiṣṇavas, who are devotees of Kṛṣṇa, contend that when one reaches the stage of realization, he really begins to talk. “Previously we only talked of nonsense,” the Vaiṣṇava says. “Now let us begin our real talks, talks of Kṛṣṇa.” The Māyāvādīs are also fond of using the example of the water pot, maintaining that when a pot is not filled with water it makes a sound, but that when it is filled it makes no sound. But are we waterpots? How can we be compared to them? A good analogy utilizes as many similarities between two objects as possible. A water pot is not an active living force, but we are. Ever silent meditation may be adequate for a waterpot, but not for us. Indeed, when one has realized he has so much to say about Kṛṣṇa, twenty-four hours in a day is not sufficient. It is the fool who is celebrated as long as he does not speak, for when he breaks his silence his lack of knowledge is exposed. Caitanya-caritāmṛta shows that there are many wonderful things to discover by glorifying the Supreme.

In the beginning of Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī

writes: "I offer my respects to my spiritual masters." He uses the plural here to indicate the disciplic succession. It is not that he offers obeisances to his spiritual master alone but to the whole paramparā, the chain of disciplic succession beginning with Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself. Thus the guru is addressed in the plural to show the author's highest respect for all the Vaiṣṇavas. After offering obeisances to the disciplic succession, the author pays obeisances to all the other devotees, God-brothers, the expansions of Godhead and the first manifestation of Kṛṣṇa's energy. Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu (sometimes called Kṛṣṇa Caitanya) is the embodiment of all of these; He is God, guru, devotee and the expansion of God. As His associate, Nityānanda, He is the first manifestation of energy; as Advaita, He is an incarnation; as Gadādhara, He is the internal potency; and as Śrīvāsa, He is the marginal living entity. Thus Kṛṣṇa should not be thought of as being alone but should be considered as eternally existing with all His manifestations, as described by Rāmānujācārya. In viśiṣṭādvaita philosophy, God's energies, expansions and incarnations are considered to be oneness in diversity. In other words, God is not separate from all these; everything together is God.

Actually Caitanya-caritāmṛta is not intended for the novice, for it is the post-graduate study of spiritual knowledge. Ideally, one begins with and advances through Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam to the Caitanya-caritāmṛta. Although all these great scriptures are on the absolute level, for the sake of comparative study Caitanya-caritāmṛta is considered to be on the highest platform. Every verse in it is perfectly composed. Indeed, Lord Caitanya and Nityānanda are compared to the sun and moon in that They dissipate the darkness of the material world. In this instance both the sun and moon have risen together, and it is proper to offer obeisances directly to Lord Caitanya and Nityānanda.

In the Western world where the glories of Lord Caitanya are relatively unknown, one may inquire, "Who is Kṛṣṇa Caitanya?" The scriptural conclusion in answer to that question is that He is the Supreme Personality of God head. Generally in the *Upaniṣads* the Supreme Absolute Truth is described in an impersonal way, but the personal aspect of the Absolute Truth is mentioned in the *Īśopaniṣad*, where,

after a description of the all-pervading, we find the following verse:

*hiraṇmayena pātreṇa
satyasyāpihitam mukham
tat tvam pūṣann apāvṛṇu
satya-dharmāya dṛṣṭaye*

“O my Lord, sustainer of all that lives, Your real face is covered by Your dazzling effulgence. Kindly remove that covering and exhibit Yourself to Your pure devotee.” (*Śrī Īśopaniṣad*, Mantra 15)

The impersonalists do not have the power to go beyond the effulgence of God and arrive at the personality from whom this effulgence is emanating. At the end of *Īśopaniṣad*, however, there is a hymn to the Personality of Godhead. It is not that the impersonal Brahman is denied; it is also described, but that Brahman is considered to be the glaring effulgence of the body of Caitanya. In other words, Kṛṣṇa Caitanya is the basis of the impersonal Brahman. It is also stated by Kṛṣṇa in *Bhagavad-gītā* that the impersonal Brahman rests on Him (*brahmaṇo hi pratiṣṭhāham*, Bg. 14.27). The Paramātmā, or Supersoul, which is present within the heart of every living entity and within every atom of the universe, is but the partial representation of Caitanya. Kṛṣṇa Caitanya is therefore the basis of Brahman and the Supreme Personality of Godhead as well. As the Supreme, He is full in six opulences: wealth, fame, strength, beauty, knowledge and renunciation. In short, we should know that He is Kṛṣṇa, God, and nothing is equal to or greater than Him. There is no superior to be conceived. He is the Supreme Person. It was Rūpa Gosvāmī, a confidential devotee taught for more than ten days continuously by Lord Caitanya, who wrote:

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

[Madhya 19.53]

“I offer my respectful obeisances unto the Supreme Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya, who is more magnanimous than any other *avatāra*, even Kṛṣṇa

Himself, because He is bestowing freely what no one else has ever given—pure love of Kṛṣṇa.”

It is not that Caitanya teaches a long and elaborate path to God realization. He is completely spiritual, and He begins from the point of surrender to Kṛṣṇa. He does not pursue the paths of *karma-yoga* or *jñāna-yoga* or *haṭha-yoga* but begins at the end of material existence, at the point where one gives up all material attachment. In *Bhagavad-gītā* Kṛṣṇa began His teachings by distinguishing the soul from matter and in the Eighteenth Chapter concluded at the point where the soul surrenders to Him in devotion. The Māyāvādīs would have all talk cease there, but at that point the real discussion only begins. It is the *Vedānta-sūtra* which begins: *athāto brahma jijñāsā*: “Now let us begin to inquire about the Supreme Absolute Truth.” Rūpa Gosvāmī thus praises Caitanya as the most munificent incarnation of all, for He gives the greatest gift by indicating the highest form of devotional service. In other words, He answers the most important inquiries that anyone can make.

There are different stages of devotional service and God realization. Strictly speaking, anyone who accepts the existence of God is situated in devotional service. To acknowledge that God is great is something, but not much. Caitanya, preaching as an *ācārya*, a great teacher, taught that we can enter into a relationship with God and actually become God’s friend. In *Bhagavad-gītā* Kṛṣṇa showed Arjuna His universal form because Arjuna was His “very dear friend.” Upon seeing Kṛṣṇa as the Lord of the universes, however, Arjuna actually asked Kṛṣṇa to forgive the familiarity of his friendship. Caitanya goes beyond this point. Through Lord Caitanya we can become friends with Kṛṣṇa, and there is no limit to this friendship. We can become friends of Kṛṣṇa not in awe or adoration but in complete freedom. We can even relate to God as His father. This is not only the philosophy of *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* but of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* as well. There are no other literatures in the world in which God is treated as the son of a devotee. Usually God is seen as the almighty Father who supplies the demands of His sons. The great devotees, however, sometimes treat God as a son in their execution of devotional service. The son demands, and the father supplies, and in supplying Kṛṣṇa the devotee becomes like a father. Instead of taking

from God, we give to God. It was in this relationship that Kṛṣṇa's mother, Yaśodā, told the Lord, "Here, eat this or You'll die. Eat nicely." In this way Kṛṣṇa, although the proprietor of everything, depends on the mercy of His devotee. This is a uniquely high level of friendship in which the devotee actually believes himself to be the father of Kṛṣṇa. However, Lord Caitanya's greatest gift was His teaching that Kṛṣṇa can be actually treated as one's lover. In this relationship the Lord is so much attached that He expresses His inability to reciprocate. Kṛṣṇa was so obliged to the *gopīs*, the cowherd girls of Vṛndāvana, that He felt unable to return their love. "I cannot repay your love," He told them. "I have no more assets to return." Thus devotional service is performed on this excellent platform, and knowledge of the devotee's relationship to Kṛṣṇa as lover and beloved was given by Caitanya Mahāprabhu. It was never given by any previous incarnation or *ācārya*. Thus Rūpa Gosvāmī wrote of Caitanya: "Devotional service itself is the highest platform, the glorious platform which You have contributed. You are Kṛṣṇa in a yellow complexion, and You are Śacīnandana, the son of mother Śacī. Those who hear *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* will keep You in their hearts. It will be easy to understand Kṛṣṇa through You." Thus Caitanya Mahāprabhu came to deliver Kṛṣṇa. His method of deliverance was not meditation, fruitive activities or scriptural study, but love.

We have often heard the phrase "love of Godhead." How far this love of Godhead can actually be developed can be learned from the Vaiṣṇava philosophy. Theoretical knowledge of love of God can be found in many places and in many scriptures, but what that love of Godhead actually is and how it is developed can be found in Vaiṣṇava literatures. It is the unique and highest development of love of God that is given by Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

Even in this material world we can have a little sense of love. How is this possible? It is due to the love which is found in the Godhead. Whatever we find within our experience within this conditional life is situated in the Supreme Lord, who is the ultimate source of everything. In our original relationship with the Supreme Lord there is real love, and that love is reflected pervertedly through material conditions. Our real love is continuous and unending, but because that love is reflected pervertedly in this material world, it lacks continuity and is inebriating.

If we want real transcendental love, we have to transfer our love to the supreme lovable object—the Supreme Personality of Godhead. This is the basic principle of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

In material consciousness we are trying to love that which is not at all lovable. We give our love to dogs and cats, running the risk that at the time of death we may think of them and consequently take birth in a family of cats or dogs. Thus love that does not have Kṛṣṇa as its object leads downward. It is not that Kṛṣṇa or God is something obscure or something that only a few chosen people can attain. Caitanya Mahāprabhu informs us that in every country and in every scripture there is some hint of love of Godhead. Unfortunately no one knows what love of Godhead actually is. The Vedic scriptures, however, are different in that they can direct the individual in the proper way to love God. Other scriptures do not give information on how one can love God, nor do they actually define or describe *what* or *who* the Godhead actually is. Although they officially promote love of Godhead, they have no idea how to execute it. But Caitanya Mahāprabhu gives a practical demonstration of how to love God in a conjugal relationship. Taking the part of Rādhārāṇī, Caitanya tries to love Kṛṣṇa as Rādhārāṇī loved Him. Kṛṣṇa was always amazed by Rādhārāṇī's love. "How does Rādhārāṇī give Me such pleasure?" He would ask. In order to study Rādhārāṇī, Kṛṣṇa lived in Her role and tried to understand Himself. This is the secret of Lord Caitanya's incarnation. Caitanya is Kṛṣṇa, but He has taken the mode or role of Rādhārāṇī to show us how to love Kṛṣṇa. Thus He is addressed: "I offer my respectful obeisances unto the Supreme Lord who is absorbed in Rādhārāṇī's thoughts."

This brings up the question of who Rādhārāṇī is and what Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa is. Actually Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa is the exchange of love. This is not ordinary love; Kṛṣṇa has immense potencies, of which three are principal: internal, external and marginal. In the internal potency there are three divisions: *saṁvit*, *hlādinī* and *sandhinī*. The *hlādinī* potency is the pleasure potency. All living entities have this pleasure-seeking potency, for all beings are trying to have pleasure. This is the very nature of the living entity. At present we are trying to enjoy our pleasure potency by means of the body in this material condition. By bodily contact we are attempting to derive pleasure from material sense objects. We should not

think, however, that Kṛṣṇa, who is always spiritual, tries to seek pleasure on this material plane like us. Kṛṣṇa describes the material universe as a nonpermanent place full of miseries. Why, then, would He seek pleasure in the material form? He is the Supersoul, the supreme spirit, and His pleasure is beyond the material conception.

In order to learn how Kṛṣṇa's pleasure can be obtained, we must read the Tenth Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* in which Kṛṣṇa's pleasure potency is displayed in His pastimes with Rādhārāṇī and the damsels of Vraja.

Unfortunately, unintelligent people turn at once to the sports of Kṛṣṇa in the *Daśama-skandha*, the Tenth Canto. Kṛṣṇa's embracing Rādhārāṇī or His dancing with the cowherd girls in the *rāsa* dance are generally not understood by ordinary men because they consider these pastimes in the light of mundane lust. They incorrectly think that Kṛṣṇa is like themselves and that He embraces the *gopīs* just as an ordinary man embraces a young girl. Some people thus become interested in Kṛṣṇa because they think that His religion allows indulgence in sex. This is not *Kṛṣṇa-bhakti*, love of Kṛṣṇa, but *prākṛta-sahajiyā*— materialistic lust.

In order to avoid such errors, we should understand what Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa actually is. Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa display their pastimes through Kṛṣṇa's internal energy. The pleasure potency of Kṛṣṇa's internal energy is a most difficult subject matter, and unless one understands what Kṛṣṇa is, he cannot understand it. Kṛṣṇa does not take any pleasure in this material world, but He has a pleasure potency. Because we are part and parcel of Kṛṣṇa, the pleasure potency is within us also, but we are trying to exhibit that pleasure potency in matter. Kṛṣṇa, however, does not make such a vain attempt. The object of Kṛṣṇa's pleasure potency is Rādhārāṇī, and He exhibits His potency or His energy as Rādhārāṇī and then engages in loving affairs with Her. In other words, Kṛṣṇa does not take pleasure in this external energy but exhibits His internal energy, His pleasure potency, as Rādhārāṇī. Thus Kṛṣṇa manifests Himself as Rādhārāṇī in order to exhibit His internal pleasure potency. Of the many extensions, expansions and incarnations of the Lord, this pleasure potency is the foremost and chief.

It is not that Rādhārāṇī is separate from Kṛṣṇa. Rādhārāṇī is also Kṛṣṇa, for there is no difference between the energy and the energetic.

Without energy, there is no meaning to the energetic, and without the

energetic, there is no energy. Similarly, without Rādhā there is no meaning to Kṛṣṇa, and without Kṛṣṇa, there is no meaning to Rādhā. Because of this, the Vaiṣṇava philosophy first of all pays obeisances to and worships the internal pleasure potency of the Supreme Lord. Thus the Lord and His potency are always referred to as Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa. Similarly, those who worship the name of Nārāyaṇa first of all utter the name of Lakṣmī, as Lakṣmī-Nārāyaṇa. Similarly, those who worship Lord Rāma first of all utter the name of Sītā. In any case—Sītā-Rāma, Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, Lakṣmī-Nārāyaṇa—the potency always comes first. Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa are one, and when Kṛṣṇa desires to enjoy pleasure, He manifests Himself as Rādhārāṇī. The spiritual exchange of love between Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa is the actual display of the internal pleasure potency of Kṛṣṇa. Although we speak of “when” Kṛṣṇa desires, just when He did desire we cannot say. We only speak in this way because in conditional life we take it that everything has a beginning; however, in the absolute or spiritual life there is neither beginning nor end. Yet in order to understand that Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa are one and that They also become divided, the question “When?” automatically comes to mind. When Kṛṣṇa desired to enjoy His pleasure potency, He manifested Himself in the separate form of Rādhārāṇī, and when He wanted to understand Himself through the agency of Rādhā, He united with Rādhārāṇī, and that unification is called Lord Caitanya.

Why did Kṛṣṇa assume the form of Caitanya Mahāprabhu? It is explained that Kṛṣṇa desired to know the glory of Rādhā’s love. “Why is She so much in love with Me?” Kṛṣṇa asked. “What is My special qualification that attracts Her so? And what is the actual way in which She loves Me?” It seems strange that Kṛṣṇa, as the Supreme, should be attracted by anyone’s love. We search after the love of a woman or a man because we are imperfect and lack something. The love of a woman, that potency and pleasure, is absent in man, and therefore a man wants a woman, but this is not the case with Kṛṣṇa, who is full in Himself. Thus Kṛṣṇa expressed surprise: “Why am I attracted by Rādhārāṇī? And when Rādhārāṇī feels My love, what is She actually feeling?” In order to taste the essence of that loving affair, Kṛṣṇa appeared just as the moon appears on the horizon of the sea. Just as the moon was produced by the churning of the sea, by the churning of spiritual love affairs the moon of

Caitanya Mahāprabhu appeared. Indeed, Caitanya's complexion was golden, just like the moon. Although this is figurative language, it conveys the meaning behind the appearance of Caitanya Mahāprabhu. The full significance of His appearance will be explained in later chapters.

The manifestations of the Supreme are also explained in *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*. After offering respects to Lord Caitanya, Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja next offers them to Nityānanda. He explains that Nityānanda is a manifestation of Saṅkarṣaṇa, who is the origin of the Mahā-Viṣṇu. Kṛṣṇa's first manifestation is as Balarāma and then Saṅkarṣaṇa, and after Saṅkarṣaṇa He is manifest as Pradyumna. In this way so many expansions take place. Although there are many expansions, Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the origin, as confirmed in *Brahma-saṁhitā*. He is like the original candle from which many thousands and millions of candles are lit. Although any number of candles can be lighted, the original candle still retains its identity as the origin. In this way Kṛṣṇa expands Himself into so many lights, and all these expansions are called *Viṣṇu-tattva*. Viṣṇu is a large light, and we are small lights, but all are expansions of Kṛṣṇa.

When it is necessary to create the material universe, Viṣṇu expands Himself as the Mahā-Viṣṇu. This Mahā-Viṣṇu lies down on the Causal Ocean and breathes all the universes from His nostrils. Thus from the Mahā-Viṣṇu and the Causal Ocean all the universes spring, and all these universes float in the Causal Ocean. In this regard there is the story of Vāmana, who, when He took three steps, stuck His foot through the covering of the universe. Water from the Causal Ocean flowed through the hole which His foot made, and it is said that that flow of water became the River Ganges. Therefore the Ganges is accepted as the most sacred water of Viṣṇu and is worshiped by all Hindus from the Himalayas down to the Bay of Bengal.

That Mahā-Viṣṇu who lies on the Causal Ocean is actually an expansion of Balarāma, who is Kṛṣṇa's first expansion, and, in the *Vṛndāvana* pastimes, is the brother of Kṛṣṇa. In the *mahā-mantra* Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare, the word Rāma refers to Balarāma. Since Nityānanda is an expansion of Balarāma, Rāma also refers to Lord Nityānanda. Thus Hare

Kṛṣṇa, Hare Rāma addresses not only Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma but Lord Caitanya and Nityānanda as well.

The subject matter of *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* primarily deals with what is beyond this material creation. The cosmic material expansion is called *māyā* because it has no eternal existence. Because it is sometimes manifested and sometimes not manifested, it is regarded as illusory. But beyond this temporary manifestation there is a higher nature, as indicated in *Bhagavad-gītā*:

*paras tasmāt tu bhavo 'nyo
'vyakto 'vyaktāt sanātanaḥ
yaḥ sa sarveṣu bhūteṣu
naśyatsu na vinaśyati*

“Yet there is another nature, which is eternal and is transcendental to this manifested and unmanifested matter. It is supreme and is never annihilated. When all in this world is annihilated, that part remains as it is.” (Bg. 8.20)

That supreme nature is beyond the manifested (*vyaktaḥ*) and unmanifested (*avyaktaḥ*). This superior nature which is beyond both creation and annihilation is the living force which is manifest in the bodies of all living entities. The body itself is composed of inferior nature, matter, but it is the superior nature that is moving the body. The symptom of that superior nature is consciousness. Thus in the spiritual world, where everything is composed of the superior nature, everything is conscious. In the material world inanimate objects are not conscious, but in the spiritual world this is not so. There a table is conscious, the land is conscious, the trees are conscious—everything is conscious. It is not possible to imagine how far this material manifestation extends. In the material world everything is calculated by imagination or by some imperfect method, but Vedic literatures give information of what lies beyond the material universe. Those who believe in experimental knowledge may doubt the Vedic conclusions, for they cannot even calculate how far this universe is extended, nor can they reach far into the universe itself. It is not possible to obtain information of anything beyond this material nature by experimental means. That which is beyond our power of conception is called *acintya*, inconceivable. It is

useless to argue or speculate about what is inconceivable. If it is truly inconceivable, it is not subject to speculation or experimentation. Our energy is limited, and our sense perception is limited; therefore we must rely on the Vedic conclusions regarding that subject matter which is inconceivable. Knowledge of the superior nature must simply be accepted without argument. How is it possible to argue about something to which we have no access? The method for understanding transcendental subject matter is given by Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself in *Bhagavad-gītā*, where Kṛṣṇa tells Arjuna at the beginning of the Fourth Chapter:

*imaṁ vivasvate yogam
proktavān aham avyayam
vivasvān manave prāha
manur ikṣvākave 'bravīt*

“I instructed this imperishable science of *yoga* to the sun-god, Vivasvān, and Vivasvān instructed it to Manu, the father of mankind, and Manu in turn instructed it to Ikṣvāku.” (Bg. 4.1)

This is the method of *paramparā*, or disciplic succession. Similarly, in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* Kṛṣṇa imparted knowledge into the heart of Brahmā, the first created creature within the universe. Brahmā imparted those lessons to his disciple, Nārada, and Nārada imparted that knowledge to his disciple, Vyāsadeva. Vyāsadeva imparted it to Madhvācārya, and from Madhvācārya the knowledge comes down to Mādhavendra Purī, to Īśvara Purī and from him to Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

One may ask that if Caitanya Mahāprabhu is Kṛṣṇa Himself, then why did He need a spiritual master? Of course He did not need a spiritual master, but because He was playing the role of *ācārya* (one who teaches by example), He accepted a spiritual master. Even Kṛṣṇa Himself accepted a spiritual master, for that is the system. In this way the Lord sets the example for men. We should not think, however, that the Lord takes a spiritual master because He is in want of knowledge. He is simply stressing the importance of accepting the disciplic succession. The knowledge of that disciplic succession actually comes from the Lord Himself, and if the knowledge descends unbroken, it is perfect.

Although we may not be in touch with the original personality who first imparted the knowledge, we may receive the same knowledge through this process of transmission. In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, it is stated that Kṛṣṇa, the Absolute Truth, the Personality of Godhead, transmitted transcendental knowledge into the heart of Brahmā. This then is one way knowledge is received—through the heart. Thus there are two processes by which one may receive knowledge: One depends upon the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who is situated as the Supersoul within the heart of all living entities, and the other depends upon the *guru* or spiritual master, who is an expansion of Kṛṣṇa. Thus Kṛṣṇa transmits information both from within and from without. We simply have to receive it. If knowledge is received in this way, it doesn't matter whether it is inconceivable or not.

In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* there is a great deal of information given about the Vaikuṅṭha planetary systems which are beyond the material universe. Similarly, a great deal of inconceivable information is given in *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*. Any attempt to arrive at this information through experimental knowledge is not possible. The knowledge simply has to be accepted. According to the Vedic method, *śabda*, or transcendental sound, is regarded as evidence. Sound is very important in Vedic understanding, for, if it is pure, it is accepted as authoritative. Even in the material world we accept a great deal of information which is sent thousands of miles by telephone or radio. In this way we also accept sound as evidence in our daily lives. Although we cannot see the informant, we accept his information as valid on the basis of sound. Sound vibration then is very important in the transmission of Vedic knowledge.

The Vedas inform us that beyond this cosmic manifestation there are extensive planets and the spiritual sky. This material manifestation is regarded as only a small portion of the total creation. The material manifestation includes not only this universe but innumerable others as well, but all the material universes combined comprise only one fraction of the total creation. The majority of the creation is situated in the spiritual sky. In that sky innumerable planets float, and these are called Vaikuṅṭhalokas. In every Vaikuṅṭhaloka Nārāyaṇa presides in the form of His four-armed expansions: Saṅkarṣaṇa, Pradyumna, Aniruddha and

Vāsudeva.

As stated before, the material universes are manifested by the Lord in the form of Mahā-Viṣṇu. Just as a husband and wife combine to beget offspring, the Mahā-Viṣṇu combines with His wife Māyā, or material nature. This is also confirmed in the *Bhagavad-gītā* where Kṛṣṇa states:

*sarva-yoniṣu kaunteya
mūrtayaḥ sambhavanti yāḥ
tāsāṃ brahma mahad yonir
aham bīja-pradaḥ pitā*

“It should be understood that all species of life, O son of Kuntī, are made possible by birth in this material nature, and that I am the seed-giving father.” (Bg. 14.4)

Viṣṇu impregnated Māyā or material nature simply by glancing at her. This is the spiritual method. Materially we are limited to impregnate by only one particular part of our body, but the Supreme Lord, Kṛṣṇa or Mahā-Viṣṇu, can impregnate any part by any part. Simply by glancing the Lord can conceive countless living entities in the womb of material nature. The *Brahma-saṃhitā* also confirms that the spiritual body of the Supreme Lord is so powerful that any part of that body can perform the functions of any other part. We can only touch with our hands or skin, but Kṛṣṇa can touch just by glancing. We can only see with our eyes, we cannot touch or smell with them. Kṛṣṇa, however, can smell and also eat with His eyes. When foodstuffs are offered to Kṛṣṇa we don't see Him eating, but He eats simply by glancing at the food. We cannot imagine how things work in the spiritual world where *everything* is spiritual. It is not that Kṛṣṇa does not eat or that we imagine that He eats; He actually eats, but His eating is different from ours. Our eating process will be similar to His when we are completely on the spiritual platform. On that platform every part of the body can act on behalf of any other part. Viṣṇu does not require anything in order to create. He does not require the goddess Lakṣmī in order to give birth to Brahmā, for Brahmā is born from a lotus flower which grows from the navel of Viṣṇu. The goddess Lakṣmī sits at the feet of Viṣṇu and serves Him. In this material world sex is required to produce children, but in the spiritual world one can produce as many children as he likes without having to take help from

his wife. Because we have no experience with spiritual energy, we think that Brahmā's birth from the navel of Viṣṇu is simply a fictional story. We are not aware that spiritual energy is so powerful that it can do anything and everything. Material energy is dependent on certain laws, but spiritual energy is fully independent.

Brahmā is born from the navel of Garbhodakaśāyī Viṣṇu, who is but a partial manifestation of the Mahā-Viṣṇu. Countless universes reside like seeds within the skin pores of the Mahā-Viṣṇu, and when He exhales, they all are manifest. In the material world we have no experience of such a thing, but we do experience a perverted reflection in the phenomenon of perspiration. We cannot imagine, however, the duration of one breath of the Mahā-Viṣṇu, for within one breath all of the universes are created and annihilated. Lord Brahmā only lives for the duration of one breath, and according to our time scale 4,320,000,000 years constitute only twelve hours of Brahmā, and Brahmā lives one hundred of his years. Yet the whole life of Brahmā is contained within one breath of the Mahā-Viṣṇu. Thus it is not possible for us to imagine the breathing power of the Supreme Lord. That Mahā-Viṣṇu is but a partial manifestation of Kṛṣṇa.

Thus Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī discusses Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu as Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and Lord Nityānanda as Balarāma, the first expansion of Kṛṣṇa. Advaitācārya, another principal disciple of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu's, is accepted as an expansion of the Mahā-Viṣṇu. Thus Advaitācārya is also the Lord, or, more precisely, an expansion of the Lord. The word *advaita* means nondual, and his name is such because he is nondifferent from the Supreme Lord. He is also called *ācārya*, teacher, because he disseminated Kṛṣṇa consciousness. In this way he is just like Caitanya Mahāprabhu. Although Caitanya is Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself, He appears as a devotee to teach people in general how to love Kṛṣṇa. Similarly, Advaitācārya appeared just to distribute the knowledge of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Thus he is also the Lord incarnated as a devotee. Kṛṣṇa is manifested in five different expansions, and He and all of His associates appear as devotees of the Supreme Lord in the form of Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya, Nityānanda, Advaitācārya, Gadādhara, Śrīvāsa and others. In all cases, Caitanya Mahāprabhu is the source of energy for all His devotees. Since this is the

case, if we take shelter of Caitanya Mahāprabhu for the successful execution of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, we are sure to make progress. One devotional song by Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura states: “My dear Lord Caitanya, please have mercy upon me. There is no one who is as merciful as You. My plea is most urgent because Your mission is to deliver fallen souls, and no one is more fallen than I. I beg priority.”

The author of *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī, was an inhabitant of Vṛndāvana and a great devotee. He had been living with his family in Katwa, a small town in the district of Burdwan in Bengal. His family also worshiped Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, and once when there was some misunderstanding amongst his family about devotional service, Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja was advised by Nityānanda Prabhu in a dream to leave home and go to Vṛndāvana. Although he was very old, he started out that very night and went to live in Vṛndāvana. While he was there, he met some of the Gosvāmīs, principal disciples of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu. He was requested to write *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* by the devotees of Vṛndāvana. Although he began this work at a very old age, by the grace of Lord Caitanya he finished it. Today it remains the most authoritative book on Caitanya’s philosophy and life.

When Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī was living in Vṛndāvana, there were not very many temples. At that time Madana-mohana, Govindajī and Gopinātha were the three principal temples. As a resident of Vṛndāvana, he offered his respects to the Deities in these temples and requested God’s favor: “My progress in spiritual life is very slow, so I’m asking Your help.” In *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, Kṛṣṇadāsa first offers his obeisances to Madana-mohana *vigraha*, the Deity who can help us progress in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. In the execution of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, our first business is to know Kṛṣṇa and our relationship with Him. To know Kṛṣṇa is to know one’s self, and to know one’s self is to know one’s relationship with Kṛṣṇa. Since this relationship can be learned by worshiping Madana-mohana *vigraha*, Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī first establishes his relationship with Him.

When this is established, Kṛṣṇadāsa begins to worship the functional Deity, Govinda. Govinda resides eternally in Vṛndāvana. In the spiritual world of Vṛndāvana the buildings are made of touchstone, the cows are known as *surabhi* cows, givers of abundant milk, and the trees are known

as wish-fulfilling trees, for they yield whatever one desires. In Vṛndāvana Kṛṣṇa herds the *surabhi* cows, and He is worshiped by hundreds and thousands of *gopīs*, cowherd girls, who are all goddesses of fortune. When Kṛṣṇa descends to the material world, this same Vṛndāvana descends just as an entourage accompanies an important personage. Because when Kṛṣṇa comes, His land also comes, Vṛndāvana is not considered to exist in the material world. Therefore devotees take shelter of the Vṛndāvana in India, for it is considered to be a replica of the original Vṛndāvana. Although one may complain that no *kalpa-vṛkṣa*, wish-fulfilling trees, exist there, when the Gosvāmīs were there, the *kalpa-vṛkṣa* were present. It is not that one can simply go to such a tree and make demands; one must first become a devotee. The Gosvāmīs would live under a tree for one night only, and the trees would satisfy all their desires. For the common man this may all seem very wonderful, but as one makes progress in devotional service, all this can be realized.

Vṛndāvana is actually experienced as it is by persons who have stopped trying to derive pleasure from material enjoyment. “When will my mind become cleansed of all hankering for material enjoyment so I will be able to see Vṛndāvana?” one great devotee asks. The more Kṛṣṇa conscious we become and the more we advance, the more everything is revealed as spiritual. Thus Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī considered Vṛndāvana in India to be as good as the Vṛndāvana in the spiritual sky, and in *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* he describes Rādhārāṇī and Kṛṣṇa as seated beneath a wish-fulfilling tree in Vṛndāvana on a throne decorated with valuable jewels. There Kṛṣṇa’s dear friends, the cowherd boys and the *gopīs*, serve Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa by singing, dancing, offering betel nuts and refreshments and decorating Their Lordships with flowers. Even today in India people decorate thrones and recreate this scene during the month of July. Generally at that time people go to Vṛndāvana to offer their respects to the Deities there.

Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī maintains that the Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa Deities show us how to serve Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. The Madana-mohana Deities simply establish that “I am Your eternal servant.” With Govinda, however, there is actual acceptance of service, and therefore He is called the functional Deity. The Gopīnātha Deity is Kṛṣṇa as master and proprietor of the *gopīs*. He attracted all the *gopīs*, or cowherd girls, by the

sound of His flute, and when they came, He danced with them. These activities are all described in the Tenth Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. These *gopīs* were childhood friends of Kṛṣṇa, and they were all married, for in India the girls are married by the age of twelve. The boys, however, are not married before eighteen so Kṛṣṇa, who was fifteen or sixteen at the time, was not married. Nonetheless He called these girls from their homes and invited them to dance with Him. That dance is called the *rāsa-līlā* dance, and it is the most elevated of all the Vṛndāvana pastimes. Kṛṣṇa is therefore called Gopīnātha because He is the beloved master of the *gopīs*.

Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī petitions the blessings of Lord Gopīnātha. “May that Gopīnātha, the master of the *gopīs*, Kṛṣṇa, bless you. May you become blessed by Gopīnātha.” Just as Kṛṣṇa attracted the *gopīs* by the sweet sound of His flute, the author of *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* prays that He will also attract the reader’s mind by His transcendental vibration. It is the purpose of this book, *Teachings of Lord Caitanya*, to transmit the essence of that vibration in an easily readable summary study.

Chapter One

Teachings to Rūpa Gosvāmī

Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, the younger brother of Sanātana Gosvāmī, went to Prayāga, the modern city of Allahabad, with his younger brother Vallabha. When the two brothers heard that Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu was staying there, they both became very happy and went to see the Lord. At that time the Lord was on His way to visit the temple Bindumādhava. On the way to the temple, the Lord was chanting and dancing, and thousands of people were following Him. Some of these people were crying, and some were laughing. Some were dancing, and some were singing, and some were falling on the ground, offering obeisances to the Lord. In all cases, all of them were roaring the holy name of Kṛṣṇa. It is said that in spite of being at the confluence of the rivers Ganges and Yamunā, Prayāga was never flooded until the appearance of Caitanya Mahāprabhu, at which time the city was overflowed by love of Kṛṣṇa.

The two brothers, Rūpa Gosvāmī and Vallabha, stayed aloof in an uncrowded place and witnessed the great crowd and wonderful scene. When the Lord danced, He raised His arms and shouted, “*Haribol! Haribol!*” The people all about Him were astonished to see His wonderful activities. After visiting the temple, the Lord accepted *prasāda* (food offered to the Deity) at the house of a Deccanist (Southern) *brāhmaṇa*. While at the *brāhmaṇa*’s home, the Lord was visited by Rūpa Gosvāmī and Vallabha. From a distance the two brothers fell down on the ground to offer obeisances, and they chanted many Sanskrit verses from the scriptures. When the Lord saw Rūpa Gosvāmī offering obeisances before Him, He became very pleased and asked him to get up. The Lord then informed Rūpa Gosvāmī of the causeless mercy of Kṛṣṇa upon him, for Kṛṣṇa had just delivered him from a materialistic way of life based simply on pound-shilling-pence. The Lord accepted the two brothers as His own devotees, and He cited one verse from the scriptures which stated that it is possible for a

brāhmaṇa, who has studied the four *Vedas*, to not be accepted as a devotee of the Lord and that a pure devotee could come from a very low family and yet be accepted by Him. Then the Lord embraced the two brothers, and, out of His causeless mercy, touched their heads with His lotus feet. Being blessed in this way, the brothers offered prayers to the Lord in their own words. The prayers indicated that Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Mahāprabhu was Kṛṣṇa Himself, that He had assumed the form and fair complexion of Caitanya and was thus known as Gaurāṅga (the golden one), and that He was the most munificent incarnation of Kṛṣṇa because He was distributing love of Kṛṣṇa. Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī also quoted one verse which was later found in the book *Govinda-līlāmṛta* (1.2):

*yo 'jñāna-mattarṁ bhuvanaṁ dayātur
ullāghayann apy akarot pramattam
svaprema-sampat-sudhayādbhutehaṁ
śrī-kṛṣṇa-caitanyam amuṁ prapadye*

“Let me surrender unto the lotus feet of Sri Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Mahāprabhu, who is the most merciful Personality of Godhead. He delivers those souls who are merged in ignorance and offers them the highest gift, love of Kṛṣṇa, and thus makes them mad for Kṛṣṇa consciousness.”

After this incident, Vallabha Bhaṭṭa invited the Lord to go to the other side of the Ganges, and the Lord went. From that moment on, wherever the Lord went, Rūpa Gosvāmī would follow Him and stay with Him. Because the Lord felt inconvenienced in crowded places, He asked Rūpa Gosvāmī to accompany Him to a place on the banks of the Ganges known as Daśāśvamedha-ghāṭa. For ten days He instructed Rūpa Gosvāmī about the truth of Kṛṣṇa, the principles of devotional service and the transcendental relationships with Kṛṣṇa. All of this was described in full detail so that in the future Rūpa Gosvāmī could distribute this science of Kṛṣṇa in his book *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*. Indeed, Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī described this incident in the first verse of *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, in which he speaks of the causeless mercy of the Lord upon him.

The Supreme Lord is cognizant and all-powerful, and by His causeless

mercy He empowers a living entity to receive His mercy. Being under the spell of conditional life, people in general are averse to rendering devotional service and practicing Kṛṣṇa consciousness. In fact, most people are unaware of the principal teachings of Kṛṣṇa consciousness regarding one's eternal relationship with the Supreme Personality of Godhead and the ultimate goal of life, which is to return home, back to Godhead. Nor are people aware of the process by which one can return to the spiritual world. Because these important subject matters are unknown to the conditioned soul, Lord Caitanya, out of His causeless mercy, instructed Rūpa Gosvāmī in the principles of devotional service. Later, for the good of the people in general, Rūpa Gosvāmī distributed this information of the science of devotional service. In the prologue to *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* (1.1.2), Rūpa Gosvāmī wrote the following:

*hṛdi yasya preraṇayā
pravartito 'haṁ varāka-rūpo 'pi
tasya hareḥ pada-kamalaṁ
vande caitanyadevasya*

“I offer my respectful obeisances unto the lotus feet of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, known as Lord Caitanyadeva, because due to His inspiration I feel the desire within my heart to write something about devotional service. For this reason I am engaged in writing this book on the science of devotion known as *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*.” When Lord Caitanya began His instructions to Rūpa Gosvāmī, He first told him, “My dear Rūpa, the science of devotional service is just like the great ocean, and it is not possible to show you all its length and breadth. However, I shall try to explain the nature of that ocean by taking just one drop out of it. In this way you can taste it and understand what that ocean of devotional service actually is.

The Lord then explained that within this *brahmāṇḍa*, or universe, there are innumerable living entities who, according to their own fruitive activities, are transmigrating from one species of life to another and from one planet to another. In this way their encagement in material existence has been continuing since time immemorial. In actuality, these living entities are atomic parts and parcels of the supreme spirit. It is

said in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* that the length and breadth of the individual soul is approximately 1/10,000th part of the tip of a hair—in other words, it is so small that it is invisible. This is also confirmed in the *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad*. In the Tenth Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, one of the four Kumāras, known as Sanandana, gave the following speech upon performing a great sacrifice: “O Supreme Truth! If the living entities were not infinitesimal sparks of the supreme spirit, each minute spark would be all-pervading and would not be controlled by a superior power. But if the living entity is accepted as a minute part and parcel of the Supreme Lord he automatically becomes controlled by a supreme energy or power. The latter is his actual constitutional position, and if he remains in this position he can attain full freedom.” (*Bhāg.* 10.87.30) If one mistakenly considers his position to be equal to that of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, he becomes contaminated by the doctrine of nonduality, and his efforts in transcendental life are rendered ineffective.

Lord Caitanya elaborated on these teachings of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* by pointing out that there are two kinds of living entities—the eternally liberated and the eternally conditioned. The eternally conditioned living entities can be divided into two types—moving and nonmoving. Those entities which cannot move—like trees, for example—remain in one place and are classified as nonmoving entities, and those that move—such as the birds and beasts—are called *jaṅgama* (moving entities) and are further divided into three categories: those that fly in the sky, those that swim in the water, and those that walk on land. Out of the many millions and trillions of living entities on land, human beings comprise only a small portion. Out of that small number of human beings, most are totally ignorant of spiritual life, are unclean in their habits and have no faith in the existence of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. In short, most human beings live like animals. These can actually be deducted from the number of human beings that comprise human or civilized life. It is very difficult to find a few human beings who believe in the scriptures and the existence of God, or, for that matter, in proper behavior. Those who do believe in the value of these things are known as *ārya*, a word denoting those who believe in advancing in spiritual life. Out of those who believe in the value of the

scriptures and the advancement of human civilization, there are two classes—the righteous and the unrighteous. Those who are righteous generally execute fruitive activities in order to derive some good result for sense gratification. Out of many such persons who engage in righteous activities for sense gratification, only a few come to know about the Absolute Truth. These are called *jñānīs*, empiric philosophers. Out of many hundreds and thousands of such empiric philosophers, only a handful actually attain liberation. When one is liberated, he theoretically understands that the living entity is not composed of material elements but is spirit soul, distinct from matter. Simply by theoretically understanding this doctrine, one can be called liberated, but actually a *mukta*, or liberated soul, is he who understands his constitutional position as an eternal servant of the Lord. Such liberated souls engage with faith and devotion in the service of the Lord, and they are called *kṛṣṇa-bhaktas*, or Kṛṣṇa conscious persons.

Kṛṣṇa-bhaktas are free from all material desires. Those who are liberated theoretically by knowing simply that the living entity is not material may still have desires, although they may be technically classified amongst liberated souls. Their main desire is to become one with the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Generally such persons are very much attached to Vedic rituals and righteous activities, performing them in order to enjoy material prosperity. Even when some of them transcend material enjoyment, they still try to enjoy the spiritual world by merging into the existence of the Supreme Lord. Some of them are also desirous of attaining mystic powers through the execution of *yoga*. As long as these desires are within one's heart, he cannot understand the nature of pure devotional service. When one is constantly being agitated by such desires, he is not peaceful. Indeed, as long as there is any desire for material perfection at all, one cannot be at peace. Since the devotees of Lord Kṛṣṇa do not desire anything material, they are the only peaceful persons within this material world. This is confirmed in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*:

*muktānām api siddhānām
nārāyaṇa-parāyaṇaḥ
sudurlabhaḥ praśāntātmā*

koṭiṣv api mahāmune

“O great sage, out of many millions of liberated persons and persons who have achieved success in mystic yoga, one who is completely devoted to the Supreme Personality of Godhead and who is filled with peace is very hard to find.” (*Bhāg.* 6.14.5)

In this way Lord Caitanya explained that of the many thousands and millions of living entities wandering in the material world, one who by the grace of Lord Kṛṣṇa and the spiritual master gets the seed of devotional service is very rare and fortunate. A pious or religious man is generally inclined to worship deities in various temples, but if by chance, even without his knowledge, he offers his obeisances to Lord Viṣṇu or receives the favor of a Vaiṣṇava, a devotee of the Lord, he at that time acquires the asset necessary to approach the Supreme Personality of Godhead. This is clearly understood from the life story of the great sage Nārada, which is related in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. By serving Vaiṣṇavas in his previous life, Nārada was favored by the devotees of the Lord and became a great sage. Indeed, amongst sages Nārada Muni is considered to be the greatest.

Vaiṣṇavas, or devotees, are usually very compassionate upon conditioned souls. Without even being invited, a devotee will go from door to door to enlighten people and to bring them out of the darkness of nescience by injecting knowledge of the living entity’s constitutional position as a servant of Lord Kṛṣṇa. Such devotees are empowered by the Lord to distribute devotional consciousness, or Kṛṣṇa consciousness, to the people in general. They are known as authorized spiritual masters, and it is by their mercy that a conditioned soul gets the seed of devotional service. The causeless mercy of the Supreme Personality of Godhead is first appreciated when one comes in touch with a bona fide spiritual master who can bring the conditioned soul to the highest position of devotional life. Therefore Lord Caitanya said that by the mercy of the spiritual master one can achieve the causeless mercy of the Lord, and by the mercy of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, one can attain the mercy of the bona fide spiritual master.

Thus by the mercy of the spiritual master and Kṛṣṇa, one receives the seed of devotional service. He has only to sow the seed in the field of his

heart, just as a gardener sows the seed of a valuable tree. After sowing this seed, one has to water it in the form of chanting and hearing the holy name of the Supreme Lord or by taking part in discussions about the science of devotional service in a society of pure devotees. When the plant of devotional service sprouts up from the seed of devotion, it begins to grow freely. When it is full grown, it surpasses the length and breadth of this universe and enters into the transcendental atmosphere, where everything is bathed in the effulgence of the *brahmajyoti*. The plant even penetrates this *brahmajyoti* and gradually enters the planet known as Goloka Vṛndāvana. There the plant takes shelter at the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa. That is the ultimate goal of devotional service. After attaining this position, the plant produces fruit, which is known as the fruit of love of Godhead. However, it is necessary for the devotee, or transcendental gardener, to pour water on the plant daily by chanting and hearing. Unless one waters the plant by chanting and hearing, there is every chance that it will dry up.

Lord Caitanya pointed out to Rūpa Gosvāmī that there was a certain danger to be encountered while watering the root of the devotional plant. After the plant has grown some bit, an animal may come and either eat or destroy it. When green leaves of a plant are taken by some animal, the plant generally dies. The most dangerous animal is considered a mad elephant, for if a mad elephant enters into a garden, it causes tremendous damage to plants and trees. An offense to a pure devotee of the Lord is called *vaiṣṇavāparādha*, the mad elephant offense. In the discharge of devotional service, an offense to the feet of a pure devotee can create havoc. Thus one has to defend the plant of *bhakti* by tending it properly and taking care not to commit offenses. If one is cautious, the plant can properly thrive.

There are ten principal offenses which can be committed against the holy name. The first is to blaspheme the great devotees who have tried to spread the glories of the holy name throughout the world. The holy name of Kṛṣṇa is nondifferent from Kṛṣṇa, and one who attempts to spread the holy names throughout the world is beloved of Him. Kṛṣṇa Himself does not tolerate offenses against His pure devotees. The second offense is to deny that Lord Viṣṇu is the Absolute Truth. There is no difference between His name, quality, form, pastimes and activities, and

one who sees a difference is considered an offender. The Lord is Supreme, and no one is equal to or greater than Him. Consequently if one thinks that the Lord's names are nondifferent from the names of demigods, he offends. The Supreme Lord and the demigods should never be considered on the same level.

The third offense is to consider the bona fide spiritual master to be a common man. The fourth offense is to blaspheme Vedic literature and authorized scriptures like the *Purāṇas*. The fifth offense is to consider the glories attributed to the holy names to be exaggerations. The sixth offense is to concoct perverted theories about the holy name. The seventh offense is to commit sinful activities on the strength of chanting the holy name. It is understood that by chanting the holy names one is free from sinful reactions, but this does not mean that one should act sinfully on the strength of chanting. That is the greatest offense. The eighth offense is to consider that religious rituals, austerity, sacrifices or other forms of renunciation are equal to chanting the holy name.

Chanting the holy name is as good as associating with the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Pious activities are only means to approach the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and they can even be performed for some material reason. The ninth offense is to preach the glories of the holy name of God to a faithless person who is not interested in hearing them. The tenth and last offense is to maintain material attachment even after hearing and chanting the holy names of God. The idea is that by chanting the holy name without offense, one can obtain elevation to the liberated platform. On the liberated platform one is freed from all material attachment. Thus if one chants the holy names and still has material attachments, he must be committing some offense.

There are also other factors which disturb the plant of devotional service. Along with this plant the weeds of material desires also grow. When a person advances in *bhakti*, it is natural that many persons will come to him requesting to become disciples and will offer him some material gains. If one is attracted by a large number of disciples and material conveniences offered by these disciples and forgets his duty as a bona fide master, the growth of the plant will be impeded. Simply by taking advantage of material conveniences one may become addicted to enjoying material comforts.

It is also considered to be disadvantageous to desire liberation. The only desire should be the desire to render service. Neglect of restrictions and prohibitions is also disadvantageous. The prohibitions are mentioned in the authorized scriptures: One should not indulge in illicit sex life, intoxication, meat eating or gambling. These things are forbidden to one who is attempting devotional service. If one does not follow these principles strictly, there may be a severe disturbance in the discharge of devotional service.

If one is not particularly careful, even by watering the plant of devotional service, unnecessary weeds will grow and hamper progress. The idea is that when one waters a garden, not only does the desired plant grow more rapidly, but the unwanted plants grow also. If the gardener does not see these impediments and take them out, they will overcome and choke the plant of devotion. If, however, one is careful to guard against the growth of unwanted plants, the plant of devotion grows luxuriantly and reaches the ultimate goal, Goloka Vṛndāvana. When the living entity engaged in devotional service relishes the fruit of love of Godhead, he forgets all religious ritual and improvements in his economic condition. He no longer desires to satisfy his senses, and he no longer desires to become one with the Supreme Lord by merging into His effulgence.

There are many phases of spiritual knowledge and transcendental bliss. On one platform are the ritualistic sacrifices recommended in the *Vedas*, the execution of austerities and pious duties, and the practice of mystic *yoga*. These all reward different results to their performer. The rewards of these practices, however, appear to be very glittering as long as one is not elevated to the transcendental loving service of the Lord. Love of God is dormant in everyone, and it can be awakened from its dormant position by the execution of pure devotional service, just as a person bitten by a serpent can be awakened by ammonia.

After speaking in this way about devotional service, Lord Caitanya begins to describe devotional service and its symptoms to Rūpa Gosvāmī. He explains that in pure devotional service there can be no desire other than the desire to advance in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. In Kṛṣṇa consciousness there is no scope for worshiping any demigod or any other form of Kṛṣṇa, nor is there room for indulgence in speculative empiric

philosophy, nor indulgence in fruitive activities. One should be free from all these contaminations. A devotee should accept only those things that are favorable to keep his body and soul together and should reject those things that increase the demands of the body. Only the bare necessities for bodily maintenance should be accepted. By minimizing bodily necessities, one can primarily devote his time to the cultivation of Kṛṣṇa consciousness through the chanting of the holy names of God. Pure devotional service means engaging all the senses of the body in the service of the Lord. At the present moment, our senses are all designated because the body is designated. Consequently we think that this body belongs to a particular society or a particular country or a particular family. In this way the body is bound by so many designations. Similarly, the senses belong to the body, and when the body is subject to such designations, the senses are also. Thus the senses engage themselves on behalf of family, society, nation and so on. When they are so engaged, they cannot cultivate Kṛṣṇa consciousness. The senses must be purified, and this is possible when one purely understands that he belongs to Kṛṣṇa and that his life belongs to Kṛṣṇa. The devotee should see his identity as an eternal servant of Kṛṣṇa. In this way one can engage his senses in the service of the Lord. Such engagement is called pure devotional service.

A pure devotee accepts the transcendental loving service of the Lord but rejects all kinds of liberation for his personal sense gratification. In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (3.29.11–13) Lord Kapila explains that as soon as a pure devotee hears the glories and transcendental qualities of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who is seated in everyone's heart, his mind immediately flows toward the Lord, just as the waters of the Ganges flow toward the sea. Such spontaneous attraction to the service of the Supreme Personality of Godhead is most important to pure devotional service. Devotional service is pure when one engages in the service of the Supreme Lord without any motive and without being hampered with material impediments. The pure devotee does not desire to live on the same planet with the Supreme Lord, nor does he desire the same opulence as the Lord, nor does he desire to have the same form as the Lord, nor to live with Him side by side, nor to merge into His existence, etc. Even if the devotee were offered such rewards by the

Lord, he would reject them. The point is that a devotee is so much absorbed in the transcendental loving service of the Lord that he has no time to think of any benefit beyond his immediate engagement. Just as an ordinary materialistic businessman thinks of nothing else when he is absorbed in his business, a pure devotee, when engaged in the service of the Lord, does not think of anything beyond that engagement. If one is so absorbed in the rendering of service, he can be understood to be elevated to the highest position of *bhakti*. By such transcendental loving service alone can one surpass the influence of *māyā* and relish pure love of Godhead. As long as one desires material benefit or liberation, which are called the two witches of allurements, he cannot relish the taste of transcendental loving service to the Supreme Lord. There are three stages of devotional service: The first is the beginning stage of cultivation, the second is the realization of service, and the third, the supreme stage, is the attainment of love of Godhead. There are nine different methods of cultivating devotional service—such as hearing, chanting, remembering, etc.—and all these processes are employed in the first stage. If one is engaged in chanting and hearing with devotion and faith, his material misgivings gradually become vanquished. As his faith in devotional service gradually increases, he becomes assured of a higher perfectional position. In this way one can become firmly fixed in devotion, increase his taste for it, become attached and feel ecstasy. This ecstasy occurs in the preliminary stage of love of Godhead. Attainment of ecstasy is produced by execution of devotional service. When one continues the process of hearing and chanting, attachment grows and assumes the name of love of Godhead. When one attains the third stage of transcendental love of God, there occur further developments known as transcendental affection, emotion, ecstasy, and extreme and intense attachment. These are technically known by the terms *rāga*, *anurāga*, *bhāva* and *mahābhāva*. The progress from one stage to another can be compared to the thickening of sugar candy juice. In the first stage sugar candy juice is like a thin liquid. When, by evaporation, it becomes thicker and thicker, it turns into molasses. Finally it turns into granules and becomes sugar, rock candy and so on. Just as liquid sugar juice progresses from one stage to another, similarly transcendental love for the Supreme Lord develops

by stages.

When one actually becomes situated on the transcendental platform, he becomes steady. Unless one is so situated, his position may not be steady and he may fall down. When one is actually situated transcendently, there is no fear of falling down. This stage of understanding is technically called *sthāyi-bhāva*. There are even stages beyond this position, and they are known as *vibhāva*, *anubhava*, *sāttvika* and *vyabhicārī*. After one attains these, there is actually an exchange of *rasa*, or transcendental activity with the Supreme Lord. This exchange in loving reciprocation between the lover and the beloved is generally called *kṛṣṇa-bhakti-rasa*. It should be noted that the transcendental loving exchanges stand on the steadfast position of *sthāyi-bhāva*, as explained before. The basic principle of *vibhāva* is *sthāyi-bhāva*, and all other activities are auxiliary for the development of transcendental love. The ecstasy of transcendental love has two components—the context and the cause of the excitement. The context is also divided into two parts—the subject and the object. The exchange of devotional service is the subject, and Kṛṣṇa is the object. The transcendental qualities are the causes of excitement. This means that the transcendental qualities of Kṛṣṇa excite the devotee to serve Him. The impersonal (Māyāvādī) philosophers say that the Absolute Truth has no specific qualities, but the Vaiṣṇava philosophers say that the Absolute Truth is described as *nirguṇa* (without qualities) because He has no material qualities. This is not to say that He does not have spiritual qualities. Indeed, the Lord's spiritual qualities are so great and so enchanting that they can even attract a liberated person. This is explained in the *ātmārāma* verse of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* where it is said that those who are already situated on the platform of self-realization are attracted by the transcendental qualities of Kṛṣṇa. This means that Kṛṣṇa's qualities are not material but pure and transcendental.

The higher stage of ecstasy can be characterized by the following thirteen transcendental activities: (1) dancing, (2) rolling on the floor, (3) singing, (4) clapping, (5) bristling of the hairs of the body, (6) thundering, (7) yawning, (8) breathing heavily, (9) forgetting social conventions, (10) salivating, (11) laughing, (12) aching, (13) coughing. All these symptoms are not awakened simultaneously; they act according

to the exchange of transcendental relationships. Sometimes one symptom is prominent, and at another time another is prominent. The transcendental *rasas*, or relationships, can be divided into five. The initial stage is called *śānta-rati*, wherein one who is liberated from material contamination appreciates the greatness of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. One who attains this stage does not exactly engage in the transcendental loving service of the Lord, for this is a neutral stage. In the second stage, which is called *dāsyā-rati*, a person appreciates his position as being everlastingly subordinate to the Supreme Lord, and he understands that he is eternally dependent on the causeless mercy of the Supreme Person. At that same time there is an awakening of natural affection, such as is felt by a son who grows up and begins to appreciate his father's benedictions. At this stage the living entity wants to serve the Supreme Lord instead of serving *māyā*, illusion. In the third stage, called *sakhya-rati*, transcendental love is developed, and one associates with the Supreme on an equal level of love and respect. As this stage is further developed, there is joking and such relaxed exchanges as laughing and so on. On this level there are fraternal exchanges with the Supreme Person, and one is free from all bondage. At this stage one practically forgets his inferior position as a living entity, but at the same time he has the greatest respect for the Supreme Person.

In the fourth stage, called *vātsalya-rati*, the fraternal affection evinced in the preceding stage develops into paternal affection. At this time the living entity tries to be the parent of God. Instead of worshiping the Lord, the living entity, as a parent of the Supreme, becomes an object of worship for the Supreme Person. At this stage the Lord depends on the mercy of His pure devotee and puts Himself under the control of the devotee to be raised. The devotee in this stage attains the position wherein he can embrace the Supreme Lord and even kiss His head. In the fifth stage, called *madhura-rati*, there is an actual transcendental exchange of conjugal love between the lover and the beloved. It is at this stage that Kṛṣṇa and the damsels of Vraja glanced at one another, for on this platform there is an exchange of loving glances, motions of the eyes, pleasant words, attractive smiles, etc.

Besides these five primary *rasas*, or relationships, there are seven

secondary *rasas* which consist of laughing, having wonderful visions, entering into a chivalrous relationship, experiencing pity, feeling anger and experiencing ghastliness and devastation. For example, Bhīṣma related to Kṛṣṇa as a warrior in the chivalrous *rasa*. *Hiraṇyakaśipu*, however, experienced an exchange of the ghastly and devastating *rasa*. The five primary *rasas* constantly remain within the heart of the pure devotee, and the seven secondary *rasas* sometimes appear and disappear to enrich the flavors and tastes of the primary ones. After enriching the primary *rasas*, they disappear.

Examples of *śānta-bhaktas*, or devotees in the neutral stage, are the nine *yogīs* named Kavi, Havi, Antarīkṣa, Prabuddha, Pippalāyana, Avirhotra, Draviḍa or Drumila, Camasa and Karabhājana. The four Kumāras (Sanaka, Sanandana, Sanatkumāra and Sanātana) are also examples of this stage. Examples of devotees in the second stage, the *dāsyā* stage of servitorship, are Raktaka, Citraka and Patraka in the Gokula *rasa*. These all function as servants of Kṛṣṇa. In Dvārakā there is Dārūka, and in the Vaikuṅṭha planets there are Hanumān and others. Devotees in the third stage, the stage of friendship, are Śrīdāmā in Vṛndāvana and Bhīma and Arjuna in Dvārakā and on the Battlefield of Kurukṣetra. There are many others also. As far as those relating to Kṛṣṇa in paternal love, they include devotees like Yaśodā and Mahārāja Nanda—that is, Kṛṣṇa’s mother, father, uncle and similar relatives. In conjugal love there are the damsels of Vraja, Vṛndāvana, and the queens and goddesses of fortune in Dvārakā. No one can count the vast number of devotees in this *rasa*. Attachment to Kṛṣṇa can also be broken down into two categories. On one platform there is attachment with awe and veneration. This type of attachment might be characterized by a certain lack of freedom, and it is exhibited in Mathurā and in the Vaikuṅṭha planets. In these abodes of the Lord, the spirit of transcendental loving service is restricted. However, in Gokula Vṛndāvana, love is freely exchanged, and although the cowherd boys and damsels of Vṛndāvana know that Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, they do not show awe and veneration because of the great intimacy of their relationship with Him. In the five principal transcendental relationships, awe and veneration are sometimes impediments obscuring the Lord’s actual greatness and sometimes they actually impede one’s service to the Lord. When there is

friendship, paternal affection and conjugal love, however such awe and veneration are reduced. For instance, when Kṛṣṇa appeared as the son of Vasudeva and Devakī, His parents prayed to the Lord with awe and veneration because they understood that the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa or Viṣṇu had appeared before them as their little child. This is confirmed in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (10.44.51). Although the Supreme Lord was present as their child, Devakī and Vasudeva began to pray to Him. Similarly, when Arjuna saw the universal form of the Lord, he was so afraid that he begged pardon for his dealings with Kṛṣṇa as an intimate friend. As a friend, Arjuna often behaved unceremoniously with the Lord, and upon seeing the awesome universal form, Arjuna said:

*sakheti matvā prasabham yad uktam
 he kṛṣṇa he yādava he sakheti
 ajānatā mahimānam tavedam
 mayā pramādāt praṇayena vāpi
 yac cāvahāsārtham asatkṛto 'si
 vihāra-śayyāsana-bhojaneṣu
 eko 'thavāpy acyuta tat-samakṣam
 tat kṣāmaye tvām aham aprameyam*

“I have in the past addressed You as ‘O Kṛṣṇa,’ ‘O Yādava,’ ‘O my friend,’ without knowing Your glories. Please forgive whatever I may have done in madness or in love. I have dishonored You many times while relaxing or while lying on the same bed or eating together, sometimes alone and sometimes in front of many friends. Please excuse me for all my offenses.” (Bg. 11.41–42)

Similarly, when Kṛṣṇa was playing jokes on Rukmiṇī, she feared that Kṛṣṇa might leave her and became so perturbed that she dropped the fan with which she was fanning Him and fainted, falling unconscious on the floor. As far as Yaśodā, Kṛṣṇa’s mother in Vṛndāvana, is concerned, it is stated in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (*Bhāg.* 10.8.45):

*trayyā copaniṣadbhiś ca
 sāṅkhya-yogaiś ca sātvataiḥ
 upagīyamāna-māhātmyam
 harim sāmānyatātmajam*

The Personality of Godhead, who is worshiped by all the *Vedas* and *Upaniṣads*, as well as by the *sāṅkhya* system of philosophy and all authorized scriptures, was considered to be born in her womb. It is also stated (*Bhāg.* 10.9.12) that Mother Yaśodā bound the child Kṛṣṇa with a rope, as if He were an ordinary son born of her body. Similarly, there are other descriptions of Kṛṣṇa's being treated as an ordinary person (*Bhāg.* 10.18.24). Indeed, when He was defeated in games with His friends, the cowherd boys, Kṛṣṇa would carry them—notably Śrīdāmā—on His shoulders.

Regarding the dealings of the *gopīs* with Sri Kṛṣṇa in Vṛndāvana, it is described (*Bhāg.* 10.30.36–40) that when Sri Kṛṣṇa took Śrīmatī Rādhikā alone from the *rāsa* dance, She thought that Kṛṣṇa had left all the other *gopīs*. Although they were all equally beautiful, He satisfied Her in this way, and She began to think proudly, “My dear Lord Kṛṣṇa has left the beautiful *gopīs*, and He is satisfied with Me alone.” In the forest, She told Kṛṣṇa, “My dear Kṛṣṇa, I am unable to move anymore. Now if You like You can take Me wherever You desire.” Kṛṣṇa replied, “Come lean against My shoulder,” and as soon as He said this, He disappeared, whereupon Śrīmatī Rādhikā repined greatly.

When Kṛṣṇa disappeared from the scene of the *rāsa* dance, all the *gopīs* began to repent, saying, “Dear Kṛṣṇa! We have come here and have left aside our husbands, sons, relatives, brothers and friends! Neglecting their advice, we have come to You, and You best know the reason for our coming here. You know that we have come because we are captivated by the sweet sound of Your flute. But You are so cunning that in the dead of night You have left girls and women like us! This is not very good for You.”

The word *śama* means controlling the mind and keeping it from being diverted in various ways by fixing it on the Supreme Personality of Godhead. When one's mind is fixed on the Supreme Lord, he is known to be situated on the *śama* platform. On that platform the devotee understands that Kṛṣṇa is the basic principle behind everything that is within one's experience. This is also explained in *Bhagavad-gītā* (Bg. 7.19). Such a person can understand that Kṛṣṇa is present in everything and is distributed all over the cosmic manifestation. Although everything is under the control of the Supreme Lord and is situated in

His energy, everything is nonetheless different from Kṛṣṇa in His personal form. It is also stated in *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* that one who understands this, whose intelligence is fixed on Kṛṣṇa, has attained the platform of *śama*. Moreover, the Supreme Personality of Godhead says: *śamo manniṣṭhatā buddheḥ*: Unless one is elevated to the platform of *śānta-rati*, he cannot be fixed in knowledge of the greatness of Kṛṣṇa or of the diffusion of His different energies, which are the cause of all manifestations. This same point is explained in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (*Bhāg.* 11.19.36):

*śamo manniṣṭhatā buddher
dama indriya-saṁyamaḥ
titikṣā duḥkha-sammarṣo
jihvopastha jayo dhṛtiḥ*

Stability of mind can be achieved by one who has concluded that the Supreme Personality of Godhead is the original source of everything. And when one can control his senses, that is called *śama*. When one is ready to tolerate all kinds of sufferings in order to control the senses and keep the mind steady, that is called *titikṣā*, or tolerance. And when one can control the urges of the tongue and genitals, that is called *dhṛtiḥ*. From *dhṛtiḥ*, one becomes *dhīra*, pacified. A pacified person is never disturbed by the urges of the tongue and the genitals.

If one can fix his mind on Kṛṣṇa without deviation, he can attain a steadfast position in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, *śānta-rasa*. When one attains *śānta-rasa*, unflinching faith in Kṛṣṇa is established, and all material desires cease. These specific characteristics of *śānta-rasa*—unflinching faith in Kṛṣṇa and cessation of all desires which are not connected with Kṛṣṇa—are common to all other *rasas* as well, just as sound is generally present in all other elements (air, fire, water and earth) because it is produced from the sky. Similarly, these two characteristics of *śānta-rasa* are present in other transcendental relationships, such as *dāsya* (servitorship), *sakhya* (fraternity), *vātsalya* (paternal affection), and the *madhura-rasa* (conjugal love).

When we speak of non-Kṛṣṇa, or desire which has no connection with Kṛṣṇa, this does not mean that anything exists without Kṛṣṇa. Actually there cannot be anything “non-Kṛṣṇa” because everything is a product

of the energy of Kṛṣṇa. Since Kṛṣṇa and His energies are identical, everything is Kṛṣṇa indirectly. For example, consciousness is common to every living entity, but when consciousness is purely centered on Kṛṣṇa (Kṛṣṇa consciousness), it is pure, and when consciousness is centered on something other than Kṛṣṇa, or when it is directed to sense gratification, it may be called non-Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Thus it is in the polluted state that the conception of non-Kṛṣṇa comes. In the pure state, however, there is nothing but Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Active interest in Kṛṣṇa—the understanding that Kṛṣṇa is mine or that I am Kṛṣṇa's, and that therefore my business is to satisfy the senses of Kṛṣṇa—is typical of a higher stage than the neutrality of the *śānta-rasa*. Simply by understanding the greatness of Kṛṣṇa, one can achieve the status of *śānta-rasa*, in which the worshipable object may be the impersonal Brahman or Paramātmā. Worship of the impersonal Brahman and the Paramātmā is conducted by those engaged in empiric philosophical speculation and mystic *yoga*. However, when one develops even further in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, or spiritual understanding, he can appreciate that the Paramātmā, the Supersoul, is the eternal worshipable object, and he surrenders unto Him. *Bahūnām janmanām ante jñānavān mām prapadyate* (Bg. 7.19): “After many, many births of worshipping Brahman and Paramātmā, when one surrenders unto Vāsudeva as the supreme master and accepts himself as the eternal servitor of Vāsudeva, he becomes a great transcendently realized soul.” At that time, due to his thick and thin relationship with the Supreme Absolute Truth, one begins to render some sort of transcendental loving service to the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Thus the neutral relationship known as *śānta-rasa* is transformed into *dāsyā-rasa*, servitorship.

On the platform of *dāsyā-rasa*, the greatest quantity of awe and veneration of the Supreme Lord is exhibited. That is, in the *dāsyā-rasa*, the greatness of the Supreme Lord is appreciated. It should be noted here that on the platform of *śānta-rasa* there is no spiritual activity, but on the platform of *dāsyā-rasa*, service begins. Thus in the *dāsyā-rasa* the quality of the *śānta-rasa* is exhibited, and, in addition, there is consciousness of the transcendental taste of service.

Transcendental qualities are certainly present in the *śānta-rasa* and *dāsyā-rasa*, but beyond these there is another quality, confidential

attachment, which is pure transcendental love. This loving confidence in the Supreme Personality is technically known as *viśrambha*. On the platform of *viśrambha*, fraternity, there is no sense of awe or veneration towards the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Thus in the transcendental fraternal relationship known as *sakhya-rasa*, there are three transcendental characteristics: the sense of greatness, the sense of service, and the sense of intimacy without awe or veneration. Thus in the *sakhya-rasa*, the relationship of fraternity, the transcendental qualities are further increased.

Similarly, on the platform of paternal affection (*vātsalya-rasa*) there are four qualities. In addition to the three qualities already mentioned, there is the sense that the Supreme Lord is dependent on the mercy of the devotee. As a parent of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the devotee sometimes chastises the Lord and considers himself to be the Lord's maintainer. This transcendental sense of being the maintainer of the supreme maintainer is very pleasing both to the devotee and to the Supreme Lord.

The Lord instructed Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī to write the transcendental literature named *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, the science of devotional service, and indicate therein the substance of these five transcendental relationships. It is explained in that great literature how the transcendental relationship of *śānta-rasa*, taking the shape of unflinching faith in Kṛṣṇa, is further developed into *dāsya-rasa* with the spirit of service, and then to *sakhya-rasa* or undeterred fraternity, and further to the transcendental platform of paternal love, wherein one feels himself to be maintaining the Lord. All these relationships culminate on the highest platform of conjugal love (*madhura-rasa*), wherein all these transcendental relationships exist simultaneously.

Chapter Two

Sanātana Gosvāmī

*vande 'nantādbhutaiśvaryaṃ
śrī-caitanya-mahāprabhum
nīco 'pi yat-prasādāt syād
bhakti-śāstra-pravartakaḥ*
[Cc. Madhya 20.1]

I offer my respectful obeisances unto Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu, by whose mercy even a person in the lowest form of life can find direction in transcendental devotional service to the Lord.

After Lord Caitanya accepted the renounced order of life (*sannyāsa*), He traveled all over India. During this period He went to Maldah, a district in Bengal. In that area there was a village named Rāmakeli, where two government ministers of the Nawab Hussain Shah's regime lived. These two ministers were named Dabira Khāsa and Sākara Mallika, and they were later to be renamed Sanātana Gosvāmī and Rūpa Gosvāmī. Being inspired by Lord Caitanya, they decided to retire from government service and join His *saṅkīrtana* movement.

Upon making this decision, the two brothers at once took steps to leave their material engagements, and they appointed two learned *brāhmaṇas* to perform certain Vedic religious rituals that would enable them to achieve complete freedom for the devotional service of Kṛṣṇa. These preliminary activities are known as *puraścaryā*. These ritualistic functions demand that three times a day one worships and offers respects to his forefathers, offers oblations to a fire, and respectfully offers food to a learned *brāhmaṇa*. Five items—time, worship, offering of respect, offering of oblation into the fire and offering of food to a *brāhmaṇa*—comprise *puraścaryā*. This and other rituals are mentioned in the *hari-bhakti-vilāsa*, the authoritative book of directions.

After performing these religious rituals, the younger brother, Sākara Mallika (Rūpa Gosvāmī), returned home with an immense amount of

money which he had acquired during his government service. Indeed, the silver and gold coins he brought back filled a large boat. After arriving home, he divided the accumulated wealth first in twain and distributed one part to the *brāhmaṇas* and Vaiṣṇavas. Thus for the satisfaction of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, he distributed fifty percent of his accumulated wealth to persons engaged in the Supreme Lord's transcendental loving service. *Brāhmaṇas* are meant to understand the Absolute Truth, and once they understand the truth and actually engage in the loving service of the Lord, they can be called Vaiṣṇavas. Both *brāhmaṇas* and Vaiṣṇavas are supposed to be fully engaged in transcendental service, and Rūpa Gosvāmī, considering their important transcendental position, gave them fifty percent of his wealth. The remaining fifty percent was again divided in twain—he distributed one part to his relatives and dependent family members, and the other he kept for personal emergencies.

Such distribution of personal wealth is very instructive for all who desire to be elevated in spiritual knowledge. Generally a person bequeaths all his accumulated wealth to his family members and then retires from family activities in order to make progress in spiritual knowledge. Here, however, we find the behavior of Rūpa Gosvāmī to be exemplary; he gave fifty percent of his wealth for spiritual purposes. This should serve as an example for everyone. The twenty-five percent of his accumulated wealth which he kept for personal emergencies was deposited with a good business firm, since in those days there were no banks. Ten thousand coins were deposited for expenditures incurred by his elder brother, Sanātana Gosvāmī.

At this time Rūpa Gosvāmī received information that Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu was preparing to proceed to Vṛndāvana from Jagannātha Purī. Rūpa Gosvāmī sent two messengers to get actual information of the Lord's itinerary, and he made his own plans to go to Mathurā to meet the Lord. It appears that Rūpa Gosvāmī got permission to join Lord Caitanya, but Sanātana Gosvāmī did not. Therefore Sanātana Gosvāmī entrusted the responsibilities of his government service to his immediate assistants, and he remained home to study *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. In fact, he even engaged some ten or twenty learned *brāhmaṇas* and began an intensive study of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* in their company. While he was

thus engaged, he submitted sick-leave reports to his employer, the Nawab. However, the ruler was so anxious for Sanātana Gosvāmī's advice in government matters that he suddenly appeared at his house. When the Nawab entered the house where Sanātana Gosvāmī and the *brāhmaṇas* were assembled, they all stood up to receive him respectfully, and they offered him a place to sit.

"You have submitted sick reports," the Nawab told Sanātana Gosvāmī: "But I sent my physician to see you, and he reported that you have no illness at all. Since I did not know why you were submitting sick reports and not attending to your service, I have personally come to see you. Frankly, I am much perturbed by your behavior. As you know, I completely depend on you and your responsible work in government. I was free to act in other matters because I was depending on you, but if you do not join me, your past devotion will be spoiled. Now, what is your intention? Please tell me."

On hearing this, Sanātana Gosvāmī replied that he was unable to continue work and that it would be very kind of the Nawab to appoint someone else to execute the work that was entrusted to him. Upon hearing this, the Nawab became very angry and said, "Your elder brother lives like a hunter, and if you also retire from the administration, everything will be finished." It was said that the Nawab used to treat Sanātana Gosvāmī like a younger brother. Since the Nawab was principally engaged in conquering different parts of the country and also in hunting, he depended largely on Sanātana Gosvāmī for government administration. Thus he pleaded with him: "If you also retire from government service, how will the administration carry on?"

"You are the governor of Gauḍa," Sanātana Gosvāmī replied very gravely, "and you punish different kinds of criminals in different ways. So you are at liberty to punish anyone according to his activity." By this reply Sanātana Gosvāmī was indicating that since the governor was engaged in hunting animals and in killing men to expand his kingdom, let both of them suffer according to the acts they were performing. The Nawab was intelligent, and he understood Sanātana Gosvāmī's purpose. He left the house in an angry mood, and shortly afterward he went off to conquer Orissa. He ordered the arrest of Sanātana Gosvāmī and commanded that he be held until he returned. Upon learning that

his elder brother had been arrested by the Nawab, Rūpa Gosvāmī sent information that ten thousand coins were being held in the custody of a grocer in Gauḍa (Bengal) and that this money could be used as ransom for his brother. Sanātana also offered five thousand coins to the keeper of the jail in which he was being held in custody. He advised the jailkeeper to gladly accept the five thousand coins from him and let him go because by accepting the money he would not only be materially benefited but would also be acting very righteously by freeing Sanātana for spiritual purposes.

“Of course I can let you go,” the jailkeeper replied, “for you have done many services for me, and you are in government service. However, I’m afraid of the Nawab. What will he do when he hears that you are free? I’ll have to explain everything to him. How can I accept such a proposal?” Sanātana then invented a story which the jailkeeper might submit to the Nawab—as to how he had escaped—and he raised his offer to ten thousand coins. Greedy to get the money, the jailkeeper agreed to the proposition and let him go. In the meantime, Rūpa Gosvāmī, with his younger brother Śrī Vallabha, had started for Vṛndāvana to meet Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

Sanātana then proceeded to go to see the Lord. He did not travel on the open road but went through the jungles until he arrived at a place in Bihar called Pātaḍā. There he rested in a hotel, but the hotelkeeper was informed by an astrologer employed there that Sanātana Gosvāmī had some gold coins with him. The hotelkeeper, desiring to get the money, spoke to Sanātana with seeming respect.

“Just take your rest tonight,” he told him, “and in the morning I shall arrange for you to get out of this jungle trap.” However, Sanātana was suspicious of his behavior, and he inquired from his servant Īśāna whether he had money, and Īśāna told him that he had seven gold coins. Sanātana did not like the idea of the servant carrying such money. He became angry with him and said, “Why do you carry this death knell on the road?”

Sanātana at once took the gold coins and offered them to the hotelkeeper. He then requested that the hotelkeeper help him through the jungle. He informed him that he was on a special journey for the government and that since he could not travel on the open road, it

would be very kind if the hotelkeeper would help him through the jungles and over the mountains.

“I understood that you had eight coins with you, and I was thinking of killing you to take them,” the hotelkeeper confessed. “But I can understand that you are such a good man that you don’t have to offer me the money.”

“If you don’t accept these coins, then someone else will take them from me,” Sanātana replied. “Someone will kill me for them, so it is better that you take them. I offer them to you.” The hotelkeeper then gave him all assistance, and that very night he helped him get past the hills.

When Sanātana emerged from the hills, he requested that his servant go home with the one coin that he still had with him, for Sanātana decided that he would go on alone. After the departure of his servant, Sanātana felt completely free. With torn clothing and a waterpot in hand, he began to proceed toward Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu. On the way, he met his rich brother-in-law who was also in the government service and who offered him an excellent blanket, which Sanātana accepted at his special request. Then he parted from him and went on alone to see Caitanya Mahāprabhu at Benares.

When he reached Benares, he understood that the Lord was there, and he became overjoyed. He was informed by the people that the Lord was staying at the house of Candraśekhara Ācārya, and Sanātana went there. Although Caitanya Mahāprabhu was inside the house, He could understand that Sanātana had arrived at the door, and He asked Candraśekhara to call the man who was sitting there. “He is a Vaiṣṇava, a great devotee of the Lord,” Caitanya Mahāprabhu said. Candraśekhara came out to see the man, but he saw no Vaiṣṇava at the door. He saw only a man who appeared to be a mendicant. The Lord then asked to see the mendicant, and when Sanātana entered the courtyard, Lord Caitanya hurriedly came to see and embrace him. When the Lord embraced him, Sanātana became overwhelmed with spiritual ecstasy, and he said, “My dear Lord, please do not touch me.” But both of them embraced each other and began to cry. Seeing Sanātana and Lord Caitanya acting thus, Candraśekhara was struck with wonder. At length, Caitanya Mahāprabhu asked Sanātana to sit down with Him on a bench. He was touching the body of Sanātana with His hand, and

Sanātana asked Him again, “My dear Lord, please do not touch me.”
“I am touching you just for My purification,” the Lord replied, “for you are a great devotee. By your devotional service you can deliver the whole universe and enable everyone to go back to Godhead.”

The Lord proceeded to quote a verse from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* to the effect that a person who is a devotee of Lord Kṛṣṇa and is one hundred percent engaged in devotional service is far better than a *brāhmaṇa* who is versed in all the Vedic literatures but who does not engage in the devotional service of the Lord. Because he is carrying the Supreme Lord within his heart, the devotee can purify everyplace and everything. In the Vedic literatures it is also stated that the Supreme Personality of Godhead does not recognize a person who is very learned in all the divisions of the *Vedas*, but, rather, He likes a person who is a devotee, even though he may be born in a low family. If one offers charity to a *brāhmaṇa* who is not a devotee, the Lord does not accept; but if something is offered to a devotee, the Lord accepts. In other words, whatever a person wishes to offer the Lord may be given to His devotees. Caitanya Mahāprabhu also quoted *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* to the effect that if a *brāhmaṇa* is not a devotee of the Supreme Lord, then he is lower than the lowest of the low, even though he may be qualified with the twelve brahminical qualities and born in a high family. A devotee, although born in a *caṇḍāla* (dog-eater) family, can purify his whole family for one hundred generations, past and future, by devotional service, whereas a proud *brāhmaṇa* cannot even purify himself. It is said in the *Hari-bhakti-sudhodaya* (13.2):

*akṣnoḥ phalam tvādṛśa-darśanam hi
tanoḥ phalam tvādṛśa-gātra-saṅgaḥ
jihvā-phalam tvādṛśa-kīrtanam hi
sudurlabhā bhāgavatā hi loke*

“O devotee of the Lord, to see you is the perfection of the eyes, to touch your body is the perfection of bodily activities, and to glorify your qualities is the perfection of the tongue, for it is very rare to find a pure devotee like you.”

The Lord then told Sanātana that Kṛṣṇa is very merciful and is the deliverer of fallen souls. “He has saved you from Mahāraurava,” the Lord

said. This Mahāraurava, or hell, is described in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* as a place meant for persons who are engaged in killing animals, for it is stated there that butchers or animal eaters go to that hell.

“I do not know the mercy of Kṛṣṇa,” Sanātana replied, “but I can understand that Your mercy upon me is causeless. You have delivered me from the entanglement of material life.”

Then the Lord inquired: “How did you get free from your custody? I understand that you were arrested.” Sanātana then narrated the whole story of his release. “I have seen your two brothers,” the Lord then informed him, “and I have advised them to proceed toward Vṛndāvana.” Lord Caitanya then introduced Candraśekhara and Tapana Miśra to Sanātana, and Tapana Miśra pleasantly invited Sanātana to dine with him. The Lord requested Candraśekhara to take Sanātana to a barber and make him “gentle,” for Sanātana had grown a long beard which Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu did not like. He not only asked Candraśekhara to provide Sanātana with a bath and clean shave but with a change of clothes as well.

After bathing, Candraśekhara gave him some good cloth. When Lord Caitanya was informed that Sanātana did not accept new garments but later accepted only some used garments from Tapana Miśra, He was very glad. The Lord went to Tapana Miśra’s house for lunch and asked him to keep food for Sanātana. Tapana Miśra did not offer Sanātana food immediately, however, but after the Lord finished His eating there were some remnants of His foodstuff, and that was offered to Sanātana while the Lord took His rest.

After resting, Lord Caitanya introduced one Mahārāṣṭrīya *brāhmaṇa*, a devotee of His, to Sanātana, and that Mahārāṣṭrīya *brāhmaṇa* invited Sanātana to accept lunch daily at his place as long as he remained in Benares.

“As long as I remain in Benares, I will beg from door to door,” Sanātana said. “But the Lord will be so good as to accept this invitation for daily lunch at your house.”

Lord Caitanya was very much pleased by this behavior of Sanātana, but He noticed the valuable blanket that was given to him by his brother-in-law while en route to Benares. Although Lord Caitanya was overlooking the blanket, Sanātana understood that He did not approve of such a

valuable garment on his body, and therefore Sanātana decided to get rid of it. He immediately went to the bank of the Ganges, and there he saw a mendicant washing an old quilt. When Sanātana asked him to trade the old quilt for the valuable blanket, the poor mendicant thought that Sanātana was joking with him. “How is this?” the mendicant upbraided him. “You appear to be a very nice gentleman, but you are mocking me in this unmannerly way.

“I am not joking with you,” Sanātana informed him. “I am very serious. Will you kindly exchange that torn quilt for this blanket?” Finally the mendicant exchanged his torn quilt for the blanket, and Sanātana returned to the Lord.

“Where is your valuable blanket?” the Lord immediately inquired. Sanātana informed Him about the exchange, and the Lord loved him for this and thanked him. “You are intelligent enough, and you have now exhausted all your attraction for material wealth.” In other words, the Lord accepts a person for devotional service only when he is completely free from all materialistic possessions. The Lord then told Sanātana: “It would not look good for you to be a mendicant and beg from door to door with such a valuable blanket on your body. It is contradictory and people would look on it with abhorrence.”

“Whatever I am doing to become free from material attachment is all Your mercy,” Sanātana replied. The Lord was very much pleased with him, and both of them discussed spiritual advancement.

Previous to this meeting between Lord Caitanya and Sanātana Gosvāmī, the Lord met a householder devotee named Rāmānanda Rāya. At that meeting, which is discussed in a later chapter, Lord Caitanya asked Rāmānanda Rāya questions, and Rāmānanda replied as if he were the teacher of the Lord. However, in this case Sanātana put questions to the Lord, and the Lord answered them Himself.

The instructions and teachings of Lord Caitanya are very important for people in general. He teaches the process of devotional service, which is the constitutional occupation of every living entity, for it is every man’s duty to advance in spiritual science. Many subjects were thoroughly discussed in the talks between Lord Caitanya and Sanātana Gosvāmī. Due to the mercy of Lord Caitanya, Sanātana was able to put important questions before Him, and these questions were replied to properly.

By the meeting of Sanātana and Lord Caitanya, we learn that in order to understand spiritual subject matters, one must approach a spiritual master like Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu and make submissive inquiries. It is also confirmed in *Bhagavad-gītā* (Bg. 4.34) that one should approach a man of authority and learn the science of spiritual life from him.

Chapter Three

Teachings to Sanātana Gosvāmī

From the instructions of Lord Caitanya to Sanātana Gosvāmī we can understand the science of God as it relates to God’s transcendental form, His opulences, and His devotional service. Indeed, everything is being explained to Sanātana Gosvāmī by the Lord Himself. At that time, Sanātana fell at the feet of the Lord and with great humility asked about his own real identity. “I am born of a lower family,” Sanātana said. “My associations are all abominable, and I am fallen, the most wretched of mankind. I was suffering in the dark well of material enjoyment, and I never knew the actual goal of my life. Indeed, I do not even know what is beneficial for me. Although I am what is known in the world as a great learned man, I am in fact so much of a fool that I myself even think that I am learned. You have accepted me as Your servant, and You have delivered me from the entanglement of material life. Now please tell me what my duty is in this liberated state.”

By this plea, we can understand that liberation is not the final word in perfection. There must be activities in liberation. Sanātana clearly says, “You have saved me from the material existence. Now, after liberation, *what is my duty?*” Sanātana further inquired, “Who am I? Why are the threefold miseries always giving me trouble? And finally, tell me how I can be relieved from this material entanglement? I do not know how to question You about the advancement of spiritual life, but I beg that You kindly, mercifully, let me know everything that I need know.”

This is the process of accepting a spiritual master. One should approach a spiritual master, humbly submit to him and then inquire from him about one’s spiritual progress.

The Lord was pleased by Sanātana’s submissive behavior, and He replied, “You have already received benediction from Lord Kṛṣṇa, and therefore you know everything and are free from all the miseries of material existence.” The Lord further pointed out that because Sanātana was in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, he was naturally, by the grace of Kṛṣṇa, already conversant with everything. “Because you are a humble

devotee,” the Lord continued, “you are asking Me to confirm what you already know. This is very nice.” These are the characteristics of a true devotee. In the *Nārada-bhakti-sūtra* it is said that one who is very serious about developing Kṛṣṇa consciousness has his desire to understand Kṛṣṇa fulfilled very soon by the grace of the Lord.

“You are a suitable person to protect the devotional service of the Lord,” Caitanya Mahāprabhu continued. “Therefore it is My duty to instruct you in the science of God, and I will explain everything to you step by step.”

It is the duty of a disciple approaching a spiritual master to inquire about his constitutional position. In conformity to that spiritual process, Sanātana has already asked, “What am I, and why am I suffering from the threefold miseries?” The threefold miseries are called *adhyātmika*, *adhibhautika*, and *adhidaivika*. The word *adhyātmika* refers to those miseries caused by the mind and body. Sometimes the living entity suffers bodily, and sometimes he is distressed mentally. Both are *adhyātmika* miseries. We experience these miseries even in the womb of our mother. As we well know, there are many types of miseries that take advantage of the delicate human body and give us pain. Miseries inflicted by other living entities are called *adhibhautika*. These living entities need not even be large, for there are many—such as bugs—that can make us miserable even while we are sleeping in bed. There are many insignificant living entities, like cockroaches, that sometimes give us pain, and there are also other living entities who are born on different kinds of planets and who give us miseries. As far as the *adhidaivika* miseries are concerned, these are natural disasters that originate with the demigods of the higher planets. For instance, we sometimes suffer from severe cold or hot weather, from a thunderbolt, or from earthquakes, tornadoes, droughts and many natural disasters. In any case, we are always suffering from either one or a combination of these three kinds of miseries.

Sanātana’s inquiry was therefore an intelligent one. “What is the position of the living entities?” he asked. “Why are they always undergoing these three kinds of miseries?” Sanātana had admitted his weakness. Although he was known by the masses of people as a greatly learned man (and actually he was a highly learned Sanskrit scholar), and

although he accepted this designation, he did not actually know what his constitutional position really was and just why he was subjected to the threefold miseries.

Approaching a spiritual master is not just a fashion but is a necessity for one who is seriously conscious of the material miseries and who wants to be free of them. It is the duty of such a person to approach a spiritual master. In this regard, we should note similar circumstances in *Bhagavad-gītā*. When Arjuna was perplexed by so many problems involving whether to fight or not, he accepted Lord Kṛṣṇa as his spiritual master. It was also a case of the supreme spiritual master instructing Arjuna about the constitutional position of the living entity. In *Bhagavad-gītā* we are informed that the constitutional nature of the individual entity is spirit soul. He is not matter. As spirit soul, he is part and parcel of the supreme soul, the Absolute Truth, the Personality of Godhead. We also learn that it is the duty of the spirit soul to surrender, for only then can he be happy. The last instruction of *Bhagavad-gītā* is that the spirit soul surrender completely unto the supreme soul, Kṛṣṇa, and in that way realize happiness.

Here also, Lord Caitanya, answering the questions of Sanātana, repeats the same truth. There is a difference, however. Here Lord Caitanya does not give the information about the spirit soul that is already described in *Bhagavad-gītā*. Rather, He begins from the point where Kṛṣṇa ended His instruction. It is accepted by great devotees that Lord Caitanya is Kṛṣṇa Himself, and from this point of view He begins His instruction to Sanātana from the point where He ended His instructions to Arjuna in *Bhagavad-gītā*.

“Your constitutional position is that you are pure living soul,” the Lord told Sanātana. “This material body cannot be identified with your real self; nor is your mind your real identity, nor your intelligence, nor false ego. Your identity is that of eternal servitor of the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa. Your position is that you’re transcendental. The superior energy of Kṛṣṇa is spiritual in constitution, and the inferior external energy is material. Since you are between the material energy and the spiritual energy, your position is marginal. Belonging to the marginal potency of Kṛṣṇa, you are simultaneously one with and different from Kṛṣṇa. Because you are spirit, you are not different from Kṛṣṇa, and because you

are only a minute particle of Kṛṣṇa, you are different from Him.” This simultaneous oneness and difference always exists in the relationship between the living entities and the Supreme Lord. From the marginal position of the living entities, this conception of “simultaneously one and different” can be understood. The living entity is just like a molecular particle of sunshine, whereas Kṛṣṇa may be compared to the blazing, shining sun itself. Lord Caitanya compared the living entities to blazing sparks from a fire and the Supreme Lord to the blazing fire of the sun. In this connection, the Lord cites a verse from *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* (1.22.52):

*eka-deśa-sthitasyāgner
jyotsnā vistāriṇī yathā
parasya brahmaṇaḥ śaktis
tathedam akhilaṁ jagat*

“Everything that is manifested within this cosmic world is but the energy of the Supreme Lord. As fire emanating from one place diffuses its illumination and heat all around, so the Lord, although situated in one place in the spiritual world, manifests His different energies everywhere. Indeed, the whole cosmic creation is composed of different manifestations of His energy.”

The energy of the Supreme Lord is transcendental and spiritual, and the living entities are part and parcel of that energy. There is another energy, however, called material energy, which is covered by the cloud of ignorance. This energy, which is material nature, is divided into three modes, or *guṇas* (goodness, passion and ignorance). Lord Caitanya quoted from *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* (1.3.2) to the effect that all inconceivable energies reside in the Supreme Personality of the Lord and that the whole cosmic manifestation acts due to the Lord’s inconceivable energy. The Lord also said that the living entities are known as *kṣetrajña*, or “knowers of the field of activities.” In the Thirteenth Chapter of *Bhagavad-gītā*, the body is described as the field of activities, and the living entity as *kṣetrajña*, the knower of that field. Although the living entity is constitutionally conversant with spiritual energy, or has the potency to understand spiritual energy, he is covered by the material energy and consequently identifies the body with the self. This false

identification is called “false ego.” Deluded by this false ego, the bewildered living entity in material existence changes his different bodies and suffers various kinds of miseries. Knowledge of the living entity’s true position is possessed to different extents by different types of living entities.

In other words, it is to be understood that the living entity is part and parcel of the spiritual energy of the Supreme Lord. Because the material energy is inferior, man has the ability to get uncovered from this material energy and utilize the spiritual energy. It is stated in *Bhagavad-gītā* that the superior energy is covered by the inferior energy. Due to this covering, the living entity is subjected to the miseries of the material world, and, in proportion to the different degrees of passion and ignorance, he suffers material miseries. Those who are a little enlightened suffer less, but on the whole everyone is subjected to material miseries due to being covered by the material energy.

Caitanya Mahāprabhu also quoted from the Seventh Chapter of *Bhagavad-gītā* in which it is stated that earth, water, fire, air, ether, mind, intelligence and ego all combine together to form the inferior energy of the Supreme Lord. The superior energy, however, is the real identity of the living being, and it is because of that energy that the whole material world functions. The cosmic manifestation, which is made of material elements, has no power to act unless it is moved by the superior energy, the living entity. It can actually be said that the conditioned life of the living entity is due to forgetfulness of his relationship with the Supreme Lord in the superior energy. When that relationship is forgotten, conditional life is the result. Only when man revives his real identity, that of eternal servitor to the Lord, does he become liberated.

Chapter Four

The Wise Man

Since no one can trace the history of the living entity's entanglement in material energy, the Lord says that it is beginningless. By beginningless it is meant that conditional life exists prior to the creation; it is simply manifested during and after the creation. Due to forgetfulness of his nature, the living entity, although spirit, suffers all kinds of miseries in material existence. It should be understood that there are also living entities who are not entangled in this material energy but are situated in the spiritual world. They are called liberated souls and are always engaged in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, devotional service.

The activities of those who are conditioned by material nature are taken into account, and in their next life, according to these activities, they are offered different types of material bodies. In the material world the conditioned spirit soul is subjected to various rewards and punishments. When he is rewarded for his righteous activities, he is elevated to the higher planets where he becomes one of the many demigods, and when he is punished for his abominable activities, he is thrown into hellish planets where he suffers the miseries of material existence more acutely. Caitanya Mahāprabhu gives a very nice example of this punishment. Formerly a king used to punish a criminal by dunking him in the river, raising him up again for breath and then again dunking him in the water. Material nature punishes and rewards the individual entity in just the same way. When he is punished, he is dunked in the water of material miseries, and when he is rewarded, he is taken out of it for some time. Elevation to the higher planets or to a higher life status is never permanent. One must again come down to be submerged in the water. All this is constantly going on in this material existence; sometimes one is elevated to higher planetary systems, and sometimes one is thrown into the hellish condition of material life.

In this regard Caitanya Mahāprabhu recites a verse from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* taken from the instructions of Nārada Muni to Vasudeva, the father of Kṛṣṇa (*Bhāg.* 11.2.37):

*bhayam dvitīyābhiniveśataḥ syād
īśād apetasya viparyayo 'smṛtiḥ
tan-māyayāto budha ābhajet tam
bhaktyaikayeśam guru-devatātmā*

In this quotation from the nine sages who were instructing Mahārāja Nimi, *māyā* is defined as “forgetfulness of one’s relationship with Kṛṣṇa.” Actually, *māyā* means “that which is not.” It has no existence. Thus it is false to think that the living entity has no connection with the Supreme Lord. He may not believe in the existence of God, or he may think that he has no relationship with God, but these are all “illusions,” or *māyā*. Due to absorption in this false conception of life, man is always fearful and full of anxieties. In other words, a godless concept of life is *māyā*. One who is actually learned in the Vedic literatures surrenders unto the Supreme Lord with great devotion and accepts Him as the supreme goal. When a living entity forgets the constitutional nature of his relationship with God, he is at once overwhelmed by the external energy. This is the cause of his false ego, his false identification of the body with the self. Indeed, his whole conception of the material universe arises from this false identification with the body, for he becomes attached to the body and its by-products. To escape this entanglement, he has only to perform his duty and to surrender unto the Supreme Lord with intelligence and devotion and with sincere Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

A conditioned soul falsely thinks himself happy in the material world, but if he is favored by the instructions of an unalloyed devotee, he gives up his desire for material enjoyment and becomes enlightened in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. As soon as one enters into Kṛṣṇa consciousness, his desire for material enjoyment is at once vanquished, and he gradually becomes free from material entanglement. There is no question of darkness where there is light, and Kṛṣṇa consciousness is the light that dispels the darkness of material sense enjoyment.

A Kṛṣṇa conscious person is never under the false conception that he is one with God. Knowing that he would not be happy by working for himself, he engages all his energies in the service of the Supreme Lord and thereby gains release from the clutches of illusory material energy. In this connection, Caitanya Mahāprabhu quotes the following verse

from *Bhagavad-gītā*:

*daivī hy eṣā guṇa-mayī
mama māyā duratyayā
mām eva ye prapadyante
māyām etāṁ taranti te*

“The divine energy of Mine, consisting of the three modes of material nature, is difficult to overcome. But those who have surrendered unto Me can easily cross beyond it.” (Bg. 7.14)

Caitanya Mahāprabhu went on to teach that for each and every moment he is engaged in some fruitive activity, the conditioned soul forgets his real identity. Sometimes when he is fatigued, when he is tired of material activities, he wants liberation and hankers to become one with the Supreme Lord, but at other times he thinks that by working hard to gratify his senses he will be happy. In either case, he is covered by material energy. For the enlightenment of such bewildered conditioned souls, the Supreme Lord has presented voluminous Vedic literatures such as the *Vedas*, the *purāṇas* and the *Vedānta-sūtra*. These are all intended to guide the human being back to Godhead. Caitanya Mahāprabhu has given further instructions by explaining that when a conditioned soul is accepted by the mercy of the spiritual master and is guided by the Supersoul and the various Vedic scriptures, he becomes enlightened and makes progress in spiritual realization. It is because Lord Kṛṣṇa is always merciful upon His devotees that He has presented all these Vedic literatures by which one can understand his relationship with Him and can act on the basis of that relationship. In this way one is gifted with the ultimate goal of life.

Actually every living entity is destined to reach the Supreme Lord. Indeed, it is possible for everyone to understand his relationship with the Supreme. The execution of duties to attain perfection is known as devotional service, and in maturity such devotional service becomes love of God, the factual goal of life for every living being. Actually the living entity is not intended to achieve success in religious rituals, economic development or sense enjoyment. The living entity should not even desire success in liberation, what to speak of success in religion, economics and sense enjoyment. One’s real desire should only be to

achieve the stage of loving transcendental service to the Lord. The all-attractive features of Lord Kṛṣṇa help one in attaining this transcendental service, and it is by such service in Kṛṣṇa consciousness that one can realize the relationship between Kṛṣṇa and himself. Concerning man's search for the ultimate goal of life, Caitanya Mahāprabhu relates a story from the commentary of Madhva which occurs in the Fifth Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (*Madhva-bhāṣya*) Sarvajña to a poor man who came to him to have his future told. When Sarvajña saw the horoscope of the man, he was at once astonished that the man was so poor, and he said to him, "Why are you so unhappy? From your horoscope I can see that you have a hidden treasure left to you by your father. However, the horoscope indicates that your father could not disclose this to you because he died in a foreign place, but now you can search out this treasure and be happy." This story is cited because the living entity is suffering due to his ignorance of the hidden treasure of his Supreme Father, Kṛṣṇa. That treasure is love of Godhead, and in every Vedic scripture the conditioned soul is advised to find it. As stated in *Bhagavad-gītā*, although the conditioned soul is the son of the wealthiest personality—the Personality of Godhead—he does not realize it. Therefore Vedic literatures are given to him to help him search out his father and his paternal property.

The astrologer Sarvajña further advised the poor man: "Don't dig on the southern side of your house to find the treasure, for if you do so you will be attacked by a poisonous wasp and will be baffled. The search should be conducted on the eastern side where there is actual light, which is called devotional service or Kṛṣṇa consciousness. On the southern side there are Vedic rituals, and on the western side there is mental speculation, and on the northern side there is meditational *yoga*."

Sarvajña's advice should be carefully noted by everyone. If one searches for the ultimate goal by the ritualistic process, he will surely be baffled. Such a process involves the performance of rituals under the guidance of a priest who takes money in exchange for service. A man may think he will be happy by performing such rituals, but actually if he does gain some result from them, it is only temporary. His material distresses will continue. Thus he will never become truly happy by following the ritualistic process. Instead, he will simply increase his material pangs

more and more. The same may be said for digging on the northern side, or searching for the treasure by means of the meditational *yoga* process. By this process a person thinks of becoming one with the Supreme Lord, but this merging into the Supreme is like being swallowed by a large serpent. Sometimes a large serpent swallows a smaller one, and merging into the spiritual existence of the Supreme is analogous. While the small serpent is searching after perfection, he is swallowed. Obviously there is no solution here. On the western side there is also an impediment in the form of a *yakṣa*, an evil spirit who protects the treasure. The idea is that a hidden treasure can never be found by one who asks the favor of a *yakṣa* in order to attain it. The result is that one will simply be killed. This *yakṣa* is the speculative mind, and in this case the speculative process of self-realization, or the *jñāna* process, is also suicidal. The only possibility then is to search for the hidden treasure on the eastern side by the process of devotional service in full Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Indeed, that process of devotional service is the perpetual hidden treasure, and when one attains to it, he becomes perpetually rich. One who is poor in devotional service to Kṛṣṇa is always in need of material gain. Sometimes he suffers the bites of poisonous creatures, and sometimes he is baffled; sometimes he follows the philosophy of monism and thereby loses his identity, and sometimes he is swallowed by a large serpent. It is only by abandoning all this and becoming fixed in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, devotional service to the Lord, that one can actually achieve the perfection of life.

Chapter Five

How to Approach God

Actually all Vedic literature directs the human being toward the perfect stage of devotion. The paths of fruitive activities, speculative knowledge and meditation do not lead one to the perfectional stage, but by the process of devotional service the Lord actually becomes approachable. Therefore all Vedic literature recommends that one accept this process. In this regard, Caitanya Mahāprabhu quoted from the Lord's instructions to Uddhava in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*:

*na sādhayati mām yogo
na sāṅkhyam dharmā uddhava
na svādhyāyas tapas tyāgo
yathā bhaktir mamorjitā*

“My dear Uddhava, neither philosophical speculation, nor meditational *yoga*, nor penances can give Me such pleasure as devotional service practiced by the living entities.” (*Bhāg.* 11.14.20) Kṛṣṇa is dear only to the devotees, and He can only be achieved by devotional service. If a lowly born person is a devotee, he automatically becomes free from all contamination. Devotional service is the only path by which one can achieve the Supreme Person. This is the only perfection accepted by all Vedic literature. Just as a poor man becomes happy upon receiving some treasure, when one attains to devotional service, his material pains are automatically vanquished. As one advances in devotional service, he attains love of Godhead, and as he advances in this love, he becomes free from all material bondage. One should not think, however, that the disappearance of poverty and liberation from bondage are the end results of love of Kṛṣṇa. It is in relishing the reciprocation of loving service that love of Kṛṣṇa exists. In all Vedic literatures we find that the attainment of this loving relationship between the Supreme Lord and the living entities is the function of devotional service. Our actual function is devotional service, and our ultimate goal is love of Godhead. In all Vedic literatures it can be found that Kṛṣṇa is the ultimate center,

for through knowledge of Kṛṣṇa all problems of life are solved. Caitanya Mahāprabhu pointed out that although (according to *Padma Purāṇa*) there are different scriptures for worshipping different types of demigods, such instructions only bewilder people into thinking that the demigods are supreme. Yet if one carefully scrutinizes and studies the *Purāṇas*, he will find that Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, is the only object of worship. For instance, in the *Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa* there is mention of Devī worship, or worship of the goddess Durgā or Kālī, but in this same *caṇḍikā* it is also stated that all the demigods—even in the shape of Durgā or Kālī—are but different energies of the Supreme Viṣṇu. Thus study of the *Purāṇas* reveals Viṣṇu, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, to be the only object of worship. The conclusion is that directly or indirectly, all types of worship are more or less directed to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa. In *Bhagavad-gītā* it is confirmed that one who worships the demigods is in fact only worshipping Kṛṣṇa because the demigods are but different parts of the body of Viṣṇu, or Kṛṣṇa. That such worship of demigods is irregular is also stated in *Bhagavad-gītā* (Bg. 7.20–23 9.23) *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* confirms this irregularity by asking the question: “What is the object of worshipping the different types of demigods?” In Vedic literature there are various divisions of ritualistic activities; one is *karma-kāṇḍa*, or purely ritualistic activities, and another is *jñāna-kāṇḍa*, or speculation on the Supreme Absolute Truth. What then is the purpose of the ritualistic sections of Vedic literatures, and what is the purpose of different *mantras* or hymns that indicate worship of various demigods? And what is the purpose of philosophical speculation on the subject of the Absolute Truth? *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* replies that in actuality all of these methods defined in the *Vedas* indicate the worship of the Supreme Lord Viṣṇu. In other words, they are all indirect ways of worshipping the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Sacrifices contained in the ritualistic portions of these literatures are meant for the satisfaction of the Supreme Lord Viṣṇu. Indeed, because *yajña*, sacrifice, is specifically meant to satisfy Viṣṇu, another name for Viṣṇu is Yajñeśvara, or Lord of sacrifices. Since neophytes are not all on the same transcendental level, they are advised to worship different types of demigods according to their

situation in the different modes of material nature. The idea is that gradually such neophytes may rise to the transcendental plane and engage in the service of Viṣṇu, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. For instance, some neophytes who are attached to flesh eating are advised by the *purāṇas* to eat flesh after offering it to the deity Kālī. The philosophical sections of the Vedic hymns are intended to enable one to distinguish the Supreme Lord from *māyā*. After one understands the position of *māyā*, he can approach the Supreme Lord in pure devotional service. That is the actual purpose of philosophical speculation, and this is confirmed in *Bhagavad-gītā*:

*bahūnām janmanām ante
jñānavān mām praṇadyate
vāsudevaḥ sarvam iti
sa mahātmā sudurlabhaḥ*

“After many births and deaths, he who is actually in knowledge surrenders unto Me, knowing Me to be the cause of all causes and all that is. Such a great soul is very rare.” (Bg. 7.19)

It can thus be seen that all Vedic rituals and different types of worship and philosophical speculation ultimately aim at Kṛṣṇa.

Caitanya Mahāprabhu then told Sanātana Gosvāmī about Kṛṣṇa’s multiforms and His unlimited opulence. He also described the nature of the spiritual manifestation, the material manifestation, and the manifestation of the living entity. He also informed Sanātana Gosvāmī that the planets in the spiritual sky, known as Vaikuṅṭhas, and the universes of the material manifestation are actually different types of manifestations, for they are the created manifestations of two different types of energy—the material and the spiritual energy. As far as Kṛṣṇa Himself is concerned, He is directly situated in His spiritual energy, or specifically in His internal potency. To help us understand the difference between the spiritual and material energies, there is a clear analysis of the two in the Second Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. Śrīdhara Svāmī also gives a clear analytical study in his commentary on the first verse of the Tenth Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. Śrīdhara Svāmī was accepted by Lord Caitanya as an authorized commentator on *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, and Caitanya Mahāprabhu quoted his writings and

explained that in the Tenth Canto of *Bhāgavatam* the life and activities of Kṛṣṇa are described because Kṛṣṇa is the shelter of all manifestations. Knowing this, Śrīdhara Svāmī worshiped and offered his obeisances unto Kṛṣṇa as the shelter of everything.

In this world there are two principles operating: One principle is the origin or shelter of everything, and the other principle is deduced from this original principle. The Supreme Truth is the shelter of all manifestations and is called *āśraya*. All other principles, which remain under the control of the *āśraya-tattva*, or the Absolute Truth, are called *āśrita*, or subordinate corollaries and reactions. The purpose of the material manifestation is to give the conditioned soul a chance to attain liberation and return to the *āśraya-tattva*, or the Absolute Truth. Since everything in the cosmic creation is dependent on the *āśraya-tattva*—the creative manifestation or Viṣṇu manifestation—the various demigods and manifestations of energy, the living entities and all material elements are dependent on Kṛṣṇa, for Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Truth. Thus *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* indicates that everything is sheltered by Kṛṣṇa directly and indirectly. Consequently perfect knowledge can be had only by an analytical study of Kṛṣṇa, as confirmed by *Bhagavad-gītā*.

Lord Caitanya then described the different features of Kṛṣṇa and requested that Sanātana Gosvāmī listen attentively. He then informed him that Kṛṣṇa, the son of Nanda Mahārāja, is the Absolute Supreme Truth, the cause of all causes and the origin of all emanations and incarnations. Yet in Vraja, or Goloka Vṛndāvana, He is just like a young boy and is the son of Nanda Mahārāja. His form, however, is eternal, full of bliss, and full of knowledge absolute. He is both the shelter of everything and the proprietor as well.

Caitanya Mahāprabhu also gives evidence from *Brahma-saṁhitā* of the transcendental properties of Lord Kṛṣṇa's body:

*īśvaraḥ paramaḥ kṛṣṇaḥ
sac-cid-ānanda-vigrahaḥ
anādir ādir govindaḥ
sarva-kāraṇa-kāraṇam*

“Kṛṣṇa, who is known as Govinda, is the Supreme Godhead. He has an

eternal, blissful spiritual body. He is the origin of all. He has no other origin, and He is the prime cause of all causes.” (*Brahma-saṁhitā* 5.1). In this way, Caitanya Mahāprabhu gives evidence that Kṛṣṇa is the original Personality of Godhead, full in all six opulences. It is Śrī Kṛṣṇa whose abode, known as Goloka Vṛndāvana, is the highest planetary system in the spiritual sky.

In addition, Lord Caitanya also quotes a verse from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (*Bhāg.* 1.3.28):

*ete cāṁśa-kalāḥ puṁsaḥ
kṛṣṇas tu bhagavān svayam
indrāri-vyākulaṁ lokaṁ
mṛḍayanti yuge yuge*

All incarnations are either direct expansions of Kṛṣṇa or, indirectly, expansions of the expansions of Kṛṣṇa. However, the name of Kṛṣṇa indicates the original Personality of Godhead. It is He who appears on this earth, in this universe or in any other universe, when there is a disturbance created by the demons, who are always trying to disrupt the administration of the demigods.

There are three different processes by which Kṛṣṇa can be understood: the empiric process of philosophical speculation, the process of meditation according to the mystic *yoga* system, and the process of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, or devotional service. By the method of philosophical speculation, the impersonal Brahman feature of Kṛṣṇa is understood. By the process of meditation or mystic *yoga*, the feature of the Supersoul, the all-pervading expansion of Kṛṣṇa, is understood. And by devotional service in full Kṛṣṇa consciousness, the original Personality of Godhead is realized. Lord Caitanya also quotes this verse from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (*Bhāg.* 1.2.11):

*vadanti tat tattva-vidas
tattvaṁ yaj jñānam advayam
brahmeti paramātmēti
bhaga vān iti śabdyate*

“Those who are knowers of the Absolute Truth describe the Absolute Truth in three features as impersonal Brahman, localized all-pervading

Supersoul, and the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa.” In other words, Brahman, the impersonal manifestation, Paramātmā, the localized manifestation, and Bhagavān, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, are one and the same. However, according to the process adopted, He is realized as Brahman, Paramātmā and Bhagavān. By realizing the impersonal Brahman, one simply realizes the effulgence emanating from the transcendental body of Kṛṣṇa. This effulgence is compared to the sunshine. There is the sun-god, the sun itself and the sunshine which is the shining effulgence of that original sun-god. Similarly, the spiritual effulgence (brahmajyoti), impersonal Brahman, is nothing but the personal effulgence of Kṛṣṇa. To support this analysis, Lord Caitanya quotes one important verse from *Brahma-saṁhitā* in which Lord Brahmā says:

*yasya prabhā prabhavato jagadaṇḍa-koṭi-
koṭiṣv aśeṣa-vasudhādi-vibhūti-bhinnam
tad-brahma niṣkalam anantam aśeṣa-bhūtam
govindam ādi-ṣuruṣaṁ tam ahaṁ bhajāmi*

“I worship the Supreme Personality of Godhead, by whose personal effulgence the unlimited *brahmajyoti* is manifested. In that *brahmajyoti* there are innumerable universes, and each is filled with innumerable planets.” (*Brahma-saṁhitā* 5.40)

Lord Caitanya further points out that the Paramātmā, the all-pervading feature situated in everyone’s body, is but a partial manifestation or expansion of Kṛṣṇa, but because Kṛṣṇa is the soul of all souls, He is called Paramātmā, the Supreme Self. In this regard, Caitanya quoted another verse from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* concerning the talks between Mahārāja Parīkṣit and Śukadeva Gosvāmī. While hearing of the transcendental pastimes of Kṛṣṇa in Vṛndāvana, Mahārāja Parīkṣit inquired from his spiritual master, Śukadeva Gosvāmī, as to why the inhabitants of Vṛndāvana were so much attached to Kṛṣṇa. To this question Śukadeva Gosvāmī answered:

*kṛṣṇam enam avehi tvam
ātmānam akhilātmanām
jagaddhitāya so ’py atra*

dehīvābhāti māyayā

“Kṛṣṇa should be known as the soul of all souls, for He is the soul of all individual souls and the soul of the localized Paramātmā as well. At Vṛndāvana He was acting just like a human being to attract people and to show that He is not formless.” (*Bhāg.* 10.14.55)

The Supreme Lord is as much an individual as other living beings, but He is different in that He is the Supreme and all other living beings are subordinate to Him. All other living beings can also enjoy spiritual bliss, eternal life and full knowledge in His association. Lord Caitanya quotes a verse from *Bhagavad-gītā* in which Kṛṣṇa, telling Arjuna of His different opulences, points out that He Himself enters this universe by one of His plenary portions, Garbhodakaśāyī Viṣṇu, and also enters into each universe as the Kṣīrodakaśāyī Viṣṇu, and then expands Himself as the Supersoul in everyone’s heart. Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself indicates that if anyone wants to understand the Supreme Absolute Truth in perfection, he must take to the process of devotional service in full Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Then it will be possible for him to understand the last word of the Absolute Truth.

Chapter Six

His Forms Are One and the Same

By devotional service one can understand that Kṛṣṇa first of all manifests Himself as *svayam-rūpa*, His personal form, then as *tadekātma-rūpa*, and then as *āveśa-rūpa*. It is in these three features that He manifests Himself in His transcendental form. The feature of *svayam-rūpa* is the form by which Kṛṣṇa can be understood by one who may not understand His other features. In other words, the form by which Kṛṣṇa is directly understood is called *svayam-rūpa*, or His personal form. The *tadekātma-rūpa* is that form which most resembles the *svayam-rūpa*, but there are some differences in the bodily features. The *tadekātma-rūpa* is divided into two manifestations—the personal expansion (*svāmśa*) and the pastime expansion (*vilāsa*). As far as the *āveśa-rūpa* is concerned, when Kṛṣṇa empowers some suitable living entity to represent Him, that living entity is called *āveśa-rūpa*, or *śaktyāveśa-avatāra*.

The personal form of Kṛṣṇa can be divided into two: *svayam-rūpa* and *svayam-prakāśa*. As far as His *svayam-rūpa* (or pastime form) is concerned, it is in that form that He remains always in Vṛndāvana with the inhabitants of Vṛndāvana. This personal form (*svayam-rūpa*) can be further divided into the *prābhava* and *vaibhava* forms. For instance, Kṛṣṇa expanded Himself in multiple forms during the *rāsa* dance in order to dance with each and every *gopī* who took part in forms in order to accommodate His 16,108 wives. There are some instances of great mystics' also expanding their bodily features in different ways, but Kṛṣṇa did not expand Himself by any *yoga* process. Each expansion of Kṛṣṇa was a separate individual. In Vedic history, Saubhari Ṛṣi, a sage, expanded himself into eight forms by the *yoga* process, but Saubhari Ṛṣi remained one. As far as Kṛṣṇa is concerned, when He manifested Himself in different forms, each and every one of them was a separate individual. When Nārada Muni visited Kṛṣṇa at different palaces at Dvārakā, he was astonished at this, and yet Nārada is never astonished to see expansions of a *yogī's* body, since he knows the trick himself. Yet in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* it is stated that Nārada was actually astonished to

see the expansions of Kṛṣṇa. He wondered how the Lord was present with His queens in each and every one of His 16,108 palaces. With each queen, Kṛṣṇa Himself was in a different form, and He was acting in different ways. In one form He was engaged in playing with His children, and in yet another form He was performing some household work. These different activities are conducted by the Lord when He is in His “emotional” forms, which are known as *vaibhava-prakāśa* expansions. Similarly, there are other unlimited expansions of the forms of Kṛṣṇa, but even when they are divided or expanded without limit, they are still one and the same. There is no difference between one form and another. That is the absolute nature of the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* it is stated that when Akrūra was accompanying both Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma from Gokula to Mathurā, he entered into the waters of the Yamunā River and could see in the waters all the planets in the spiritual sky. He also saw there the Lord in His Viṣṇu form as well as Nārada and the four Kumāras, who were worshiping Him. As stated in the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* (*Bhāg.* 10.40.7):

*anye ca saṁskṛtātmāno
vidhinābhīhitena te
yajanti tvan-mayās tvām vai
bahumūrty-ekamūrtikam*

There are many worshipers who are purified by different processes of worship—such as the Vaiṣṇavas or the Āryans—who also worship the Supreme Lord according to their convictions and spiritual understanding. Each process of worship involves understanding different forms of the Lord, as mentioned in scriptures, but the ultimate idea is to worship the Supreme Lord Himself.

In His *vaibhava-prakāśa* feature, the Lord manifests Himself as Balarāma. The Balarāma feature is as good as Kṛṣṇa Himself, the only difference being that the bodily hue of Kṛṣṇa is dark and that of Balarāma is fair. The *vaibhava-prakāśa* form was also displayed when Kṛṣṇa appeared before His Mother Devakī in the four-handed form of Nārāyaṇa, just when He entered the world. At the request of His parents, however, He transformed Himself into a two-handed form.

Thus He sometimes manifests four hands and sometimes two. The two-handed form is actually *vaibhava-prakāśa*, and the four-handed form is *prābhava-prakāśa*. In His personal form, Kṛṣṇa is just like a cowherd boy, and He thinks of Himself in that way. But when He is in the Vāsudeva form, He thinks of Himself as the son of a *kṣatriya* and acts as a princely administrator.

In the two-handed form, as the cowherd son of Nanda Mahārāja, Kṛṣṇa fully exhibits His opulence, form, beauty, wealth, attractiveness and pastimes. Indeed, in some of the Vaiṣṇava literatures it is found that sometimes, in His form as Vāsudeva, He becomes attracted to the form of Govinda in Vṛndāvana. Thus as Vāsudeva He sometimes desires to enjoy as the cowherd boy Govinda does, although the Govinda form and the Vāsudeva form are one and the same. In this regard, there is a passage in the Fourth Chapter of the *Lalita-mādhava* (4.19), in which Kṛṣṇa addresses Uddhava as follows: “My dear friend, the form of Govinda, the cowherd boy, attracts Me. Indeed, I wish to be like the damsels of Vraja, who are also attracted by this form of Govinda.” Similarly, in the Eighth Chapter, Kṛṣṇa says: “O how wonderful it is! Who is this person? After seeing Him, I am so attracted that I am now desiring to embrace Him just like Rādhikā.”

There are also forms of Kṛṣṇa which are a little different, and these are called *tadekātmā-rūpa* forms. These may be further divided into the *vilāsa* and *svāmśa* forms, which in turn have many different features and can be divided into *prābhava* and *vaibhava* forms. As far as the *vilāsa* forms are concerned, there are innumerable *prābhava-vilāsas* by which Kṛṣṇa expands Himself as Vāsudeva, Saṅkarṣaṇa, Pradyumna, and Aniruddha. Sometimes the Lord thinks of Himself as a cowherd boy, and sometimes He thinks of Himself as the son of Vasudeva, a *kṣatriya* prince, and this “thinking” of Kṛṣṇa is called His “pastimes.” Actually He is in the same form in His *vaibhava-prakāśa* and *prābhava-vilāsa*, but He appears differently as Balarāma and Kṛṣṇa. His expansions as Vāsudeva, Saṅkarṣaṇa, Pradyumna and Aniruddha are in the original *catur-vyūha*, or four-handed forms.

There are innumerable four-handed manifestations in different planets and different places, and they are manifested in Dvārakā and Mathurā eternally. From the four principal four-handed forms (Vāsudeva,

Saṅkarṣaṇa, Pradyumna and Aniruddha) there are manifest the principal twenty-four forms called *vaibhava-vilāsa*, and they are named differently according to the placement of different symbols (conch, mace, lotus and disc) in their hands. The four principal manifestations of Kṛṣṇa are found in each planet in the spiritual sky, and these planets are called Nārāyaṇaloka or Vaikuṅṭhaloka. In the Vaikuṅṭhaloka He is manifested in the four-handed form of Nārāyaṇa. From each Nārāyaṇa the forms of Vāsudeva, Saṅkarṣaṇa, Pradyumna and Aniruddha are manifested. Thus Nārāyaṇa is the center, and the four forms of Vāsudeva, Saṅkarṣaṇa, Pradyumna and Aniruddha surround the Nārāyaṇa form. Each of these four forms again expand into three, and these all have different names, beginning with Keśava. These forms are twelve in all, and they are known by different names according to the placement of symbols in their hands.

As far as the Vāsudeva form is concerned, the three expansions manifested from Him are Keśava, Nārāyaṇa and Mādhava. The three forms of Saṅkarṣaṇa are known as Govinda, Viṣṇu and Śrī Madhusūdana. (It should be noted, however, that this Govinda form is not the same Govinda form that is manifested in Vṛndāvana as the son of Nanda Mahārāja.) Similarly, Pradyumna is also divided into three forms known as Trivikrama, Vāmana and Śrīdhara; and the three forms of Aniruddha are known as Hṛṣīkeśa, Padmanābha and Dāmodara.

Chapter Seven

Unlimited Forms of Godhead

According to the Vaiṣṇava almanac, the twelve months of the year are named according to the twelve Vaikuṅṭha forms of Lord Kṛṣṇa, and these forms are known as the predominating Deities for the twelve months. This calendar begins with the month of Mārgaśīrsa, which is equivalent to late October and early November. The remainder of November is known by Vaiṣṇavas as Keśava. December is called Nārāyaṇa, January is called Mādhava, February is Govinda, March is Viṣṇu, April Śrī Madhusūdana, May Trivikrama, June Vāmana, July Śrīdhara, August Hṛṣīkeśa, September Padmanābha, and early October is known as Dāmodara. (The name Dāmodara was given to Kṛṣṇa when He was bound by ropes by His mother, but the Dāmodara form in the month of October is a different manifestation). Just as the months of the year are known according to the twelve different names of the Supreme Lord, the Vaiṣṇava community marks twelve parts of the body according to these names. For instance, the *tilaka* mark on the forehead is called Keśava, and on the stomach, breast and arms the other names are also given. These are the same names as those given the months.

The four forms (Vāsudeva, Saṅkarṣaṇa, Pradyumna and Aniruddha) are also expanded in the *vilāsa-mūrti*. These are eight in number, and their names are Puruṣottama, Acyuta, Nṛsimha, Janārdana, Hari, Kṛṣṇa, Adhokṣaja and Upendra. Out of these eight, Adhokṣaja and Puruṣottama are the *vilāsa* forms of Vāsudeva. Similarly, Upendra and Acyuta are the forms of Saṅkarṣaṇa; Nṛsimha and Janārdana are the forms of Pradyumna, and Hari and Kṛṣṇa are the *vilāsa* forms of Aniruddha. (This Kṛṣṇa is different from the original Kṛṣṇa.)

These twenty-four forms are known as the *vilāsa* manifestation of the *prābhava* (four-handed) form, and they are named differently according to the position of the symbolic representations (mace, disc, lotus flower and conch shell). Out of these twenty-four forms there are *vilāsa* and *vaibhava* forms. Names mentioned herein, such as Pradyumna, Trivikrama, Vāmana, Hari and Kṛṣṇa, are also different in features.

Then, coming to the *prābhava-vilāsa* of Kṛṣṇa (including Vāsudeva, Saṅkarṣaṇa, Pradyumna and Aniruddha), there are a total of twenty further variations. All of these have Vaikuṅṭha planets in the spiritual sky and are situated in eight different directions. Although each of them is eternally in the spiritual sky, some of them are nonetheless manifest in the material world also.

In the spiritual sky all the planets dominated by the Nārāyaṇa feature are eternal. The topmost planet in the spiritual sky is called Kṛṣṇaloka and is divided into three different portions: Gokula, Mathurā and Dvārakā. In the Mathurā portion, the form of Keśava is always situated. He is also represented on this earthly planet. In Mathurā, India, the Keśava *mūrti* is worshiped, and similarly there is a Puruṣottama form in Jagannātha Purī in Orissa. In Ānandāraṇya there is the form of Viṣṇu, and in Māyāpur, the birthplace of Lord Caitanya, there is the form of Hari. Many other forms are also situated in various places on the earth. Not only in this universe but in all other universes as well the forms of Kṛṣṇa are distributed everywhere. It is indicated that this earth is divided into seven islands, which are the seven continents, and it is understood that on each and every island there are similar forms, but at the present moment these are found only in India. Although from Vedic literatures we can understand that there are forms in other parts of the world, at present there is no information of their location.

The different forms of Kṛṣṇa are distributed throughout the universe to give pleasure to the devotees. It is not that devotees are born only in India. There are devotees in all parts of the world, but they have simply forgotten their identity. These forms incarnate not only to give pleasure to the devotee but to reestablish devotional service and perform other activities which vitally concern the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Some of these forms are incarnations mentioned in the scriptures, such as the Viṣṇu incarnation, Trivikrama incarnation, Nṛsimha incarnation and Vāmana incarnation.

In the *Siddhārtha-saṁhitā*, there is a description of the twenty-four forms of Viṣṇu, and these forms are named according to the position of the symbolic representations in Their four hands. When one describes the positions of objects in the hands of the Viṣṇu *mūrti*, one should begin with the lower right hand then move to the upper right hand,

upper left hand and, finally, to the lower left hand. In this way, Vāsudeva may be described as being represented by mace, conch shell, disc and lotus flower. Saṅkarṣaṇa is represented by mace, conch shell, lotus flower and disc. Similarly, Pradyumna is represented by disc, conch shell, mace and lotus flower. Aniruddha is represented by disc, mace, conch shell and lotus flower. In the spiritual sky the representations of Nārāyaṇa are twenty in number and are described as follows: Śrī Keśava (flower, conch shell, disc, mace), Nārāyaṇa (conch, flower, mace and disc), Śrī Mādhava (mace, disc, conch and flower), Śrī Govinda (disc, mace, flower and conch), Viṣṇu-mūrti (mace, flower, conch and disc), Madhusūdana (disc, conch, flower and mace), Trivikrama (flower, mace, disc and shell), Śrī Vāmana (conch, disc, mace and flower), Śrīdhara (flower, disc, mace and shell), Hṛṣīkeśa (mace, disc, flower and conch), Padmanābha (shell, flower, disc and mace), Dāmodara (flower, disc, mace and shell), Puruṣottama (disc, flower, shell and mace), Acyuta (mace, flower, disc and shell), Nṛsimha (disc, flower, mace and shell), Janārdana (flower, disc, shell and mace), Śrī Hari (shell, disc, flower and mace), Śrī Kṛṣṇa (shell, mace, flower and disc), Adhokṣaja (flower, mace, shell and disc), and Upendra (shell, mace, disc and flower). According to the *Hayaśīrṣa-pañcarātra*, there are sixteen forms, and these forms are named differently according to the situations of the disc and mace. The conclusion is that the Supreme Original Personality of Godhead is Kṛṣṇa. He is called *līlā-puruṣottama*, and He resides principally in Vṛndāvana as the son of Nanda. It is also learned from the *Hayaśīrṣa-pañcarātra* that there are nine forms protecting each of the two Purīs known as the Mathurā Purī and the Dvārakā Purī: Vāsudeva, Saṅkarṣaṇa, Pradyumna and Aniruddha protect one, and Nārāyaṇa, Nṛsimha, Hayagrīva, Varāha and Brahmā—protect the other. These are different manifestations of the *prakāśa* and *vilāsa* forms of Lord Kṛṣṇa. Lord Caitanya also informs Sanātana Gosvāmī that there are different forms of *svāmśa* as well, and these are divided into the Saṅkarṣaṇa division and the incarnation division. From the first division come the three *puruṣa-avatāras*—the Kāraṇodakaśāyī Viṣṇu, Garbhodakaśāyī Viṣṇu and Kṣīrodakaśāyī Viṣṇu—and from the other division come the *līlā-avatāras*, such as the Lord’s incarnations as a fish, tortoise, etc. There are six kinds of incarnations: (1) the *puruṣa-avatāra*, (2) the *līlā-*

avatāra, (3) the *guṇa-avatāra*, (4) the *manvantara-avatāra*, (5) the *yuga-avatāra*, and (6) the *śaktyāveśa-avatāra*. Out of the six *vilāsa* manifestations of Kṛṣṇa, there are two divisions based on His age, and these are called *bālyā* and *paugaṇḍā*. As the son of Nanda Mahārāja, Kṛṣṇa in His original form enjoys both of these childhood aspects—namely *bālyā* and *paugaṇḍā*.

It is thus safe to conclude that there is no end to the expansions and incarnations of Kṛṣṇa. Lord Caitanya explains some of them to Sanātana just to give him an idea of how the Lord expands and enjoys. These conclusions are also confirmed in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (1.3.26). There it is said that there is no limit to the incarnations of the Supreme Lord, just as there is no limit to the waves of the ocean.

Kṛṣṇa first incarnates as the three *puruṣa-avatāras*, namely the Mahā-Viṣṇu or Kāraṇodakaśāyī *avatāra*, the Garbhodakaśāyī *avatāra* and the Kṣīrodakaśāyī *avatāra*. This is confirmed in the *Sātvata-tantra*. Kṛṣṇa's energies can also be divided into three: His energy of thinking feeling and acting. When He exhibits His thinking energy, He is the Supreme Lord; when He exhibits His feeling energy, He is Lord Vāsudeva; when He exhibits His acting energy, He is Saṅkarṣaṇa Balarāma. Without His thinking, feeling and acting, there would be no possibility of creation. Although there is no creation in the spiritual world—for there the planets are beginningless—there is creation in the material world. In either case, however, both the spiritual and material worlds are manifestations of the energy of acting, in which Kṛṣṇa acts in the form of Saṅkarṣaṇa and Balarāma.

The spiritual world of the Vaikuṅṭha planets and Kṛṣṇaloka, the supreme planet, is situated in His energy of thinking. Although there is no creation in the spiritual world, which is eternal, it is still to be understood that the Vaikuṅṭha planets depend on the thinking energy of the Supreme Lord. This thinking energy is described in *Brahma-saṁhitā* (5.2), where it is said that the supreme abode, known as Goloka, is manifested like a lotus flower with hundreds of petals. Everything there is manifested by Ananta, the Balarāma or Saṅkarṣaṇa form. The material cosmic manifestation and its different universes are manifest through *māyā*, or material energy. However, one should not think that material nature or material energy is the cause of this cosmic

manifestation. Rather, it is caused by the Supreme Lord, who uses His different expansions through material nature. In other words, there is no possibility of any creation without the superintendence of the Supreme Lord. The form by which the energy of material nature works to bring about creation is called the Saṅkarṣaṇa form, and it is understood that this cosmic manifestation is created under the superintendence of the Supreme Lord.

In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (10.46.31) it is said that Balarāma and Kṛṣṇa are the origin of all living entities and that these two personalities enter into everything. A list of incarnations is given in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (1.3), and they are as follows: (1) Kumāras, (2) Nārada, (3) Varāha, (4) Matsya, (5) Yajña, (6) Nara-nārāyaṇa, (7) Kārdami Kapila, (8) Dattātreya, (9) Hayaśīrṣa, (10) Haṁsa, (11) Dhruvapriya or Pṛśnigarbha, (12) Ṛṣabha, (13) Pṛthu, (14) Nṛsimha, (15) Kūrma, (16) Dhanvantari, (17) Mohinī, (18) Vāmana, (19) Bhārgava (Paraśurāma), (20) Rāghavendra, (21) Vyāsa, (22) Pralambāri Balarāma, (23) Kṛṣṇa, (24) Buddha (25) Kalki. Because almost all of these twenty-five *līlā-avatāras* appear in one day of Brahmā, which is called a *kalpa*, they are sometimes called *kalpa-avatāras*. Out of these, the incarnation of Haṁsa and Mohinī are not permanent, but Kapila, Dattātreya, Ṛṣabha, Dhanvantari and Vyāsa are five eternal forms, and they are more celebrated. The incarnations of the tortoise Kūrma, the fish Matsya, Nara-nārāyaṇa, Varāha, Hayaśīrṣa, Pṛśnigarbha, and Balarāma are considered to be incarnations of *vaibhava*. Similarly, there are three *guṇa-avatāras*, or incarnations of the qualitative modes of nature, and these are Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva.

Of the *manvantara-avatāras*, there are fourteen: (1) Yajña, (2) Vibhu, (3) Satyasena, (4) Hari, (5) Vaikuṅṭha, (6) Ajita, (7) Vāmana, (8) Sārvabhauma, (9) Ṛṣabha, (10) Viṣvaksena, (11) Dharmasetu, (12) Sudhāmā, (13) Yogeśvara, (14) Bṛhadbhānu. Out of these fourteen *manvantara-avatāras*, Yajña and Vāmana are also *līlā-avatāras*, and the rest are *manvantara-avatāras*. These fourteen *manvantara-avatāras* are also known as *vaibhava-avatāras*.

The four *yuga-avatāras* are also described in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. In the Satya-yuga, the incarnation of God is white; in the Tretā-yuga He is red; in the Dvāpara-yuga, He is blackish; and in the Kali-yuga He is also

blackish, but sometimes, in a special Kali-yuga, His color is yellowish (as in the case of Caitanya Mahāprabhu). As far as the *śaktyāveśa-avatāras* are concerned, they include Kapila and Ṛṣabha, Ananta, Brahmā (sometimes the Lord Himself becomes Brahmā), Catuḥsana (the incarnation of knowledge), Nārada (the incarnation of devotional service), King Pṛthu (the incarnation of administrative power), and Paraśurāma (the incarnation who subdues evil principles).

Chapter Eight

The *Avatāras*

Lord Caitanya continued to explain to Sanātana Gosvāmī that the expansions of Lord Kṛṣṇa who come to the material creation are called *avatāras*, or incarnations. The word *avatāra* means “One who descends,” and in this case the word specifically refers to one who descends from the spiritual sky. In the spiritual sky there are innumerable Vaikuṅṭha planets, and from these planets the expansions of the Supreme Personality of Godhead come into this universe.

The first descent of the Supreme Personality of Godhead from the expansion of Saṅkarṣaṇa is the *puruṣa* incarnation, Mahā-Viṣṇu. It is confirmed in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (1.3.1) that when the Supreme Personality of Godhead descends as the first *puruṣa* incarnation of the material creation, He immediately manifests sixteen elementary energies. Known as the Mahā-Viṣṇu, He lies within the Causal Ocean, and it is He who is the original incarnation in the material world. He is the Lord of time, nature, cause and effect, mind, ego, the five elements, the three modes of nature, the senses and the universal form. Although He is master of all objects movable and immovable in the material world, He is totally independent.

The influence of material nature cannot reach beyond the Virajā, or Causal Ocean, as confirmed in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (2.9.10). The modes of material nature (goodness, passion and ignorance), as well as material time, have no influence on the Vaikuṅṭha planets. On those planets the liberated associates of Kṛṣṇa live eternally, and they are worshiped both by the demigods and the demons.

Material nature acts in two capacities as *māyā* and *pradhāna*. *Māyā* is the direct cause, and *pradhāna* refers to the elements of the material manifestation. When the first *puruṣa-avatāra*, Mahā-Viṣṇu, glances over the material nature, material nature becomes agitated, and the *puruṣa-avatāra* thus impregnates matter with living entities. Simply by the glance of the Mahā-Viṣṇu, consciousness is created, and this consciousness is known as *mahat-tattva*, The predominating Deity of the

mahat-tattva is Vāsudeva. This created consciousness is then divided into three departmental activities according to the three *guṇas*, or modes of material nature. Consciousness in the mode of goodness is described in the Eleventh Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. The predominating Deity of the mode of goodness is called Aniruddha. Consciousness in the mode of material passion produces intelligence, and the predominating Deity in this case is Pradyumna. He is the master of the senses. Consciousness in the mode of ignorance causes the production of ether, the sky and the sense of hearing. The cosmic manifestation is a combination of all these modes, and in this way innumerable universes are created. No one can count the number of universes.

These innumerable universes are produced from the pores of the Mahā-Viṣṇu's body. As innumerable particles of dust pass through the tiny holes in a screen, similarly from the pores of the Mahā-Viṣṇu's body innumerable universes emanate. As He breathes out, innumerable universes are produced, and as He inhales, they are annihilated. All of the energies of the Mahā-Viṣṇu are spiritual, and they have nothing to do with the material energy. In *Brahma-saṁhitā* (5.48) it is stated that the predominating deity of each universe, Brahmā, lives only during one breath of the Mahā-Viṣṇu. Thus Mahā-Viṣṇu is the original Supersoul of all the universes and the master of all universes as well.

The second Viṣṇu incarnation, the Garbhodakaśāyī Viṣṇu, enters each and every universe, spreads water from His body, and lies down on that water. From His navel, the stem of a lotus flower grows, and on that lotus flower the first creature, Brahmā, is born. Within the stem of that lotus flower are fourteen divisions of planetary systems, which are created by Brahmā. Within each universe the Lord is present as the Garbhodakaśāyī Viṣṇu, and He maintains each universe and tends to its needs. Although He is within each material universe, the influence of material energy cannot touch Him. When it is required, this very same Viṣṇu takes the form of Lord Śiva and annihilates the cosmic creation. The three secondary incarnations—Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva—are the predominating deities of the three modes of material nature. The master of the universe, however, is the Garbhodakaśāyī Viṣṇu, who is worshiped as the Hiraṇyagarbha Supersoul. The Vedic hymns describe Him as

having thousands of heads. Although He is within the material nature, He is not touched by it.

The third incarnation of Viṣṇu, Kṣīrodakaśāyī Viṣṇu, is also an incarnation of the mode of goodness. He is also the Supersoul of all living entities, and He resides on the ocean of milk within the universe. Thus Caitanya Mahāprabhu described the *puruṣa-avatāras*.

Lord Caitanya next described the *līlā-avatāras*, or “pastime” *avatāras*, and of these the Lord points out that there is no limit. However, He describes some of them—for example, Matsya, Kūrma, Raghunātha, Nṛsimha, Vāmana and Varāha.

As far as the *guṇa-avatāras*, or qualitative incarnations of Viṣṇu, are concerned, they are three—Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva. Brahmā is one of the living entities, but due to his devotional service he is very powerful. This primal living entity, master of the mode of material passion, is directly empowered by the Garbhodakaśāyī Viṣṇu to create innumerable living entities. In *Brahma-saṁhitā* (5.49) Brahmā is likened to valuable jewels influenced by the rays of the sun, and the sun is likened to the Supreme Lord Garbhodakaśāyī Viṣṇu. If in some *kalpa* there is no suitable living entity capable of acting in Brahmā’s capacity, Garbhodakaśāyī Viṣṇu Himself manifests as Brahmā and acts accordingly.

Similarly, by expanding Himself as Lord Śiva, the Supreme Lord is engaged when there is a need to annihilate the universe. Lord Śiva, in association with *māyā*, has many forms, which are generally numbered at eleven. Lord Śiva is not one of the living entities; he is, more or less, Kṛṣṇa Himself. The example of milk and yogurt is often given in this regard—yogurt is a preparation of milk, but still yogurt cannot be used as milk. Similarly, Lord Śiva is an expansion of Kṛṣṇa, but he cannot act as Kṛṣṇa, nor can we derive the spiritual restoration from Lord Śiva that we derive from Kṛṣṇa. The essential difference is that Lord Śiva has a connection with material nature, but Viṣṇu or Lord Kṛṣṇa has nothing to do with material nature. In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (10.88.3) it is stated that Lord Śiva is a combination of three kinds of transformed consciousness known as *vaikārika*, *taijasa* and *tāmasa*.

The Viṣṇu incarnation, although master of the modes of goodness within each universe, is in no way in touch with the influence of

material nature. Although Viṣṇu is equal to Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa is the original source. Viṣṇu is a part, but Kṛṣṇa is the whole. This is the version given by Vedic literatures. In *Brahma-saṁhitā* the example is given of an original candle which lights a second candle. Although both candles are of equal power, one is accepted as the original, and the other is said to be kindled from the original. The Viṣṇu expansion is like the second candle. He is as powerful as Kṛṣṇa, but the original Viṣṇu is Kṛṣṇa. Brahmā and Lord Śiva are obedient servants of the Supreme Lord, and the Supreme Lord as Viṣṇu is an expansion of Kṛṣṇa.

After describing the *Līlā* and *guṇa-avatāras*, Lord Caitanya explains the *manvantara-avatāras* to Sanātana Gosvāmī. He first states that there is no possibility of counting the *manvantara-avatāras*. In one *kalpa*, or one day of Brahmā, fourteen Manus are manifest. One day of Brahmā is calculated at 4 billion 320 million years, and Brahmā lives for one hundred years on this scale. Thus if fourteen Manus appear in one day of Brahmā, there are 420 Manus during one month of Brahmā, and during one year of Brahmā there are 5,040 Manus. Since Brahmā lives for one hundred of his years, it is calculated that there are 504,000 Manus manifest during the lifetime of one Brahmā. Since there are innumerable universes, no one can imagine the totality of the *manvantara* incarnations. Because all the universes are produced simultaneously by the exhalation of the Mahā-Viṣṇu, no one can begin to calculate how many Manus are manifest at one time. Each Manu, however, is called by a different name. The first Manu is called Svāyambhuva, and he is the son of Brahmā. The second Manu, Svārociṣa, is the son of the predominating deity of fire. The third Manu is Uttama, and he is the son of King Priyavrata. The fourth Manu, Tāmasa, is the brother of Uttama. The fifth Manu, called Raivata, and the sixth Manu, Cākṣuṣa, are both brothers of Tāmasa, but Cākṣuṣa is the son of Cākṣu. The seventh Manu is called Vaivasvata, and he is the son of the sun-god. The eighth Manu is called Sāvarṇi, and he is also a son of the sun-god, born of a wife named Chāyā. The ninth Manu, Dakṣasāvarṇi, is the son of Varuna. The tenth Manu, Brahmasāvarṇi, is the son of Upaśloka. Four other Manus are known as Rudrasāvarṇi, Dharmasāvarṇi, Devasāvarṇi and Indrasāvarṇi.

After describing the Manu incarnations, Lord Caitanya explained the

yuga-avatāras to Sanātana Gosvāmī. There are four *yugas*, or millennia—Satya, Tretā, Dvāpara, and Kali—and in each millennium the Supreme Lord incarnates, and each incarnation has a different color according to the *yuga*. In the Satya-yuga the color of the principal incarnation is white. In the Tretā-yuga the color is red, in the Dvāpara-yuga the color is blackish (Kṛṣṇa), and in the Kali-yuga the color of the principal incarnation is yellow (Caitanya Mahāprabhu). This is confirmed in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (10.8.13) by the astrologer Gargamuni, who calculated Kṛṣṇa’s horoscope in the house of Nanda Mahārāja. In the Satya-yuga the process of self-realization was meditation, and this process is taught by the white incarnation of God. This incarnation gave a benediction to the sage Kardama by which he could have an incarnation of the Personality of Godhead as his son. In the Satya-yuga, everyone meditated on Kṛṣṇa, and each and every living entity was in full knowledge. In this present age, Kali-yuga, people who are not in full knowledge are still attempting this meditative process which was recommended for a previous age. The process for self-realization recommended in the Tretā millennium was the performance of sacrifice, and this was taught by the red incarnation of God. In the Dvāpara millennium, Kṛṣṇa was personally present, and He was worshiped by everyone by the *mantra*:

*namas te vāsudevāya
namaḥ saṅkarṣaṇāya
pradyumnāyāniruddhāya
tubhyaṁ bhagavate namaḥ*

“Let me offer my obeisances unto the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Vāsudeva, Saṅkarṣaṇa, Pradyumna, and Aniruddha.” This was the process of self-realization for the Dvāpara age. In the next millennium—this present age of Kali-yuga—the Lord incarnates to preach the chanting of the holy name of Kṛṣṇa. In this age the Lord is yellow (Caitanya Mahāprabhu), and He teaches people love of God by chanting the names of Kṛṣṇa. This teaching is carried out personally by Kṛṣṇa, and He exhibits love of Godhead by chanting, singing and dancing with thousands of people following Him. This particular incarnation of the Supreme Personality of Godhead is foretold in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*

(11.5.32):

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

“In the age of Kali the Lord incarnates as a devotee, yellowish in color, and is always chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare. Although He is Kṛṣṇa, His complexion is not blackish like Kṛṣṇa’s in Dvāpara-yuga but is golden. It is in Kali-yuga that the Lord engages in preaching love of Godhead through the *saṅkīrtana* movement, and those living entities who are intelligent adopt this process of self-realization.” It is also stated in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (12.3.52):

*kṛte yad dhyāyato viṣṇum
tretāyām yajato makhaiḥ
dvāpare paricaryāyām
kalau taddhari-kīrtanāt*

“The self-realization which was achieved in the Satya millennium by meditation, in the Tretā millennium by the performance of different sacrifices, and in the Dvāpara millennium by worship of Lord Kṛṣṇa, can be achieved in the age of Kali simply by chanting the holy names, Hare Kṛṣṇa.” This is also confirmed in *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* (6.2.17) where it is stated:

*dhyāyan kṛte yajan yajñais
tretāyām dvāpare ’rcayan
yad āpnoti tad āpnoti
kalau saṅkīrtya keśavam*

“In this age there is no use in meditation, sacrifice and temple worship. Simply by chanting the holy name of Kṛṣṇa—Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare—one can achieve perfect self-realization.”

When Lord Caitanya described the incarnation for this age of Kali, Sanātana Gosvāmī, who had been a government minister and was

perfectly capable of drawing conclusions, directly asked of the Lord, “How can one understand the advent of an incarnation?” By the description of the incarnation for the Kali millennium, Sanātana Gosvāmī could understand that Lord Caitanya was indeed that incarnation of Kṛṣṇa, and he could also understand that in the future there would be many people who would try to imitate Lord Caitanya because the Lord played as an ordinary *brāhmaṇa*, despite the fact that His devotees accepted Him as an incarnation. Since Sanātana knew that there would be many pretenders, he asked the Lord, “How can one understand the symptoms of an incarnation?”

“As one can understand the different incarnations for different millenniums by referring to Vedic literatures,” the Lord replied, “one can similarly understand who is actually the incarnation of Godhead in this age of Kali.” In this way the Lord especially stressed reference to authoritative scriptures. In other words, one should not whimsically accept a person as an incarnation but should try to understand the characteristics of an incarnation by referring to scriptures. An incarnation of the Supreme Lord never declares Himself to be an incarnation, but His followers must ascertain who is an incarnation and who is a pretender by referring to authoritative scriptures.

Any intelligent person can understand the characteristics of an *avatāra* by understanding two features—the principal feature, called personality, and the marginal features. In the scriptures there are descriptions of the characteristics of the body and the activities of an incarnation, and the description of the body is the principal feature by which an incarnation can be identified. The activities of the incarnation are the marginal features. This is confirmed in the beginning of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (1.1.1) where the features of an *avatāra* are nicely described. In that verse, the two terms *param* and *satyam* are used, and Lord Caitanya indicates that these words reveal Kṛṣṇa’s principal feature. The other marginal features indicate that He taught Vedic knowledge to Brahmā and incarnated as the *puruṣa-avatāra* to create the cosmic manifestation. These are occasional features manifest for some special purposes. One should be able to understand and distinguish the principal and marginal features of an *avatāra*. No one can declare himself an incarnation without referring to these two features. An intelligent man will not

accept anyone as an *avatāra* without studying the principal and marginal features. When Sanātana Gosvāmī tried to confirm Lord Caitanya's personal characteristics as being those of the incarnation of this age, Lord Caitanya Himself indirectly made the confirmation by simply saying, "Let us leave aside all these discussions and continue with a description of the *śaktyāveśa-avatāras*."

The Lord then pointed out that there is no limit to the *śaktyāveśa-avatāras* and that they cannot be counted. However, some can be mentioned as examples. The *śaktyāveśa* incarnations are of two kinds—direct and indirect. When the Lord Himself comes, He is called *sākṣāt*, or a direct *śaktyāveśa-avatāra*, and when He empowers some living entity to represent Him that living entity is called an indirect or *āveśa* incarnation. Examples of indirect *avatāras* are the four Kumāras, Nārada, Pṛthu and Paraśurāma. These are actually living entities, but there is specific power given to them by the Supreme Personality of Godhead. When a specific opulence of the Supreme Lord is invested in specific entities, they are called *āveśa-avatāras*. The four Kumāras specifically represent the Supreme Lord's opulence of knowledge. Nārada represents the devotional service of the Supreme Lord. Devotional service is also represented by Lord Caitanya, who is considered to be the full representation of devotional service. In Brahmā the opulence of creative power is invested, and in King Pṛthu the power for maintaining the living entities is invested. Similarly, in Paraśurāma the power for killing evil elements is invested. As far as *vibhāti*, or the special favor of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, is concerned, it is described in the Tenth Chapter of *Bhagavad-gītā* that a living entity who appears to be especially powerful or beautiful should be known to be especially favored by the Supreme Lord.

Examples of direct or *sākṣād-avatāras* are the Śeṣa incarnation and the Ananta incarnation. In Ananta the power for sustaining all planets is invested, and in the Śeṣa incarnation the power for serving the Supreme Lord is invested.

After describing the *śaktyāveśa* incarnations, Caitanya Mahāprabhu began to speak about the age of the Supreme Lord. He said that the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa is always like a sixteen-year-old boy, and when He desires to descend on this universe, He first of all sends His father and

mother, who are His devotees, and then He advents Himself as an incarnation, or He comes personally. All His activities—beginning with the killing of the Pūtanā demon—are displayed in innumerable universes, and there is no limit to them. Indeed, at every moment, at every second, His manifestations and various pastimes are seen in different universes (*brahmāṇḍas*). Thus His activities are just like the waves of the Ganges River. Just as there is no limit to the flowing of the waves of the Ganges, there is no cessation of Lord Kṛṣṇa's incarnations in different universes. From childhood He displays many pastimes, and ultimately He exhibits the *rāsa* dance.

It is said that all the pastimes of Kṛṣṇa are eternal, and this is confirmed in every scripture. Generally people cannot understand how Kṛṣṇa performs His pastimes, but Lord Caitanya clarified this by comparing His pastimes to the orbit of the earth about the sun. According to Vedic astrological calculations, the twenty-four hours of a day and night are divided into sixty *daṇḍas*. The days are again divided into 3,600 *palas*. The sun disc can be perceived in every sixty *palas*, and that time constitutes a *daṇḍa*. Eight *daṇḍas* make one *prahara*, and the sun rises and sets with in four *praharas*. Similarly, four *praharas* constitute one night, and after that the sun rises. Similarly, all the pastimes of Kṛṣṇa can be seen in any of the universes, just as the sun can be seen in its movement through 3,600 *palas*.

Lord Kṛṣṇa remains in this universe for only 125 years, but all the pastimes of that period are exhibited in each and every universe. These pastimes include His appearance, His boyhood activities, His youth and His later pastimes up to those pastimes at Dvārakā. Since all these pastimes are present in one or another of the myriad universes at any given time, they are called eternal. The sun is eternally existing, although we see it rise and set, appear and disappear, according to our position on the planet. Similarly, the Lord's pastimes are going on, although we can see them manifest in this particular universe only at certain intervals. His abode is the supreme planet known as Goloka Vṛndāvana, and by His will, this Goloka Vṛndāvana is manifested in this universe and in other universes as well. Thus the Lord is always in His supreme abode, Goloka Vṛndāvana, and by His supreme will His activities there are also manifested in innumerable universes. When He

appears, He appears in those particular places, and in every manifestation His six opulences are displayed.

Chapter Nine

The Opulences of Kṛṣṇa

Since Lord Caitanya is especially merciful to innocent, unsophisticated persons, His name is also Patitapāvana, the deliverer of the most fallen conditioned souls. Although a conditioned soul may be fallen to the lowest position, it is possible for him to advance in spiritual science if he is innocent. Sanātana Gosvāmī was considered to be fallen according to the Hindu social system because he was in the service of the Mohammedan government. Indeed, he had even been excommunicated from brahminical society due to his employment. But because he was a sincere soul, Lord Caitanya showed him special favor by granting him a wealth of spiritual information.

The Lord next explained the situation of different spiritual planets in the spiritual sky. The spiritual planets are also known as Vaikuṅṭha planets. The universes of the material creation have a limited length and breadth, but as far as the Vaikuṅṭha planets are concerned, there is no limitation to their dimensions because they are spiritual. Lord Caitanya informed Sanātana Gosvāmī that the length and breadth of each and every Vaikuṅṭha planet is millions and billions of miles. Each of these planets is unlimitedly expanded, and in each and every one of them there are residents who are full in all six opulences—wealth, strength, knowledge, beauty, fame and renunciation. In each and every one of these Vaikuṅṭha planets an expansion of Kṛṣṇa has His eternal abode, and Kṛṣṇa Himself has His original, eternal abode called Kṛṣṇaloka or Goloka Vṛndāvana.

In this universe even the largest planet lies in one corner of outer space. Although the sun is thousands of times larger than the earth, it still lies in one corner of outer space. Similarly, each of the infinite planets, although unlimited in length and breadth, lies in a corner of the spiritual sky known as the *brahmajyoti*. In the *Brahma-saṁhitā* this *brahmajyoti* is described as *niṣkalam anantam aśeṣa-bhūtam*, or undivided and unlimited and without a trace of the material modes of nature. All the Vaikuṅṭha planets are like petals of a lotus flower, and the principal

part of that lotus, called Kṛṣṇaloka or Goloka Vṛndāvana, is the center of all the Vaikuṅṭhas. Thus the expansions of Kṛṣṇa in various forms, as described herein, as well as His various abodes on the spiritual planets in the spiritual sky, are unlimited. Even demigods like Brahmā and Śiva cannot see or even estimate the extent of the Vaikuṅṭha planets. This is confirmed in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (10.14.21): “No one can estimate the length and breadth of all the Vaikuṅṭha planets.” It is also stated there that not only demigods like Brahmā and Śiva are unable to make such an estimate, but even Ananta, the very incarnation of the Lord’s opulence of strength, cannot ascertain any limit to the Lord’s potency or to the area of the different Vaikuṅṭha planets.

The prayers of Brahmā, mentioned in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (10.14.21), are very convincing in this connection, for therein Lord Brahmā says:

*ko vetti bhūman bhagavan parātman
yogeśvarotīr bhavatas tri-lokyām
kva vā katham vā kati vā kadeti
vistārayan krīḍasi yoga-māyām*

“O my dear Lord, O Supreme Personality of Godhead, O Supersoul, O master of all mystic powers, no one can know or explain Your expansions, which You manifest by Your *yogamāyā* energy. These expansions extend throughout the three worlds.” Brahmā also says in his prayers:

*guṇātmanas te ’pi guṇān vimāturṁ
hitāvatīrṇasya ka īsire ’sya
kālena yair vā vimitāḥ sukalpair
bhū-pāmsavaḥ khe mihikā dyubhāsaḥ*

“Scientists and learned men cannot even estimate the atomic constitution of a single planet. Even if they could count the molecules of snow in the sky or the number of stars in space, they cannot estimate how it is You descend on this earth or in this universe with Your innumerable transcendental potencies, energies and qualities.” (*Bhāg.* 10.14.7) Lord Brahmā informed Nārada that none of the great sages, including himself, could estimate the potential strength and energy of the Supreme Lord. He admitted that even if Ananta with His thousands

of tongues tried to estimate the Lord's energies, He would fail. Therefore the Personified Vedas also prayed:

*dyupataya eva te na yayur antam anantatayā
tvam api yad antarāṇḍa-nicayā nanu sāvaraṇāḥ
kha iva rajāṁsi vānti vayasā saha yac chrutayas
tvayi hi phalanty atannirasanena bhavan-nidhanāḥ*

“My Lord, You are unlimited, and no one has estimated the extent of Your potencies. I think that even You do not know the range of Your potential energies. Unlimited planets float in the sky just like atoms, and great Vedāntists, who are engaged in research to find You, discover that everything is different from You. Thus they finally decide that You are everything.” (*Bhāg.* 10.87.41)

When Lord Kṛṣṇa was within this universe, Brahmā played a trick on Him in order to confirm that the cowherd boy in Vṛndāvana was actually Kṛṣṇa Himself. By his mystic power, Brahmā stole all the cows, calves and cowherd friends of Kṛṣṇa and hid them. However, when he returned to see what Kṛṣṇa was doing alone, he saw that Kṛṣṇa was still playing with the same cows, calves and cowherd boys. In other words, by His Vaikuṅṭha potency, Lord Kṛṣṇa had expanded all the stolen cows, calves and friends. Indeed, Brahmā saw millions and billions of them, and he also saw millions and billions of tons of sugarcane and fruit, lotus flowers and horns. The cowherd boys were decorated with various clothes and ornaments, and no one could count their vast numbers. Indeed, Brahmā saw that each of the cowherd boys had become a four-handed Nārāyaṇa like the predominating Deity of each *brahmāṇḍa*, and he also saw that innumerable Brahmās were engaged in offering obeisances to the Lord. He saw that all of them were emanating from the body of Kṛṣṇa and, after a second, also entering into His body. Lord Brahmā became struck with wonder and in his prayer admitted that although anyone and everyone could say that they knew about Kṛṣṇa, as far as he was concerned, he did not know anything about Him. “My dear Lord,” he said, “the potencies and opulences which You have exhibited just now are beyond the ability of my mind to understand.” Lord Caitanya further explained that not only Kṛṣṇaloka but even Vṛndāvana, Lord Kṛṣṇa’s abode on this planet, cannot be estimated as

far as potency is concerned. From one point of view, Vṛndāvana is estimated to be thirty-two square miles in area, yet in one part of this Vṛndāvana all the Vaikuṅṭhas exist. The area of the present Vṛndāvana miles in area, and Vṛndāvana City is estimated to be about sixteen *krośas*, or thirty-two miles. How it is all the Vaikuṅṭhas exist there is beyond material calculation. Thus Caitanya Mahāprabhu proclaimed the potencies and opulences of Kṛṣṇa to be unlimited. Whatever He told Sanātana Gosvāmī was only partial, but by such a partial presentation one can try to imagine the whole.

While Lord Caitanya was speaking to Sanātana Gosvāmī about the opulences of Kṛṣṇa, He was deep in ecstasy, and in that transcendental state He cited a verse from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (3.2.21) in which Uddhava, after the disappearance of Kṛṣṇa, told Vidura:

*svayaṁ tv asāmyātīśayas tryadhīśaḥ
svārājya-lakṣmyāpta-samasta-kāmaḥ
balim haradbhiś cira-lokapālaiḥ
kirīta-kotyedīta-pādapīthaḥ*

“Kṛṣṇa is the master of all demigods, including Lord Brahmā, Lord Śiva and the expansion of Viṣṇu within this universe. Therefore no one is equal to or greater than Him, and He is full in six opulences. All the demigods engaged in the administration of each universe [*brahmāṇḍa*] offer their respectful obeisances unto Him. Indeed, the helmets on their heads are beautiful because they are decorated with the imprints of the lotus feet of the Supreme Lord.” It is similarly stated in *Brahma-saṁhitā* (5.1) that Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and no one can be equal to or greater than Him. Although masters of each and every universe, Brahmā, Śiva and Viṣṇu are servants of the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa. That is the conclusion. As the cause of all causes, Lord Kṛṣṇa is the cause of the Mahā-Viṣṇu, the first incarnation and controller of this material creation. From the Mahā-Viṣṇu, the Garbhodakaśāyī Viṣṇu and Kṣīrodakaśāyī Viṣṇu come; thus Kṛṣṇa is master of the Garbhodakaśāyī Viṣṇu and Kṣīrodakaśāyī Viṣṇu, and He is also the Supersoul within every living entity in the universe. In *Brahma-saṁhitā* (5.48) it is stated that by the Mahā-Viṣṇu’s breathing, innumerable universes are produced, and in each universe there are innumerable *Viṣṇu-tattvas*, but

it should be understood that Lord Kṛṣṇa is the master of them all, and they are but partial plenary expansions of Kṛṣṇa.

From revealed scriptures it is understood that Kṛṣṇa lives in three transcendental places. The most confidential residence of Kṛṣṇa is Goloka Vṛndāvana. It is there that He stays with His father, mother and friends, exhibits His transcendental relationships and bestows His mercy amongst His eternal entourage. There *yogamāyā* acts as His maidservant in the *rāsa-līlā* dance. The residents of Vrajabhūmi think, “The Lord is glorified by particles of His transcendental mercy and affection, and we, the residents of Vṛndāvana, have not the slightest anxiety due to His merciful existence.” As stated in *Brahma-saṁhitā* (5.43), all the Vaikuṅṭha planets in the spiritual sky (known as Viṣṇuloka) are situated in the planet known as Kṛṣṇaloka, Goloka Vṛndāvana. In that supreme planet the Lord enjoys His transcendental bliss in multiple forms, and all the opulences of the Vaikuṅṭhas are fully displayed in that one planet.

The associates of Kṛṣṇa are also full with six opulences. In the *Pādmottara-khaṇḍa* (225.57) it is stated that the material energy and the spiritual energy are separated by water known as the Virajā River. That river flows from the perspiration of the first *puruṣa* incarnation. On one bank of the Virajā is the eternal nature, unlimited and all-blissful, called the spiritual sky, and this is the spiritual kingdom, or the kingdom of God. The spiritual planets are called Vaikuṅṭhas because there is no lamentation or fear there; everything is eternal. The spiritual world has been calculated to comprise three-fourths of the energies of the Supreme Lord, and the material world is said to comprise one-fourth of His energy, but no one can understand what this three-fourths is, since even this material universe, which comprises only one-fourth of His energy, cannot be described. Trying to convey to Sanātana Gosvāmī something of the extent of one-fourth of Kṛṣṇa’s energy, Caitanya Mahāprabhu cited an incident from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* in which Brahmā, the lord of the universe, came to see Kṛṣṇa at Dvārakā. When Brahmā approached Kṛṣṇa, the doorman informed Kṛṣṇa that Brahmā had arrived to see Him. Upon hearing this, Kṛṣṇa inquired as to *which* Brahmā had come, and the doorman returned to Brahmā and asked, “Which Brahmā are you? Kṛṣṇa has asked.”

Brahmā was struck with wonder. Why did Kṛṣṇa ask such a question? He

informed the doorman, “Please tell Him that Brahmā, who is the father of the four Kumāras and who has four heads, has come to see Him.”

The doorman informed Kṛṣṇa and then asked Brahmā inside. Brahmā offered his obeisances unto the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa, and after receiving him with all honor, Kṛṣṇa inquired about the purpose of his visit.

“I shall tell You of my purpose in coming here,” Lord Brahmā replied, “but first I have a doubt which I ask You to kindly remove. Your doorman told me that You asked which Brahmā has come to see You. May I inquire if there are other Brahmās besides me?”

Upon hearing this, Kṛṣṇa smiled and at once called for many Brahmās from many universes. The four-headed Brahmā then saw many other Brahmās coming to see Kṛṣṇa and to offer their respects. Some of them had ten heads, some had twenty, some had a hundred and some even had a million heads. Indeed, the four-headed Brahmā could not even count the Brahmās who were coming to offer their obeisances to Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa then called many other demigods from various universes, and they all came to offer their respects to the Lord. Upon seeing this wonderful exhibition, the four-headed Brahmā became nervous and began to think of himself as no more than a mosquito in the midst of many elephants. Since so many demigods were offering obeisances unto the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa, Brahmā concluded that the unlimited potency of Kṛṣṇa could not be estimated. All the helmets of the various demigods and Brahmās shone brightly in the great assembly, and the prayers of the demigods made a great sound.

“Dear Lord,” the demigods said, “it is Your great mercy that You have called us to see You. Is there any particular order? If so, we will carry it out at once.”

“There is nothing especially required of you,” Lord Kṛṣṇa replied. “I only wanted to see you together at one time. I offer My blessing to you. Don’t fear the demons.”

“By Your mercy, everything is all right,” they all replied. “There are no disturbances at present, for by Your incarnation everything inauspicious is vanquished.”

As each of the Brahmās saw Kṛṣṇa, each thought that He was only within his universe. After this incident, Kṛṣṇa wished all the Brahmās farewell, and after offering respects to Him, they returned to their

respective universes. Upon seeing this, the four-headed Brahmā at once fell down at the feet of Kṛṣṇa and said, “What I thought about You at first was all nonsensical. Everyone may say that they know You in perfection, but as far as I am concerned, I cannot begin to conceive how great You are. You are beyond my conception and understanding.” “This particular universe is only four thousand million miles broad,” Kṛṣṇa then informed him, “but there are many millions and billions of universes which are far, far greater than this one. Some of these are many trillions of miles broad, and all these universes require strong Brahmās, not just four-headed.” Kṛṣṇa further informed Brahmā, “This material creation is only a quarter manifestation of My creative potency. Three quarters of My creative potency is in the spiritual kingdom.” After offering obeisances, the four-headed Brahma parted from Kṛṣṇa, and he could understand the meaning of the Lord’s “three-quarters energy.”

The Lord is therefore known as Tryadhīśvara, a name indicating His principal abodes—Gokula, Mathurā and Dvārakā. These three abodes are full of opulences, and Lord Kṛṣṇa is the master of them all. Situated in His transcendental potency, Lord Kṛṣṇa is master of all transcendental energies, and He is full with six opulences. Because He is master of all opulences, all Vedic literatures acclaim Kṛṣṇa to be the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

Lord Caitanya then sang a nice song about the opulences of Kṛṣṇa, and Sanātana Gosvāmī listened. “All the pastimes of Kṛṣṇa are exactly like the activities of human beings,” the Lord sang. “Therefore it is to be understood that His form is like that of a human being. Indeed, a human being is but an imitation of His form. Kṛṣṇa’s dress is just like that of a cowherd boy’s. He has a flute in His hand, and He seems to be just like a newly grown youth. He is always playful, and He plays just like an ordinary boy.” Lord Caitanya then told Sanātana Gosvāmī about the beautiful aspects of Kṛṣṇa. He said that one who understands these beautiful qualities enjoys an ocean of nectar. The *yogamāyā* potency of Kṛṣṇa is transcendental and beyond the material energy, but the Lord exhibits His transcendental potency even within this material world just to satisfy His confidential devotees. Thus He appears in the material world to satisfy His devotees, and His qualities are so attractive that

Kṛṣṇa Himself becomes eager to understand Himself. When He is fully decorated and stands with His body curved in three ways—His eyebrows always moving and His eyes so attractive—the *gopīs* become enchanted. His spiritual abode is at the top of the spiritual sky, and He resides there with His associates, the cowherd boys, the *gopīs*, and all the goddesses of fortune. It is there that He is known as Madana-mohana.

There are many different pastimes of Kṛṣṇa—such as His pastimes in the forms of Vāsudeva and Saṅkarṣaṇa—and in the material sky His pastimes are carried on as the first *puruṣa* incarnation, the creator of the material world. There are also pastimes in which He incarnates as a fish or a tortoise, and there are pastimes in which He takes the forms of Lord Brahmā and Lord Śiva, as incarnations of the material qualities. In His pastimes as an empowered incarnation, He takes the form of King Pṛthu, and He also carries on His pastimes as the Supersoul in everyone’s heart and as the impersonal Brahman as well. Although He has innumerable pastimes, the most important is that of Kṛṣṇa in human form frolicking in Vṛndāvana, dancing with the *gopīs*, playing with the Pāṇḍavas on the Battlefield of Kurukṣetra and playing in Mathurā and Dvārakā. Of His important pastimes in human form, the most important are those pastimes in which He appears as a cowherd boy, a newly grown youth who plays a flute. It is to be understood that a mere partial manifestation of His pastimes in Goloka, Mathurā and Dvārāvātī, or Dvārakā, can overflow the whole universe with love of Godhead. Every living entity can be attracted by the beautiful qualities of Kṛṣṇa.

The manifestation of His internal potency is not even exhibited in the kingdom of God or on the planets of Vaikuṅṭha, but He does exhibit that internal potency within the universe when, through His inconceivable mercy, He descends from His personal abode. Kṛṣṇa is so wonderful and attractive that He Himself becomes attracted by His own beauty, and this is proof that He is full of all inconceivable potencies. As far as Kṛṣṇa’s ornaments are concerned, when they decorate His body it appears that they do not beautify Him, but the ornaments themselves become beautiful simply by being on His body. When He stands in a three-curved way, He attracts all living entities, including the demigods. Indeed, He even attracts the Nārāyaṇa form which presides in each and every Vaikuṅṭha planet.

Chapter Ten

The Beauty of Kṛṣṇa

Kṛṣṇa is known as Madana-mohana because He conquers the mind of Cupid. He is also known as Madana-mohana due to His accepting the devotional service of the damsels of Vraja and rendering favors unto them. After conquering Cupid's pride, the Lord engages in the *rāsa* dance as the new Cupid. He is also known as Madana-mohana because of His ability to conquer the minds of women with His five arrows called form, taste, smell, sound and touch. The pearls of the necklace which hangs about the neck of Kṛṣṇa are as white as ducks, and the peacock feather which decorates His head is colored like a rainbow. His yellow garment is like lightning in the sky, and Kṛṣṇa Himself is like the newly arrived clouds. The *gopīs* are like footbells on His feet, and when the cloud pours rain on the grains in the field, it appears that Kṛṣṇa is nourishing the hearts of the *gopīs* by calling down His pastime rain of mercy. Indeed, ducks fly in the sky during the rainy season, and rainbows can also be seen at that time. Kṛṣṇa freely moves amongst His friends as a cowherd boy in Vṛndāvana, and when He plays His flute, all living creatures, mobile and immobile, become overwhelmed with ecstasy. They quiver, and tears flow from their eyes. Of Kṛṣṇa's various opulences, His conjugal love is the summit. He is the master of all riches, all strength, all fame, all beauty, all knowledge and all renunciation, and out of these, His perfect beauty is His conjugal attraction. The form of Kṛṣṇa, the conjugal beauty, is eternally existent in Kṛṣṇa alone, whereas His other opulences are present in His Nārāyaṇa form.

When Lord Caitanya described the superexcellence of Kṛṣṇa's conjugal attraction, He felt transcendental ecstasy, and, catching the hands of Sanātana Gosvāmī, He began to proclaim how fortunate the damsels of Vraja were, reciting a verse from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (10.44.14):

*gopyas tapaḥ kim acarān yad amuṣya rūpaṁ
lāvaṇya-sāram asamordh vaṁ ananya-siddham
dṛgbhiḥ pibanty anusavābhinavaṁ durāpam
ekānta-dhāma yaśasaḥ śriya aiśvarasya*

“What great penance and austerities the damsels of Vṛndāvana must have undergone, for they are able to drink the nectar of Kṛṣṇa, who is all beauty, all strength, all riches, all fame and whose bodily luster is the center of all beauty.”

The body of Kṛṣṇa, the ocean of the eternal beauty of youth, can be seen to move in waves of beauty. There is a whirlwind at the sound of His flute, and those waves and that whirlwind make the hearts of the *gopīs* flutter like dry leaves on trees, and when those leaves fall down at Kṛṣṇa’s lotus feet, they can never rise up again. There is no beauty to compare with Kṛṣṇa’s, for no one possesses beauty greater than or equal to His. Since He is the origin of all incarnations, including the form of Nārāyaṇa, the goddess of fortune, who is a constant companion of Nārāyaṇa, gives up Nārāyaṇa’s association and engages herself in penance in order to gain the association of Kṛṣṇa. Such is the greatness of the superexcellent beauty of Kṛṣṇa, the everlasting mine of all beauty. It is from that beauty that all beautiful things emanate.

The attitude of the *gopīs* is like a mirror upon which the reflection of Kṛṣṇa’s beauty develops at every moment. Both Kṛṣṇa and the *gopīs* increase their transcendental beauty at every moment, and there is always transcendental competition between them. No one can appreciate the beauty of Kṛṣṇa by properly discharging his occupational duty, or by austerities, mystic *yoga*, cultivation of knowledge or by prayers. Only those who are on the transcendental platform of love of God, who out of love engage in devotional service, can appreciate the transcendental beauty of Kṛṣṇa. Such beauty is the essence of all opulences and is only appreciated in Goloka Vṛndāvana and nowhere else. In the form of Nārāyaṇa the beauties of mercy, fame, etc., are all established by Kṛṣṇa, but Kṛṣṇa’s gentleness and magnanimity do not exist in Nārāyaṇa. They are found only in Kṛṣṇa.

Lord Caitanya, greatly relishing all the verses of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* which He was explaining to Sanātana, quoted another verse (*Bhāg.* 9.24.65):

*yasyānanaṁ makara-kuṇḍala-cāru-karṇa-
bhrājat-kapola-subhagaṁ savllāsa-hāsam
nityotsavaṁ na tatṛpur dṛśibhiḥ pibantyo*

nāryo narāś ca muditāḥ kupitā nimeś ca

“The *gopīs* used to relish the beauty of Kṛṣṇa as a ceremony of perpetual enjoyment. They enjoyed the beautiful face of Kṛṣṇa, His beautiful ears with earrings, His broad forehead and His smile, and when enjoying this sight of Kṛṣṇa’s beauty, they used to criticize the creator Brahmā for causing their vision of Kṛṣṇa to be momentarily impeded by the blinking of their eyelids.”

The Vedic hymn known as *kāma-gāyatrī* describes the face of Kṛṣṇa as the king of all moons. In metaphorical language, there are many different moons, but they are all one in Kṛṣṇa. There is the moon of His mouth, the moon of His cheeks, the moonspots of sandalwood pulp on His body, the moons of the fingertips of His hands and the moons of the tips of His toes. In this way there are twenty-four and a half moons, and Kṛṣṇa is the central figure of all of them.

The dancing movement of Kṛṣṇa’s earrings, eyes and eyebrows is very attractive to the damsels of Vraja. Activities in devotional service increase the sense of devotional service. What else is there for two eyes to see beyond the face of Kṛṣṇa? Since one cannot adequately see Kṛṣṇa with only two eyes, one feels incapable and thus becomes bereaved. Such bereavement is slightly reduced when one criticizes the creative power of the creator. The unsatiated seer of Kṛṣṇa’s face nonetheless laments: “I do not have thousands of eyes, but only two, and these are disturbed by the movements of my eyelids. Therefore it is to be understood that the creator of this body is not very intelligent. He is not conversant in the art of ecstasy but is simply a prosaic creator. He does not know how to arrange things properly so one can see only Kṛṣṇa.”

The *gopīs*’ minds are always engaged in relishing the sweetness of Kṛṣṇa’s body. He is the ocean of beauty, and His beautiful face and smile and the luster of His body are all-attractive to the minds of the *gopīs*. In *kṛṣṇa-karṇāmṛta*, His face, smile and bodily luster have been described as sweet, sweeter and sweetest. A perfect devotee of Kṛṣṇa is overwhelmed by seeing the beauty of Kṛṣṇa’s bodily luster, His face and smile, and he bathes in the ocean of transcendental convulsions. Before Kṛṣṇa’s beauty, these convulsions often continue without treatment, just as ordinary convulsions which a physician will allow to continue, not even

allowing a drink of water for relief.

The devotee increasingly feels the absence of Kṛṣṇa, for without Him one cannot drink the nectar of His beauty. When the transcendental sound of Kṛṣṇa's flute is heard, the devotee's anxiety to continue to hear that flute enables him to penetrate the covering of the material world and enter into the spiritual sky, where the transcendental sound of the flute enters into the ears of the followers of the *gopīs*. The sound of Kṛṣṇa's flute always resides within the ears of the *gopīs* and increases their ecstasy. When it is heard, no other sound can enter into their ears, and amongst their family they are not able to reply to questions properly, for all these beautiful sounds are vibrating in their ears.

Thus Lord Caitanya explained the transcendental constitution of Kṛṣṇa, His expansions, His bodily luster and everything connected with Him. In short, Lord Caitanya explained Kṛṣṇa as He is, as well as the process by which one can approach Him. In this regard, Caitanya Mahāprabhu pointed out that devotional service to Kṛṣṇa is the only process by which He can be approached. This is the verdict of Vedic literature. As the sages declare: "If someone inquires into Vedic literature to determine the process of transcendental realization, or if someone consults the *Purāṇas* (which are considered sister literatures), one will find that in all of them the conclusion is that the Supreme Personality of Godhead Kṛṣṇa is the only object of worship."

Kṛṣṇa is the Absolute Truth, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and He is situated in His internal potency, which is known as *svarūpa-śakti* or *ātma-śakti*, as described in *Bhagavad-gītā*. He expands Himself in various multiple forms, and some of these are known as His personal forms and some as His separated forms. Thus He enjoys Himself in all the spiritual planets, as well as in the material universes. The expansions of His separated forms are called living entities, and these living entities are classified according to the energies of the Lord. They are divided into two classes—eternally liberated and eternally conditioned.

Eternally liberated living entities never come into contact with material nature, and therefore they do not have any experience of material life. They are eternally engaged in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, or devotional service to the Lord, and they are counted among the associates of Kṛṣṇa. Their pleasure, the only enjoyment of their life, is derived from rendering

transcendental loving service to Kṛṣṇa. On the other hand, those who are eternally conditioned are always divorced from the transcendental loving service of Kṛṣṇa and are thus subjected to the threefold miseries of material existence. Due to the conditioned soul's eternal attitude of separation from Kṛṣṇa, the spell of material energy awards him two kinds of bodily existence—the gross body consisting of five elements, and the subtle body consisting of mind, intelligence and ego. Being covered by these two bodies, the conditioned soul eternally suffers the pangs of material existence known as the threefold miseries. He is also subjected to six enemies (such as lust, anger, etc.). Such is the everlasting disease of the conditioned soul.

Diseased and conditioned, the living entity transmigrates throughout the universe. Sometimes he is situated in the upper planetary system and sometimes in the lower system. In this way he leads his diseased life. His disease can be cured only when he meets and follows the expert physician, the bona fide spiritual master. When the conditioned soul faithfully follows the instructions of a bona fide spiritual master, his material disease is cured, he is promoted to the liberated stage, and he again attains to the devotional service of Kṛṣṇa and goes back home, back to Kṛṣṇa. A conditioned living entity should become aware of his real position and should pray to the Lord, “How much longer will I be under the rule of all these bodily functions such as lust and anger?” As masters of the conditioned soul, lust and anger are never merciful. Indeed the conditioned soul will never cease rendering service to such bad masters. However, when he comes to his real consciousness, or Kṛṣṇa consciousness, he abandons these bad masters and approaches Kṛṣṇa with a frank and open heart to achieve His shelter. At such a time he prays to Kṛṣṇa to be engaged in His transcendental loving service. In Vedic literatures sometimes fruitive activities, mystic *yoga* and the speculative search for knowledge are praised as different ways to self-realization, yet despite such praise, in all literatures the path of devotional service is accepted as the foremost. In other words, devotional service to Lord Kṛṣṇa is the highest perfectional path to self-realization, and it is recommended that it be performed directly. Fruitive activity, mystic meditation and philosophical speculation are not direct methods of self-realization. They are indirect because without

devotional service they cannot lead to the highest perfection of self-realization. Indeed, all paths to self-realization ultimately depend on the path of devotional service.

Chapter Eleven

Service to the Lord

When Vyāsadeva was not satisfied even after compiling heaps of books of Vedic knowledge, Nārada Muni, his spiritual master, explained that there is no path to self-realization that can be successful without being mixed with devotional service. At the time, Vyāsadeva was sitting by the banks of the River Sarasvatī, and he was in a state of depression when Nārada Muni arrived. Upon seeing Vyāsa so dejected, Nārada explained why the various books he compiled were deficient.

“Even pure knowledge is insufficient if it is devoid of transcendental devotional service,” Nārada said. “And what to speak of fruitive activities when they are devoid of devotional service? How can they be of any benefit to their performer?”

There are many sages who are expert in performing austerities; there are many men who give much in charity; there are many famous men, scholars and thinkers, and there are those who are very expert in reciting Vedic hymns. Although these are all auspicious, unless one utilizes his resources and performs his activities to attain devotional service to the Lord, he cannot attain the desired results. Therefore in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (***Bhāg.*** 2.4.17) Śukadeva Gosvāmī offered his respectful obeisances unto the Supreme Lord as the only person who can award success.

It is accepted by all types of philosophers and transcendentalists that one who lacks knowledge cannot be liberated from material entanglement. Yet knowledge without devotional service cannot possibly award liberation. In other words, when *jñāna*, or the cultivation of knowledge, opens onto the path of devotional service, it can give one liberation, but not otherwise. This is also stated by Brahmā in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (***Bhāg.*** 10.14.4):

*śreyaḥ-srutim bhaktim udasya te vibho
kliśyanti ye kevala-bodha-labdhave
teṣāṃ asau kleśala eva śisyate
nānyad yathā sthūla-tusāvaghātinām*

“My dear Lord, devotional service unto You is the best path for self-realization. If someone gives up that path and engages in the cultivation of knowledge or in speculation, he will simply undergo a troublesome process and will not achieve his desired results. A person who beats an empty husk of wheat cannot get grain, and one who engages simply in speculative knowledge cannot achieve the desired result of self realization. The only gain is trouble.”

In *Bhagavad-gītā* it is stated (Bg. 7.14) that material nature is so strong that it cannot be surmounted by an ordinary living entity. Only those who surrender unto the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa can cross the ocean of material existence. The living entity forgets that he is eternally the servitor of Kṛṣṇa, and his forgetfulness causes his bondage in conditional life and his attraction for material energy. Indeed, that attraction is the shackle of material energy. Since it is very difficult for a person to become free as long as he desires to dominate material nature, it is recommended that he approach a spiritual master who can train him in devotional service and enable him to get out of the clutches of material nature and achieve the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa.

There are eight divisions of human society created to facilitate the execution of duty (the *brāhmaṇas*, or intellectuals; the *kṣatriyas*, or administrators; the *vaiśyas*, or businessmen and farmers; and the *śūdras*, or laborers—as well as the four *āśramas*: the *brahmacārī*, or student; the *gṛhastha*, or householder; the *vānaprastha*, or retired person; and the *sannyāsī*, or the person in renounced life), but if a person is lacking in devotion or Kṛṣṇa consciousness, he cannot be released from material bondage, even if he executes his prescribed duty. On the contrary, even by discharging his prescribed duty he will glide down into hell due to material consciousness. Therefore whoever is engaged in his occupational duty must simultaneously cultivate Kṛṣṇa consciousness in devotional service if he wants liberation from material clutches.

In this regard, Lord Caitanya recited a verse from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* which was delivered by Nārada Muni to indicate the path of *bhāgavata* cultivation. Nārada Muni pointed out that the four divisions of human society, as well as the four orders of life, are born out of the gigantic form of the Lord. The *brāhmaṇas* are born from the mouth of the universal form of the Lord, the *kṣatriyas* are born out of the arms, the

vaiśyas out of the waist, and the *śūdras* out of the legs. As such, they are qualified in the different modes of material nature within the form of the *virāṭ-puruṣa*. If a person is not engaged in the devotional service of the Lord, he falls from his position, regardless of whether he executes his prescribed occupational duty or not.

Lord Caitanya further points out that those who belong to the Māyāvādī or impersonalist school consider themselves to be one with God, or liberated, but according to Caitanya Mahāprabhu Himself and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, they are not actually liberated. In this regard Caitanya Mahāprabhu again quotes *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (10.2.32):

*ye 'nye 'ravindākṣa vimukta-māninas
tvayy asta-bhāvād aviśuddha-buddhayaḥ
āruhya kṛcchreṇa param padaṁ tataḥ
patanty adho 'nāḍṛta-yuṣmad-aṅghrayaḥ*

“Those who think that they are liberated according to Māyāvādī philosophy, but who do not take to the devotional service of the Lord, fall down for want of devotional service, even after they undergo the severest types of penances and austerities and even after they sometimes approach the supreme position.”

Caitanya Mahāprabhu explains that Kṛṣṇa is just like the sun, and *māyā*, the illusory material energy, is just like darkness. One who is constantly in the sunshine of Kṛṣṇa cannot possibly be deluded by the darkness of material energy. This is very clearly explained in the four principal verses of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and is also confirmed in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (***Bhāg.*** 2.5.13), wherein it is stated: “The illusory energy, or *māyā*, is ashamed to stand before the Lord.” Nonetheless, the living entities are constantly being bewildered by this very illusory energy. In his conditioned state, the living entity discovers many forms of word jugglery in order to get apparent liberation from the clutches of *māyā*, but if he sincerely surrenders unto Kṛṣṇa by simply saying once, “My dear Lord Kṛṣṇa, from this day I am Yours,” he at once gets out of the clutches of material energy. This is also confirmed in the ***Rāmāyaṇa, Laṅkā-kāṇḍa*** (18.33), wherein the Lord says:

sakṛdeva praṇanno yas

*tavāsmīti ca yācate
abhayaṁ sarvadā tasmai
dadāmy etad vrataṁ mama*

“It is My promise and duty to give all protection to one who surrenders unto Me without reservation.” One may enjoy fruitive activities, liberation, *jñāna*, or the perfection of the *yoga* system, but if one becomes very intelligent he will give up all these paths and engage himself in sincere devotional service to the Lord. The *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* also confirms (2.3.10) that even if a person desires material enjoyment or liberation, he should engage in devotional service. Those who are ambitious to derive material benefit from devotional service are not pure devotees, but because they are engaged in devotional service they are considered fortunate. They do not know that the result of devotional service is not material benediction, but because they engage themselves in the devotional service of the Lord they ultimately come to understand that material enjoyment is not the goal of devotional service. Kṛṣṇa Himself says that persons who want some material benefit in exchange for devotional service are certainly foolish because they want something which is poisonous for them. The real goal of devotional service is love of Godhead, and although a person may desire material benefits from Kṛṣṇa, the Lord, being all-powerful, considers the person’s position and gradually liberates him from a materially ambitious life and engages him more in devotional service. When one is actually engaged in devotional service, he forgets his material ambitions and desires. This is also confirmed by *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (5.19.27):

*satyaṁ diśaty arthitam arthito nṛṇāṁ
naivārthado yat punar arthitā yataḥ
svayaṁ vidhatte bhajatām anicchatām
icchā-pidhānaṁ nija-pāda-pallavam*

“Lord Kṛṣṇa certainly fulfills the desires of His devotees who come to Him in devotional service, but He does not fulfill desires that would again cause miseries. In spite of being materially ambitious, such devotees, by rendering transcendental service, are gradually purified of desires for material enjoyment, and they come to desire the pleasure of

devotional service.”

Generally people come into the association of devotees in order to mitigate some material wants, but the influence of a pure devotee frees a man from all material desires so that he eventually comes to relish the taste of devotional service. Devotional service is so nice and pure that it purifies the devotee, and he forgets all material ambitions as soon as he engages fully in the transcendental loving service of Kṛṣṇa. A practical example is Dhruva Mahārāja, who wanted something material from Kṛṣṇa and therefore engaged in devotional service. When the Lord appeared as four-handed Viṣṇu before Dhruva, Dhruva told the Lord: “My dear Lord, because I engaged myself in Your devotional service with great austerity and penances, I am now seeing You. Even great demigods and great sages have difficulty in seeing You. Now I am pleased, and all my desires are satisfied. I do not want anything else. I was searching for some broken glass, but instead I have found a great and valuable gem.” Thus Dhruva Mahārāja was fully satisfied, and he refused to ask anything of the Lord.

The living entity, transmigrating through 8,400,000 species of life, is sometimes likened to a log which is gliding down a river. Sometimes, by chance, a log washes upon shore and is thus saved from being forced to drift further downstream. There is a verse in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (*Bhāg.* 10.38.5) which encourages every conditioned soul in this way: “No one should be depressed by thinking that he will never be out of the clutches of matter, for there is every possibility of being rescued, exactly as it is possible for a log, which is floating down a river, to come to rest on the bank.” This fortunate opportunity is also discussed by Lord Caitanya. Such fortunate incidents are considered the beginning of the decline of one’s conditional life, and they occur if there is association with the pure devotees of the Lord. By associating with pure devotees, one actually develops attraction for Kṛṣṇa. There are various types of rituals and activities, and some of them develop into material enjoyment and some into material liberation, but if a living entity takes to those ritualistic activities by which pure devotional service to the Lord is developed in the association of pure devotees, then one’s mind naturally becomes attracted to devotional service. In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (10.51.54) it is stated by Mucukunda:

*bhavāpavargo bhramato yadā bhavej
janasya tarhy acyuta sat-samāgamaḥ
sat-saṅgamo yarhi tadaiva sad-gatau
parāvareṣe tvayi jāyate matiḥ*

“My dear Lord, while traveling in this material world through different species of life, a living entity may progress toward liberation. But if, by chance, he comes in contact with a pure devotee, he becomes actually liberated from the clutches of material energy and becomes a devotee of Yourself, the Personality of Godhead.”

When a conditioned soul becomes a devotee of Kṛṣṇa, the Lord, by His causeless mercy, trains him in two ways: He trains him from without through the spiritual master, and He trains him from within through the Supersoul. As stated in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.29.6): “My dear Lord, even if someone attains a life as long as Brahmā’s, he would still be unable to express his gratitude for the benefits derived from remembering You. Out of Your causeless mercy You drive away all inauspicious conditions, expressing Yourself from outside as the spiritual master and from inside as the Supersoul.”

Somehow or other if one gets in touch with a pure devotee and thus develops a desire to render devotional service to Kṛṣṇa, he gradually rises to the platform of love of Godhead and is thus freed from the clutches of material energy. This is also explained in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.20.8) where the Lord Himself says: “For one who is attracted by My activities out of his own accord—being neither lured nor repelled by material activities—the path of devotional service leading to the perfection of love of God becomes possible.” However, it is not possible to achieve the stage of perfection without the favor of a pure devotee, or a *mahātmā*, a great soul. Without the mercy of a great soul, one cannot even be liberated from the material clutches, and what to speak of rising to the platform of love of Godhead. This is also confirmed in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (5.12.12) in a conversation between King Rahūgaṇa of the Sind province in Siberia with King Bharata. When King Rahūgaṇa expressed surprise upon seeing King Bharata’s spiritual achievements, Bharata replied:

rahūgaṇaitat tapasā na yāti

*na cejyayā nirvaṇāṇād gṛhād vā
na cchandasā naiva jalāgni-sūryair
vinā mahat-pāda-rajo 'bhiṣekam*

“My dear Rahūgaṇa, no one can attain the perfected stage of devotional service without being favored by a great soul or a pure devotee. No one can attain the perfectional stages simply by following the regulative principles of scriptures, or by accepting the renounced order of life, or by prosecuting the prescribed duties of householder life, or by becoming a great student of spiritual science, or by accepting severe austerity and penances for realization.” Similarly, when the atheist father Hiraṇyakaśipu asked his son Prahlāda Mahārāja how it was he became attracted to devotional service, the boy replied, “As long as one is not favored by the dust of the feet of pure devotees, he cannot even touch the path of devotional service, which is the solution to all the problems of material life.” (*Bhāg.* 7.5.32)

Thus Lord Caitanya told Sanātana Gosvāmī that all scriptures stress association with pure devotees of the Godhead. The opportunity to associate with a pure devotee of the Supreme Lord is the beginning of one’s complete perfection. This is also confirmed in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (1.18.13) where it is said that the facilities and benedictions which one achieves by association with a pure devotee are incomparable. They cannot be compared to anything—neither elevation to the heavenly kingdom nor liberation from material energy. Lord Kṛṣṇa also confirms this in the most confidential instruction in *Bhagavad-gītā*, wherein He tells Arjuna:

*man-manā bhava mad-bhakto
mad-yājī mām namaskuru
mām evaiṣyasi satyaṁ te
pratijāne priyo 'si me*

“Always think of Me and become My devotee. Worship Me and offer your homage unto Me. Thus you will come to Me without fail. I promise you this because you are My very dear friend.” (Bg. 18.65)

Such a direct instruction from Kṛṣṇa is more important than any Vedic instruction or even regulative service. There are certainly many Vedic

injunctions, ritualistic and sacrificial performances, regulative duties, meditative techniques and speculative processes to attain knowledge, but Kṛṣṇa's direct order—"Always think of Me and become My devotee"—should be taken as the final order of the Lord and should be followed. If one is simply convinced of this order and comes to His devotional service, giving up all other engagements, one will undoubtedly attain success. To confirm this statement, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.20.9) says that one should follow other paths to self-realization only as long as one is not convinced of the direct order of the Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa. It is the conclusion of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and *Bhagavad-gītā* that the direct order of the Lord is to give up everything and engage in devotional service.

Firm conviction to execute the order of the Lord is known as faith. If one has faith he is firmly convinced that simply by rendering devotional service to Lord Kṛṣṇa all other activities are automatically performed—including ritualistic duties, sacrifices, *yoga* and the speculative pursuit of knowledge. If one is convinced that devotional service to the Lord includes everything, no other activity is required. As stated in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (4.31.14):

*yathā taror mūla-niṣecanena
 tṛṇyanti tat-skandha-bhujopāśākhāḥ
 prāṇopahārāc ca yathendriyāṇām
 tathaiva sarvārhaṇam acyutejyā*

“By watering the root of a tree, one automatically nourishes the branches, twigs and fruits, and by supplying food to the stomach, all the senses are satisfied. Similarly, by rendering devotional service to Kṛṣṇa, one automatically satisfies the requirements for all other forms of worship.” One who is faithful and firmly convinced of this is eligible to be elevated as a pure devotee.

There are three classes of devotees according to the degree of conviction. The first-class devotee is conversant with all kinds of Vedic literature and at the same time has the firm conviction mentioned above. He can deliver all others from the pangs of material miseries. The second-class devotee is firmly convinced and has strong faith, but he has no power to cite evidence from revealed scriptures. The third-class

devotee is one whose faith is not very strong, but, by the gradual cultivation of devotional service, he will eventually be eligible for promotion to the second or first-class position. It is said in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.2.45–47) that the first class devotee always sees the Supreme Lord as the soul of all living entities. Thus in seeing all living entities, he sees Kṛṣṇa and nothing but Kṛṣṇa. The second-class devotee places his full faith in the Supreme Personality of Godhead, makes friends with the pure devotees, favors innocent persons and avoids those who are atheistic or opposed to devotional service. The third-class devotee engages in devotional service according to the directions of the spiritual master, or engages out of family tradition, and worships the Deity of the Lord, but he is not cultivated in knowledge of devotional service, and he does not know a devotee from a nondevotee. Such a third-class devotee cannot actually be considered a pure devotee; he is almost in the devotional line, but his position is not very secure. One can thus conclude that when a person shows love for God and friendship for devotees, displays mercy towards the innocent and is reluctant to associate with nondevotees, he may be considered a pure devotee. By developing devotional service, such a person can perceive that every living entity is part and parcel of the Supreme. In each and every living entity he can see the Supreme Person, and therefore he becomes highly developed in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. At this stage he does not distinguish between the devotee and the nondevotee, for he sees everyone in the service of the Lord. He continues to develop all great qualities while engaged in Kṛṣṇa consciousness and devotional service. As stated in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (5.18.12):

*yasyāsti bhaktir bhagavaty akiñcanā
sarvair guṇais tatra samāsate surāḥ
harāv abhaktasya kuto mahad-guṇā
mano-rathenāsati dhāvato bahiḥ*

“One who attains pure unalloyed devotional service to the Supreme Lord develops all the good qualities of the demigods, whereas a person who doesn’t develop such service, despite all material qualifications, is sure to go astray, for he hovers on the mental platform.” Thus material qualifications are valueless without devotional service.

Chapter Twelve

The Devotee

A person in Kṛṣṇa consciousness who is fully devoted to the transcendental loving service of the Lord develops all the godly qualities of the demigods. There are many divine qualities, but Lord Caitanya describes only some of them to Sanātana Gosvāmī. A devotee of the Lord is always kind to everyone, and he does not pick quarrels. His interest is in the essence of life, which is spiritual. He is equal to everyone, and no one can find fault in him. His magnanimous mind is always fresh and clean and devoid of material obsessions. He is a benefactor to all living entities and is peaceful and always surrendered to Kṛṣṇa. He has no material desires. He is very humble and is fixed in his purpose. He is victorious over the six material qualities such as lust and anger, and he does not eat more than he needs. He is always sane and is respectful to others, but he does not require respect for himself. He is grave, merciful, friendly, poetic, expert and silent.

There is also a description of the devotee of the Lord in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (3.25.21) wherein he is said to be always tolerant and merciful. A friend to all living entities, he has no enemies. He is peaceful, and he possesses all good qualities. These are but a few of the characteristics of a person in Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

It is also said in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* that if one gets an opportunity to serve a great soul—a *mahātmā*—his path to liberation is open. However, those who are attached to materialistic persons are on the path of darkness. Those who are actually holy are transcendental, composed, peaceful, friendly to all living entities and not subject to anger. Simply by association with such holy men one can become a Kṛṣṇa conscious devotee. Indeed, to develop love of Godhead, the association of holy devotees is needed. The path of advancement in spiritual life opens for anyone who comes in contact with a holy man, and by following the path of the devotee, one is sure to develop Kṛṣṇa consciousness in full devotional service.

In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.2.28), Vasudeva, the father of Kṛṣṇa, asks

Nārada Muni about the welfare of all living entities, and in reply Nārada Muni quotes a passage from Mahārāja Nimi’s discussion with the nine sages. “O holy sages,” King Nimi said, “I am just trying to find the path of well-being for all living entities. A moment of association with holy men is the most valuable thing in life, for that moment opens the path of advancement in spiritual life.” This is also confirmed elsewhere in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (3.25.25). By associating with holy persons and discussing transcendental subject matters with them, one becomes convinced of the value of spiritual life. Very soon, hearing of Kṛṣṇa becomes pleasing to the ear and begins to satisfy one’s heart. After receiving such spiritual messages from holy persons or pure devotees, if one tries to apply them in his own life, the path of Kṛṣṇa consciousness naturally develops in faith, attachment and devotional service. The Lord then informed Sanātana Gosvāmī about the behavior of a devotee. Here the main point is that one should always stay aloof from unholy association. That is the sum and substance of a devotee’s behavior. And what is unholy association? It is association with one who is too much attached to women and with one who is not a devotee of Lord Kṛṣṇa. These are unholy persons. One is advised to associate with the holy devotees of the Lord and carefully avoid the association of unholy nondevotees. Those who are pure devotees of Kṛṣṇa are very careful to keep aloof from the two types of nondevotees. In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (3.31.33–35) it is said that one should give up all association with a person who is a playmate for women, for by associating with such an unholy person one becomes bereft of all good qualities, such as truthfulness, cleanliness, mercy, gravity, intelligence, shyness, beauty, fame, forgiveness, control of the mind and senses and all the opulences that are automatically obtained by a devotee. A man is never so degraded as when he associates with persons who are too much attached to women.

In this regard, Lord Caitanya also quotes a verse from *Kātyāyana-saṁhitā*: “One should rather tolerate the miseries of being locked in a cage filled with fire than associate with those who are not devotees of the Lord.” One is also advised not to even look at the faces of persons who are irreligious or who are devoid of devotion to the Supreme Lord. Lord Caitanya recommends that one should scrupulously renounce the

association of unwanted persons and completely take shelter of the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa. This same instruction is given to Arjuna in the last verses of *Bhagavad-gītā* in which Kṛṣṇa says: “Just give up everything and surrender unto Me. I will take care of you and protect you from all the reactions to sinful activities.” (Bg. 18.66) The Lord is very kind to His devotees, and He is very grateful, able and magnanimous. It is our duty to believe His words, and if we are intelligent and educated enough, we will follow His instructions without hesitation. In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (10.48.26) Akrūra tells Kṛṣṇa:

*kaḥ paṇḍitas tvad āparam śaraṇam samīyād
bhakta-priyād ṛta-giraḥ suhṛdaḥ kṛta-jñāt
sarvān dadāti suhṛdo bhajato 'bhikāmān
ātmānam apy upacayāpacayau na yasya*

“Who can surrender to anyone other than Yourself? Who is as dear, truthful, friendly and grateful as You? You are so perfect and complete that even though You give Yourself to Your devotee, You are still full and perfect. You can satisfy all the desires of Your devotee and even deliver Yourself unto him.” A person who is intelligent and able to understand the philosophy of Kṛṣṇa consciousness naturally gives up everything and takes to the shelter of Kṛṣṇa. In this regard, Lord Caitanya recites a verse spoken by Uddhava in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (3.2.23): “How can one take shelter of anyone but Kṛṣṇa? He is so kind. Even though Bakāsura’s sister planned to kill Kṛṣṇa when He was an infant by applying poison to her breast and offering it to Kṛṣṇa to suck and thus die, still that heinous woman received salvation and was elevated to the same platform as Kṛṣṇa’s own mother.” This verse refers to the time when Pūtanā planned to kill Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa accepted the poisonous breasts of that demonic woman, and when He sucked the milk from her, He sucked out her life also. Nonetheless Pūtanā was elevated to the same position as Kṛṣṇa’s own mother.

There is no essential difference between a fully surrendered soul and a person in the renounced order of life. The only difference is that a fully surrendered soul is completely dependent upon Kṛṣṇa. There are six basic guidelines for surrender. The first is that one should accept everything that is favorable for the discharge of devotional service, and

one should be determined to accept the process. The second is that one should give up everything that is unfavorable to the discharge of devotional service, and one should be determined to give it all up. Thirdly, one should be convinced that only Kṛṣṇa can protect him and should have full faith that the Lord will give that protection. An impersonalist thinks that his actual identity is in being one with Kṛṣṇa, but a devotee does not destroy his identity in this way. He lives with full faith that Kṛṣṇa will kindly protect him in all respects. Fourthly, a devotee should always accept Kṛṣṇa as his maintainer. Those who are interested in the fruits of activities generally expect protection from the demigods, but a devotee of Kṛṣṇa does not look to any demigod for protection. He is fully convinced that Kṛṣṇa will protect him from all unfavorable circumstances. Fifth, a devotee is always conscious that his desires are not independent; unless Kṛṣṇa fulfills them, they cannot be fulfilled. Lastly, one should always think of himself as the most fallen among souls so that Kṛṣṇa will take care of him.

Such a surrendered soul should take shelter of a holy place like Vṛndāvana, Mathurā, Dvārakā, Māyāpur, etc., and should surrender himself unto the Lord, saying, “My Lord, from today I am Yours. You can protect me or kill me as You like.” A pure devotee takes shelter of Kṛṣṇa in such a way, and Kṛṣṇa is so grateful that He accepts him and gives him all kinds of protection. This is confirmed in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.29.34) where it is said that if a person who is about to die takes full shelter of the Supreme Lord and places himself fully under His care, he actually attains immortality and becomes eligible to associate with the Supreme Lord and enjoy transcendental bliss.

The Lord then explained to Sanātana Gosvāmī the various types and symptoms of practical devotional service. When devotional service is performed with our present senses, it is called practical devotional service. Actually devotional service is the eternal life of the living entity and is lying dormant in everyone’s heart. The practice which invokes that dormant devotional service is called practical devotional service. The purport is that the living entity is constitutionally part and parcel of the Supreme Lord; the Lord can be compared to the sun, and the living entities can be compared to molecules of sunshine. Under the spell of illusory energy, the spiritual spark is almost extinguished, but by

practical devotional service one can revive his natural constitutional position. When one practices devotional service, it should be understood that he is returning to his original and normal liberated position.

Devotional service can be practiced with one's senses under the direction of a bona fide spiritual master.

One begins spiritual activities for advancement in Kṛṣṇa consciousness by hearing. Hearing is the most important method for advancement, and one should be very eager to hear favorably about Kṛṣṇa. Giving up all speculation and fruitive activity, one should simply worship and desire to attain to love of God. That love of God is eternally existing within everyone; it simply has to be evoked by the process of hearing. Hearing and chanting are the principal methods of devotional service.

Devotional service may be regulative or affectionate. One who has not developed transcendental affection for Kṛṣṇa should conduct his life according to the directions and regulations of the scriptures and the spiritual master. In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (2.1.5) Śukadeva Gosvāmī advises Mahārāja Parīkṣit:

*tasmād bhārata sarvātmā
bhagavān īśvaro hariḥ
śrotavyaḥ kīrtitavyaś ca
smartavyaś cecchatābhayam*

“O best of the Bhāratas, it is the prime duty of persons who want to become fearless to hear about the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Hari, and to chant about Him and always remember Him. Lord Viṣṇu is always to be remembered; indeed, He is not to be forgotten for even a moment. He is the sum and substance of all regulative principles.” The conclusion is that when all the rules, regulations, recommended and prohibited activities revealed in scriptures are taken together, the remembrance of the Supreme Lord is invariably the essence of everything. Remembrance of the Supreme Personality of Godhead within one's heart is the goal of devotional service. When devotional service is performed purely and affectionately, there is no question of regulative principles. There are no do's and don't's.

However, one should generally accept the following principles to properly execute devotional service: (1) take shelter of a bona fide

spiritual master, (2) receive initiation from the spiritual master, (3) serve the spiritual master, (4) inquire and learn love from the spiritual master, (5) follow in the footsteps of holy persons devoted to the transcendental loving service of the Lord, (6) prepare to give up all kinds of enjoyment and miseries for the satisfaction of Kṛṣṇa, (7) live in a place where Kṛṣṇa had His pastimes, (8) be satisfied by whatever is sent by Kṛṣṇa for the maintenance of the body and hanker for no more, (9) observe fasting on Ekādaśī day (this occurs on the eleventh day after the full moon and the eleventh day after the new moon. On such days no grains, cereals or beans are eaten; simply vegetables and milk are moderately taken, and chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa and reading scriptures are increased.), (10) show respect to devotees, cows and sacred trees like the banyan tree.

It is essential for a neophyte devotee who is beginning to follow the path of devotional service to observe these ten principles. One should also try to avoid offenses in serving the Lord and in chanting His holy names.

There are ten kinds of offenses which one can commit while chanting the holy name, and they should be avoided. These offenses are: (1) blaspheming a devotee of the Lord, (2) considering the Lord and the demigods on the same level or thinking that there are many gods, (3) neglecting the orders of the spiritual master, (4) minimizing the authority of the scriptures (the *Vedas*), (5) interpreting the holy names of God, (6) committing sins on the strength of chanting, (7) instructing the glories of the Lord's names to the unfaithful, (8) comparing the holy name with material piety, (9) being inattentive while chanting the holy name, (10) remaining attached to material things in spite of chanting the holy names. Ten additional regulations are as follows: (1) one should try to avoid offenses in the service of the Lord and in chanting the holy names of the Lord; (2) one should avoid the association of unholy nondevotees; (3) one should not attempt to have many disciples; (4) one should not take the trouble to understand many books or to understand partially any particular book, and one should avoid discussing different doctrines; (5) one should be composed both in gain and in loss; (6) one should not be subject to any kind of lamentation; (7) one should not disrespect the demigods or other scriptures; (8) one should not tolerate blasphemy against the Supreme Lord and His devotees; (9) one should avoid ordinary topics of novels and fiction, but there is no injunction

that one should avoid hearing ordinary news; (10) one should not give any trouble to any living creature, including a small bug.

In *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* compiled by Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī it is said that one should be very liberal in behavior and should avoid any undesirable activities. The most important affirmative points are that one should accept the shelter of a bona fide spiritual master, be initiated by him and serve him.

In addition to these, there are thirty-five items of devotional service, and they can be analyzed as follows: (1) hearing, (2) chanting, (3) remembering, (4) worshiping, (5) praying, (6) serving, (7) engaging as a servitor, (8) being friendly, (9) offering everything, (10) dancing before the Deity, (11) singing, (12) informing, (13) offering obeisances, (14) standing up to show respect to the devotees, (15) following a devotee when he gets up to go to the door, (16) entering the temple of the Lord, (17) circumambulating the temple of the Lord, (18) reading prayers, (19) vibrating hymns, (20) performing *saṅkīrtana*, or congregational chanting, (21) smelling the incense and flowers offered to the Deity, (22) accepting *prasāda* (food offered to Kṛṣṇa), (23) attending the *ārātrika* ceremony, (24) seeing the Deity, (25) offering palatable foodstuffs to the Lord, (26) meditating, (27) offering water to the *tulasī* tree, (28) offering respect to the Vaiṣṇavas or advanced devotees, (29) living in Mathurā or Vṛndāvana, (30) understanding *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, (31) trying one's utmost to attain Kṛṣṇa, (32) expecting the mercy of Kṛṣṇa, (33) performing ceremonial functions with the devotees of Kṛṣṇa, (34) surrendering in all respects, (35) observing different ceremonial functions. To these thirty-five items, another four can be added: (1) marking one's body with sandalwood pulp to show that one is a Vaiṣṇava, (2) painting one's body with the holy names of the Lord, (3) covering one's body with the remnants of the Deity covers, (4) accepting *caraṇāmṛta*, the water which washes the Deity. These four additional items make thirty-nine items for devotional service in all, and out of all of these the following five are most important: (1) to associate with devotees, (2) to chant the holy name of the Lord, (3) to hear *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, (4) to live in a holy place such as Mathurā or Vṛndāvana, (5) to serve the Deity with great devotion. These items are especially mentioned by Rūpa Gosvāmī in his book *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*. The

thirty-nine items above, plus these five items, total forty-four items. Add to these the twenty preliminary occupations and there are a total of sixty-four different items for conducting devotional service. One can adopt the sixty-four items with his body, mind and senses and thus gradually purify his devotional service. Some of the items are completely different, some are identical, and others appear to be mixed.

Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī has recommended that one live in the association of those who are of the same mentality; therefore it is necessary to form some association for Kṛṣṇa consciousness and live together for the cultivation of knowledge of Kṛṣṇa and devotional service. The most important item for living in that association is the mutual understanding of *Bhagavad-gītā* and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. When faith and devotion are developed, they become transformed into the worship of the Deity, chanting of the holy name and living in a holy place like Mathurā and Vṛndāvana.

The last five items—mentioned after the first thirty-nine—are very important and essential. If one can simply discharge these five items, he can be elevated to the highest perfectional stage, even if he does not execute them perfectly. One may be able to perform one item or many items, according to one's capacity, but it is the principal factor of complete attachment to devotional service that makes one advance on the path. There are many devotees in history who have attained perfection in devotional service simply by discharging the duties of one item, and there are many other devotees, like Mahārāja Ambarīṣa, who executed all the items. Some individual devotees who attained perfection in devotional service by executing only one item are: Mahārāja Parīkṣit, who was liberated and fully perfected simply by hearing; Śukadeva Gosvāmī, who became liberated and attained perfection in devotional service simply by chanting; Prahlāda Mahārāja, who attained perfection by remembering; Lakṣmī, who attained perfection by serving the lotus feet of the Lord; King Pṛthu, who attained perfection simply by worshiping; Akrūra, who attained perfection simply by praying; Hanumān, who attained perfection simply by becoming the servant of Lord Rāma; Arjuna, who attained perfection simply by being a friend of Kṛṣṇa's; and Bali Mahārāja who attained perfection simply by offering whatever he had in his possession. As far

as Mahārāja Ambarīṣa is concerned, he actually performed all the items of devotional service. He first of all engaged his mind upon the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa. He engaged his words, his power of speaking, in describing the transcendental qualities of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. He engaged his hands in washing the temple of the Deity, his ears in hearing the words of Kṛṣṇa and his eyes in beholding the Deity. He engaged his sense of touch by rendering service to the devotees, and he engaged his sense of smell by relishing the fragrance of the flowers offered to Kṛṣṇa. He engaged his tongue in tasting the *tulasī* leaves offered to the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa, his legs in going to the temple of Kṛṣṇa, and his head in offering obeisances to the Deity of Kṛṣṇa. Because all his desires and ambitions were thus engaged in the devotional service of the Lord, Mahārāja Ambarīṣa is considered the leader in discharging devotional service in all kinds of ways. Whoever engages in the devotional service of the Lord in full Kṛṣṇa consciousness becomes freed of all debts to the sages, demigods and forefathers, to whom everyone is generally indebted. This is confirmed in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.5.41):

*devarṣi-bhūtāpta-nṛṇām pitṛṇām
na kiṅkaro nāyam ṛṇi ca rājan
sarvātmanā yaḥ śaraṇam śaraṇyam
gato mukundaṁ parihr̥tya kartam*

“Whoever fully engages himself in the service of the Lord, O King, is no longer indebted to the demigods, the sages, other living entities, his relatives, the forefathers or to any man.” Every man, just after his birth, immediately becomes indebted to so many people, and one is expected to discharge many kinds of ritualistic functions because of this indebtedness. However, if one is fully surrendered unto Kṛṣṇa, there is no obligation. One becomes free from all debts.

It should be carefully noted, however, that when a person gives up all other duties and simply takes to the transcendental service of Kṛṣṇa, he has no desire and is not subjected to or likely to perform sinful activities. If, however, he performs sinful activities (not willfully but by chance), Kṛṣṇa gives him all protection. It is not necessary for him to purify himself by any other method, and this is confirmed in *Śrīmad-*

Bhāgavatam (11.5.42): “A devotee who is fully engaged in the transcendental loving service of the Lord is protected by the Supreme Person, but in case he unintentionally commits some sinful activity or is obliged to act sinfully under certain circumstances, God, situated within his heart, gives him all protection.”

The processes of speculative knowledge and renunciation are not actually the chief items for elevation in devotional service. One does not have to take to the principles of nonviolence and sense control, although there are rules and regulations for acquiring these qualities in the other processes. Without even practicing these processes a devotee develops all good qualities simply by discharging devotional service to the Lord. In the Eleventh Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.20.31), the Lord Himself says that there is no necessity to cultivate speculative knowledge and renunciation if one is actually engaged in the devotional service of the Lord.

Chapter Thirteen

Devotional Service in Attachment

Out of sheer misunderstanding, some transcendentalists think that knowledge and renunciation are necessary for rising to the platform of devotional service. This is not so. The cultivation of knowledge and the renunciation of fruitive activities may be necessary to understand one's spiritual existence in relation to the material conception of life, but they are not part and parcel of devotional service. The results of knowledge and fruitive activities are liberation and material sense gratification respectively. Consequently, they cannot be part and parcel of devotional service; rather, they have no intrinsic value in the discharge of devotional service. When one is freed from bondage to the results of knowledge and fruitive activities, he can attain to devotional service. Since a devotee of Lord Kṛṣṇa is by nature nonviolent, and since his mind and senses are controlled, he does not have to make a special effort to acquire the good qualities which result from cultivating knowledge and performing fruitive activities.

When Uddhava was asking Kṛṣṇa about rules and regulations according to Vedic injunctions, he asked, "Why is it that the Vedic hymns encourage one in material enjoyment, while at the same time the Vedic instructions also free one from all illusion and encourage one toward liberation?" The Vedic rules are supposed to be ordained by the Supreme Personality of Godhead, but apparently there are contradictions, and Uddhava was anxious to know how one could be freed from these contradictions. In reply, Lord Kṛṣṇa informed him of the superexcellence of devotional service.

"It is neither practical nor necessary for one who is already engaged in devotional service to Me and whose mind is fixed on Me to endeavor for the cultivation of knowledge and renunciation." Thus the Lord's conclusion is that devotional service is independent of any other process. The cultivation of knowledge, renunciation or meditation may be a little helpful in the beginning, but they cannot be considered necessary for the discharge of devotional service. In other words,

devotional service can be discharged independently of the cultivation of knowledge and renunciation. In this regard, there is also a verse from *Skanda Purāṇa* in which Parvata Muni told a hunter tribesman: “O hunter, the qualifications which you have just now acquired—such as nonviolence and others—are not astonishing, because one who is engaged in devotional service to the Supreme Lord cannot be a source of trouble for anyone under any circumstance.”

After discussing these points, Lord Caitanya told Sanātana Gosvāmī, “Thus far I have explained devotional service according to the regulative principles. Now I shall explain devotional service to you in terms of transcendental attachment.”

The inhabitants of Vṛndāvana, Vrajavāsīs, are living examples of devotional service. Theirs is ideal devotional service with attachment, and such devotion can be found only in Vrajabhūmi, Vṛndāvana. If one develops devotional service and attachment by following in the footsteps of the Vrajavāsīs, he attains *rāga-mārga-bhakti*, or devotional service in attachment to the Lord. According to *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* (1.2.270), “Devotional service with ecstatic attachment for that service, which becomes natural for the devotee, is called *rāga*, or transcendental attachment.” Devotional service discharged with such attachment is called *rāgātmikā*, and deep attachment with deep absorption in the object of love is called *rāgātmikā*. Examples of these can be seen in the activities of the residents of Vrajabhūmi. One who becomes attracted to Kṛṣṇa by hearing of such attachment is certainly very fortunate. When one becomes deeply affected by the devotion of the residents of Vrajabhūmi and tries to follow in their footsteps, he does not care for the restrictions or regulations of the revealed scriptures. This is the characteristic of one discharging *rāga-bhakti*.

Devotional service with attachment is natural, and one who has been attracted by it does not argue with those who oppose him, even though others may argue by presenting scriptural injunctions. The natural inclination to devotional service is also based on scriptural injunction, and one who has attachment for such devotional service is not required to give it up simply on the strength of scriptural argument. In this connection it should be noted that a class of so-called devotees (known as *prākṛta-sahajiyā*) follow their own concocted ideas and, representing

themselves as Kṛṣṇa and Rādhā, indulge in debauchery. Such devotional service and attachment are false, and those so engaged are actually gliding down a hellish path. This is not the standard of *rāgātmikā*, or devotion. The *prākṛta-sahajiyā* community is actually cheated and very unfortunate.

Devotional service with attachment can be executed in two ways—externally and internally. Externally the devotee strictly follows the regulative principles beginning with chanting and hearing, while internally he thinks of the attachment which attracts him to serve the Supreme Lord. Indeed, he always thinks of his special devotional service and attachment. Such attachment does not violate the regulative principles of devotional service, and a real devotee adheres to these principles strictly; yet he always thinks of his particular attachment. Since all the inhabitants of Vrajabhūmi, Vṛndāvana, are very dear to Kṛṣṇa, a devotee selects one of the inhabitants and follows in his footsteps in order to be successful in his own devotional service. A pure devotee who is attached to the Lord always follows in the footsteps of a personality of Vrajabhūmi. It is advised in *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* (1.2.294) that a pure devotee attached to devotional service should always remember the activities of a particular inhabitant of Vraja, even though he is not able to live in Vrajabhūmi or Vṛndāvana. In this way he can always think of Vrajabhūmi and Vṛndāvana.

The confidential devotees attached to the service of the Lord are divided into several categories: some of them are servants, some are friends, some are parents, and some are conjugal lovers. In devotional service with attachment, one has to follow a particular type of devotee of Vrajabhūmi. In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (3.25.38) the Lord says:

*na karhicin mat-paraḥ śānta-rūpe
nañkṣyanti no me 'nimiṣo leḍhi hetih
yeṣāṃ ahaṃ priya ātmā sutaś ca
sakhā guruḥ suhrdo daivam iṣṭam*

“The word *mat-para* is only used to refer to persons who are satisfied with the idea of becoming My adherents alone. They consider that I am their soul, I am their friend, I am their son, I am their master, I am their well-wisher, I am their God, and I am their supreme goal. My dear

mother, time does not act on such devotees.” In *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* (1.2.308), Rūpa Gosvāmī offers his respectful obeisances to those who always think of Kṛṣṇa as He is, and His relation as son, well-wisher, brother, father, friend, etc. Whoever follows the principles of devotional service with attachment and follows a particular devotee of Vrajabhūmi certainly attains the highest perfection of love of Godhead in that spirit. There are two characteristics by which the seeds of love of Godhead can develop, and these are known as *rati*, or attachment, and *bhāva*, the condition immediately preceding love of Godhead. It is by such attachment and *bhāva* that the Supreme Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa is conquered by His devotees. These two characteristics are present before any symptoms of love of Godhead are manifest. This was all explained to Sanātana Gosvāmī by Lord Caitanya. Lord Caitanya told him that since there is really no end to describing the system of devotional service with attachment, He is simply trying to offer a sampling. Lord Caitanya then described the ultimate goal of devotional service, which is meant for one who wants to attain perfection. When one’s attachment to Kṛṣṇa becomes very deep, one attains the condition called love of Godhead. Such a state of existence is considered a permanent situation for a devotee. In this regard, Kavirāja Gosvāmī offered his respectful obeisances to Lord Caitanya for His sublime teachings of love of Godhead. As stated in *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, (*Madhya* 23.1): “O Supreme Personality of Godhead, who but You has ever awarded such pure devotional service? O most magnanimous incarnation of the Personality of Godhead, for my part I offer my respectful obeisances to this incarnation known as Gaurakṛṣṇa.”

In *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* (1.3.1) the state of being in love with the Godhead is compared to the sunshine emanating from the sun; this shining makes the devotee’s heart more and more lovely. The heart of such a devotee is situated in a transcendental position beyond even the mode of goodness. The process for making the heart even more sterilized by the sunshine of love is called *bhāva*. A description of *bhāva* is given by Rūpa Gosvāmī. *Bhāva* is called the permanent characteristic of the living entity, and the crucial point of progress for *bhāva* is called the marginal state of love of Godhead. When the *bhāva* state becomes deeper and deeper, learned devotees call it love of Godhead. As stated in

the *Nārada-pañcarātra*:

*ananya-mamatā viṣṇau
mamatā prema-saṅgatā
bhaktir ity ucyate bhīṣma-
prahlādoddhava-nāradaih*

“When one is firmly convinced that Viṣṇu is the only object of love and worship and that there is no one else—not even a demigod—worthy of receiving devotional service, one feels intimacy in his love relationship with God, and this is approved by such personalities as Bhīṣma, Prahlāda, Uddhava and Nārada.”

If, due to some righteous activities which provoke devotional service, one is influenced by the service attitude and takes shelter of the good association of pure devotees, he develops attachment for hearing and chanting. By developing chanting and hearing, one can advance further and further in regulative devotional service to the Supreme Lord. As one so advances, his misgivings about devotional service and his attraction for the material world proportionately diminish. By advancing in hearing and chanting, a devotee becomes more firmly fixed in his faith, and gradually his initial faith develops into a taste for devotional service, and that taste gradually develops into attachment. When attachment becomes pure, it exhibits the two characteristics of *bhāva* and *rati*. When *rati* increases, it is called love of Godhead, and love of Godhead is the ultimate goal of human life.

This process is summarized by Rūpa Gosvāmī in *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* (1.4.15–16): The first requirement is faith; it is due to faith that one associates with pure devotees, and, by such association, develops devotional service. As devotional service develops, one’s misgivings diminish. Then one is situated in firm conviction, and from that conviction he develops a taste for devotional service and advances to the stage of attachment, whereby he follows the regulative principles of devotional service. After that point, after one makes further progress, he attains the state called *bhāva*, which is permanent. When such love of God increases, it reaches the highest stage of love of Godhead.”

In Sanskrit this highest stage is called *premā*, *premā* can be defined as love of God without any expectation of exchange or return. Actually the

words *premā* and *love* are not synonymous, yet one can say that *premā* is the highest stage of love. One who has attained *premā* is the most perfect human being. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* also confirms this statement (*Bhāg.* 3.25.25): Only by the association of pure devotees can one develop a taste for Kṛṣṇa consciousness, and when he tries to apply Kṛṣṇa consciousness in his life, he can achieve everything up to the stage of *bhāva* and *prema*.

Lord Caitanya, describing the symptoms of a person who has developed from faith to the stage of *bhāva*, states that such a person is never agitated even if there are causes for agitation. Nor does such a person waste his time even for a moment; he is always anxious to do something for Kṛṣṇa. Even if he has no engagement, he will find some work to do for Kṛṣṇa's satisfaction. Nor does such a person like anything which is not connected with Kṛṣṇa. Although he is situated in the best position, he does not hanker after honor or personal respect. He is confident in his work, and he is never under the impression that he is not making progress toward the supreme goal of life—going back to Godhead. Since he is fully convinced of his progress, he is always confident and keeps himself busy to achieve the highest goal. He is very much attached to gratifying the Lord and in chanting or hearing about the Lord, and he is always attached to describing the transcendental qualities of the Lord. He also prefers to live in holy places like Mathurā, Vṛndāvana or Dvārakā. Such characteristics are visible in one who has developed to the stage of *bhāva*.

King Parikṣit affords a good example of *bhāva*. When sitting on the banks of the Ganges waiting to meet his death, he said: "All the *brāhmaṇas* present here, as well as Mother Ganges, should know that I am a soul completely surrendered to Kṛṣṇa. I do not mind if I am immediately bitten by the snake sent by the *brāhmaṇa* boy's curse. Let the snake bite me as it likes. I shall be pleased if all of you present here will go on chanting the message of Kṛṣṇa." Such a devotee is always anxious to see that his time is not wasted in anything which is not connected with Kṛṣṇa. Consequently he does not like the benefits derived from fruitive activity, yogic meditation or the cultivation of knowledge. His attachment is to discourses which are favorably related to Kṛṣṇa. Such pure devotees of the Lord always pray to the Supreme

Lord with tears in their eyes; their minds are always engaged in recollecting the activities of the Lord, and their bodies are always engaged in offering obeisances. In this way they are satisfied. Any devotee who is acting in devotional service dedicates his life and body for the purpose of the Lord.

King Bharata—after whom India is called Bhārata-varṣa—was also a pure devotee, and at an early age he left his household life, his devoted beautiful wife, his son, friends and kingdom just as if they were stool. This is typical of a person who has developed *bhāva* in devotional service. Such a person thinks of himself as the most wretched, and his only satisfaction is in thinking that some day or other Kṛṣṇa will be kind enough to favor him by engaging him in devotional service. In the *Padma Purāṇa* another instance of pure devotion is found. There it is recorded that the king, although the most elevated of human beings, was begging from door to door and was even praying to the *caṇḍālas*, the lowest members of human society.

It was Sanātana Gosvāmī who later composed this verse:

*na premā śravaṇādi-bhaktir api vā yogo 'thavā vaiṣṇavo
jñānam vā śubha-karma vā kiyad aho saj-jātir apy asti vā
hīnārthādhika-sādhake tvayi tathāpy acchedya-mūlā satī
he gopījanavallabha vyathayate hā hā madāśaiva mām*

“I am poor in love of Godhead, and I have no asset for hearing about devotional service. Nor do I have any understanding of the science of devotional service, nor any cultivation of knowledge, nor any righteous activities to my credit. I am not even born in a high family. Nonetheless, O darling of the damsels of Vraja, I still maintain hopes of achieving You, and these hopes are always disturbing me.” Such a devotee, being touched deeply by such strong desires, always chants Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare.

In this regard, the following verse by Bilvamaṅgala appears in the *kṛṣṇa-karṇāmṛta* (32):

*tvac chaiśavaṁ tri-bhuvanādbhutam ity avehi
mac cāpalam ca tava vā mama vādhigamyam*

*tat kiṁ karomi viralam muralivilāsi
mugdhaḥ mukhāmbujam udīkṣitum ikṣaṇābhyām*

“O Kṛṣṇa, O wonderful flute player, the beauty of Your boyhood activities is very wonderful in this world. You know the agitation of my mind, and I know what You are. No one knows how confidential our relationship is. Although my eyes are anxious to see You and Your face, I cannot see You. Please let me know what I shall do.” A similar passage appears in *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* (1.3.38) in which Rūpa Gosvāmī states:

*rodana-bindu-maranda-syandi-
dṛḡindīvarādya govinda
tava madhura-svara-kaṇṭhī
gāyati nāmāvalīm bālā*

“O Govinda! This young girl with tears in her eyes is crying in a sweet voice, chanting Your glories.” Such pure devotees are always anxious to describe the glories of Kṛṣṇa and to live in a place where He exhibited His pastimes. A similar verse appears again in *kṛṣṇa-kaṇṭhāmrta* (92): “The body of Kṛṣṇa is so nice, and His face is so beautiful. Everything about Him is sweet and fragrant.” And in *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* (1.2.156): “O lotus-eyed one, when will I be able to always chant Your holy name, and being inspired by that chanting, when will I be able to dance on the banks of the Yamunā?”

All these descriptions of the *bhāva* stage of devotional service were quoted by Lord Caitanya to Sanātana Gosvāmī. Lord Caitanya next proceeded to describe the symptoms of actual love for Kṛṣṇa. He informed Sanātana Gosvāmī that no one can understand the person who has developed love of Kṛṣṇa. No one can understand his words, his activities or his symptoms. Even if one is very learned, it is very difficult for him to understand a pure devotee who is in love with the Lord. This is also confirmed in *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*.

A person engaged in devotional service becomes heartsick when singing the glories of the Supreme Lord. Because the Lord is very dear to him, when he glorifies the Lord’s name, fame and so on, he becomes almost like an insane man, and in that condition he sometimes laughs,

sometimes cries and sometimes dances. He continues in this way without even considering his situation. By gradually developing his love of Godhead, he increases his affection, his emotion and his ecstasy. Such attachment, *mahābhāva*, is the highest stage of devotional love. It may be likened to sugar candy, which is the most powerful form of sugar. Love of Godhead can gradually develop in such a way that transcendental pleasure is increased to the highest stage for the real devotee.

Chapter Fourteen

The Ecstasy of the Lord and His Devotees

The symptoms of highly developed devotional service, which are exhibited by the pure devotees, are sometimes imitated by those who are not actually pure devotees. This is described in *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*. Without devotional service to Kṛṣṇa, one may have some motive in exhibiting such symptoms, but it should be known that the symptoms are not actual. Sometimes those who are not conversant with the science of devotional service are captivated by the exhibition of ecstatic symptoms, but those who are in knowledge of the science of devotional service do not accept such symptoms as the all in all. These symptoms only mark the beginning of devotional service. That is accepted by learned devotees.

According to the various divisions and gradations of devotees, permanent devotional situations can be divided into five categories: (1) peacefulness, (2) service to Kṛṣṇa, (3) friendship with Kṛṣṇa, (4) parental affection toward Kṛṣṇa, and (5) conjugal love for Kṛṣṇa. Each division has its own different taste and relish, and a devotee situated in a particular division is happy in that position. Characteristic symptoms exhibited by a pure devotee are generally laughing and crying; when emotions are favorable, a pure devotee laughs, and when emotions are not favorable, he cries.

Situated above these two emotions is permanent love, which is called *sthāyibhāva*. In other words, attachment to Kṛṣṇa is permanent. That permanent loving attitude is sometimes mixed with different kinds of taste, called *vibhāva*, *anubhāva* and *vyabhicārī*. *Vibhāva* is a particular taste for attachment to Kṛṣṇa, and it can be divided into two further categories—*ālabhana* and *uddīpana*. In the *Agni Purāṇa* and other authoritative scriptures, that which increases one's love of Kṛṣṇa is said to be *vibhāva*, and when Kṛṣṇa is the objective, *vibhāva* is increased as *ālabhana*. *Uddīpana* is induced by Kṛṣṇa's transcendental qualities, His activities, His beautiful smiling face and the aroma of His body, the sound of His flute, the sound of His conchshell, the marks on the

bottoms of His feet, His dwelling place and His paraphernalia of devotional service (such as *tulasī* leaves, devotees, ceremonial performances and *Ekādaśī*). *Anubhāva* occurs when feelings and emotions within oneself are exhibited. In the attitude of *anubhāva*, one dances and sometimes falls down, sometimes sings loudly, shows convulsions, yawns, and sometimes breathes very heavily—all without concern for circumstances.

The external features exhibited on the bodies of devotees are called *udbhāsvara*. The *vyabhicārī* symptoms are thirty-three in number, and they primarily involve words uttered by the devotee and different bodily features. These different bodily features—such as dancing trembling and laughing—when mixed with the *vyabhicārī* symptoms are called *sañcārī*. When *bhāva*, *anubhāva* and *vyabhicārī* symptoms are combined, they make the devotee dive into the ocean of immortality. That ocean is called the *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, the ocean of the pure nectar of devotional service, and one who is merged in that ocean is always rapt in transcendental pleasure on the waves and sounds of that ocean. The particular *rasas* (flavors or tastes) of the devotees who merge into that ocean of *bhakti-rasāmṛta* are known as neutrality, servitorship, friendship, parenthood and conjugal love. Conjugal love is very prominent, and it is symptomized by the devotee's decorating his body to attract Kṛṣṇa. The flavor of servitorship increases to include affection, anger, fraternity and attachment. The flavor of friendship increases to include affection, anger, fraternity, attachment and devotion, and in parenthood the attachment increases to include affection, anger, fraternity, attachment, and devotion. There are also special flavors experienced in friendship with the Supreme Lord, and these are manifested by friends such as Subala, whose devotion increases up to the point of *bhāva*. The different *rasas* are also divided into two kinds of ecstasy, called *yoga* and *viyoga*, or meeting and separation. In friendship and parenthood, the feelings of meeting and separation are various. The situations known as *rūḍha* and *adhirūḍha* are possible in the conjugal love relationship. Conjugal love exhibited by the queens at Dvārakā is called *rūḍha*, and conjugal love exhibited at Vṛndāvana by the damsels of Vraja is called *adhirūḍha*. The highest perfection of *adhirūḍha* affection in conjugal love involve meeting (*mādana*) and

separation (*mohana*). In the ecstasy of *mādana*, meeting, there is kissing, and in the ecstasy of *mohana*, separation, there is *udghūrṇā* and *citrajalpa*. As far as *citrajalpa* is concerned, in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, there is a portion known as *Bhramara-gītā* in which various kinds of *citra jalpa* are mentioned. *Udghūrṇā* is a symptom of separation, and there is also a symptom called transcendental insanity. In that transcendental insanity one thinks that he himself has become the Supreme Personality of Godhead. In such an ecstasy, he imitates the symptoms of Kṛṣṇa in different ways.

There are two kinds of dresses worn in that relationship of conjugal love, and they are called *sambhoga* and *vipralambha*. On the *sambhoga* platform, the dresses are unlimited, and on the *vipralambha* they are four in number. The ecstasy exhibited before the lover and beloved meet, the ecstasy experienced between them after meeting, the state of mind experienced by not meeting, and the state of mind experienced after meeting fearing separation are called *vipralambha*. That *vipralambha* serves as a nourishing element for future meetings. When the lover and beloved meet all of a sudden and embrace one another, they feel an ecstasy of happiness, and the state of mind they experience in that ecstasy is called *sambhoga*. According to the situation, *sambhoga* ecstasy is also known by four names: (1) *saṅkṣipta*, (2) *saṅkīrṇa*, (3) *sampanna*, (4) *saṃṛddhimān*. Such symptoms are also visible during dreams.

The mental state experienced before meeting is called *pūrvavāga*. The obstacles which sometimes impede the meeting between lover and beloved are called *māna*, or anger. When the lover and beloved are separated, the mental state experienced is called *pravāsa*. Feelings of separation which are present under certain conditions even when the lovers meet are called love anxieties (*prema-vaicitrya*). Such love anxieties are exhibited in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (10.90.15) by the princesses who kept awake nights and watched Kṛṣṇa sleep. They were afraid of being separated from Kṛṣṇa, and they always talked amongst themselves about how they had been affected by Kṛṣṇa's beautiful eyes and His smile.

The supreme lover is Kṛṣṇa, and He is situated in Vṛndāvana, and the supreme beloved is Rādhārāṇī. Kṛṣṇa has sixty-four important qualifications, and His devotee takes transcendental pleasure in hearing

of them. As explained in *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, the characteristics are as follows: (1) His body is well constructed; (2) His body has all auspicious symptoms; (3) His body is beautiful; (4) His body is very glorious; (5) His body is very strong; (6) He always looks like a boy of sixteen; (7) He is well versed in various languages; (8) He is truthful; (9) He is decorated with pleasing words; (10) He is expert in speaking; (11) He is very learned; (12) He is very intelligent; (13) He is influential; (14) He is joyful; (15) He is cunning; (16) He is expert; (17) He is grateful; (18) He is firmly convinced; (19) He knows how to deal with different circumstances; (20) He is always conversant with scriptural injunctions; (21) He is clean; (22) He is controlled by His devotees; (23) He is steady; (24) He is self-controlled; (25) He is forgiving; (26) He is grave; (27) He is speculative; (28) He is fair in His dealings; (29) He is magnanimous; (30) He is religious; (31) He is a great hero; (32) He is merciful; (33) He is respectful; (34) He is competent; (35) He is gentle; (36) He is modest; (37) He is the protector of the souls surrendered unto Him; (38) He is the deliverer; (39) He is the friend of the devotees; (40) He is submissive to love; (41) He is all-auspicious; (42) He is most powerful; (43) He is famous; (44) He is devoted to all living entities; (45) He is worshipable by everyone; (46) He is very attractive to all women; (47) He is partial to His devotees; (48) He is full of all opulence; (49) He is the supreme controller; (50) He possesses all honor.

These fifty qualities or characteristics are fragmentally present in every living entity. When they are completely spiritually free and situated in their original condition, all these qualities can be perceived in human life in minute quantity. In Kṛṣṇa, however, they exist in totality. There are five other transcendental qualities (mentioned below) which can be seen in Viṣṇu, the Supreme Lord, and partially in Lord Śiva also, but they are not visible in ordinary living entities. These characteristics are as follows: (1) He is always situated in His original condition; (2) He is omniscient; (3) He is evergreen or always fresh; (4) He is eternally blissful; (5) He is conversant and is the master of all perfection. Besides these five transcendental characteristics, there are five others which can be seen in the spiritual sky, especially in the Vaikuṅṭha planets where Nārāyaṇa is the predominating Deity. These are: (1) He has inconceivable qualities; (2) He is able to sustain innumerable universes;

(3) He is the seed of all incarnations; (4) He grants the highest perfection to those enemies whom He kills; (5) He is the most attractive of self-realized persons.

The above-mentioned qualities and characteristics, which total sixty in number, are visible up to the platform of Nārāyaṇa. However, Kṛṣṇa has four special qualities, which are: (1) He is able to manifest wonderful pastimes; (2) He is expert at transcendental flute playing; (3) He is surrounded by loving devotees; (4) He possesses unparalleled personal beauty.

Thus Kṛṣṇa has sixty-four transcendental qualities. Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī has twenty-five transcendental qualities, but She can control even Kṛṣṇa by them. Her transcendental qualities are as follows: (1) She is sweetness personified; (2) She is a fresh young girl; (3) Her eyes are always moving; (4) She is always brightly smiling; (5) She possesses all auspicious marks on Her body; (6) She can agitate Kṛṣṇa by the flavor of Her person; (7) She is expert in the art of singing; (8) She can speak very nicely and sweetly; (9) She is expert in presenting feminine attractions; (10) She is modest and gentle; (11) She is always very merciful; (12) She is transcendently cunning; (13) She knows how to dress nicely; (14) She is always shy; (15) She is always respectful; (16) She is always patient; (17) She is very grave; (18) She is enjoyed by Kṛṣṇa; (19) She is always situated on the highest devotional platform; (20) She is the abode of love of the residents of Gokula; (21) She can give shelter to all kinds of devotees; (22) She is always affectionate to superiors and inferiors; (23) She is always obliged by the dealings of Her associates; (24) She is the greatest amongst Kṛṣṇa's girl friends; (25) She always keeps Kṛṣṇa under Her control.

Thus Kṛṣṇa and Rādhārāṇī are both transcendently qualified, and both of Them attract one another. Yet in that transcendental attraction, Rādhārāṇī is greater than Kṛṣṇa, for the attractiveness of Rādhārāṇī is the transcendental taste in conjugal love. Similarly, there are transcendental tastes in servitude, friendship and other relationships with Kṛṣṇa. These can be described with reference to the context of *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*.

Persons who have been thoroughly cleansed by devotional service and are always joyful, being situated in elevated consciousness, who are very

much attached to the studies of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, who are always cheerful in the association of devotees, who have accepted the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa as the ultimate shelter of their lives, and who are pleased to perform all details of devotional service, have in their pure hearts the transcendental ecstasy of attachment. When that ecstatic state of being is enriched with love of Kṛṣṇa and the transcendental experience, one gradually attains to the mature oneness of spiritual life. Such spiritual life is not possible for those who are not situated in Kṛṣṇa consciousness and devotional service. This fact is further corroborated in the *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* wherein it is said: “It is very difficult for the nondevotee to understand the taste of devotional service. Only one who has completely taken shelter of the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa and whose life is merged in the ocean of devotional service can understand this transcendental pleasure.”

Lord Caitanya thus explained briefly the transcendental situation and spiritual enjoyment of life, and He taught that the first stage of perfection is to become a religious man in the ordinary sense, as known in the material world. The second stage of perfection is to become materially rich. The third stage of material perfection is the attainment of complete sense enjoyment, and in the fourth stage there is knowledge of liberation. Above this platform are those on the fifth stage who are already liberated and who are established in Kṛṣṇa consciousness or devotional service to the Lord. In the highest perfection of devotional service in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, one experiences the taste of the ecstasy of spiritual relish.

The Lord then told Sanātana Gosvāmī that He had previously taught his younger brother, Rūpa Gosvāmī, at Prayāga (Allahabad). The Lord assured Sanātana Gosvāmī that He had empowered Rūpa Gosvāmī to spread the knowledge He had given him. The Lord then similarly ordered Sanātana Gosvāmī to write books on the transcendental loving service of the Lord, and He authorized him to excavate the different sites of Kṛṣṇa’s pastimes in the district of Mathurā. Sanātana Gosvāmī was also advised to construct temples in Vṛndāvana and to write books on the principles of Vaiṣṇavism, as authorized by Lord Caitanya Himself. Sanātana Gosvāmī executed all these desires of the Lord—he constructed the temple of Madana-mohana at Vṛndāvana, and he wrote

books on the principles of devotional service, such as *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa*. Lord Caitanya further taught Sanātana Gosvāmī how one can live in the material world while being in a complete relationship with Kṛṣṇa, and He also taught him that there is no necessity for dry renunciation. The purport of these instructions is that in the present age there are many persons who accept the renounced order of life but who are not spiritually advanced. Lord Caitanya did not approve of one's accepting *sannyāsa* without having perfect knowledge of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Actually it is found that there are many so-called *sannyāsīs* whose actions are below those of ordinary men but who pass themselves off as being in the renounced order of life. Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu did not accept such hypocrisy. He taught Sanātana Gosvāmī to write elaborately on the subject of devotional service in his different books.

The perfectional stage of spiritual life which one can experience even while being in the material world is described in the Twelfth Chapter of *Bhagavad-gītā* as follows: “One who is not envious but who is a kind friend to all living entities, who does not think himself a proprietor, who is free from false ego and equal both in happiness and distress, who is always satisfied and engaged in devotional service with determination and whose mind and intelligence are in agreement with Me—he is very dear to Me. He for whom no one is put into difficulty and who is not disturbed by anxiety, who is steady in happiness and distress, is very dear to Me. A devotee who is not dependent on the ordinary course of activities, who is pure, expert, without cares, free from all pains, and who does not strive for some result, is very dear to Me. One who grasps neither pleasure or grief who neither laments nor desires, and who renounces both auspicious and inauspicious things, is very dear to Me. One who is equal to friends and enemies, who is equipoised in honor and dishonor, heat and cold, happiness and distress, fame and infamy, who is always free from contamination, always silent and satisfied with anything, who doesn't care for any residence, who is fixed in knowledge and engaged in devotional service, is very dear to Me. He who follows this imperishable path of devotional service and who completely engages himself with faith, making Me the supreme goal, is very, very dear to Me.” (Bg. 12.13–20)

Even if one is not situated in such a transcendental position, if he simply

approves of such a transcendental life, he also becomes very dear to Kṛṣṇa. In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (2.2.5) it is stated that a devotee should always remain dependent on the mercy of the Supreme Lord and that as far as his material necessities are concerned, he should be satisfied with whatever is obtained without endeavor. In this regard, Śukadeva Gosvāmī advised that a devotee should never approach a materialistic person for any kind of help. As far as one's bodily necessities are concerned, one can pick up torn clothing out of the street, can take fruits offered by trees, can drink water which flows from rivers, and can live in a cave constructed by nature herself. Even if one is unable to do all these things, he should nonetheless completely depend on the Supreme Lord, understanding that the Supreme Lord provides everyone with food and shelter. One should understand that the Lord will never fail to care for His devotees who are fully surrendered unto Him. In any case, the devotee is always protected, and therefore he should not be at all anxious for his maintenance.

Sanātana Gosvāmī thus inquired into all phases of devotional service, and Lord Caitanya taught him most confidentially from authoritative scriptures like *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. The Lord referred also to the Vedic literature known as *Harivamśa*, which gives information about the transcendental abode of Kṛṣṇa. This information was disclosed by Indra when he offered his prayers after being defeated upon challenging the potency of Kṛṣṇa. In the *Harivamśa* it is stated that although birds and airplanes can fly, they cannot reach the higher planetary systems. The higher planetary systems begin with the sun planet, which is situated in the middle of the universe. Beyond the sun there are other planetary systems where persons who are elevated by great austerities and penances are situated. The entire material universe is called Devīdhāma, and above it there is Śivadhāma, where Lord Śiva and his wife Pārvatī eternally reside. Above that planetary system is the spiritual sky where innumerable spiritual planets, known as Vaikuṅṭhas, are situated. Above these Vaikuṅṭha planets there is Kṛṣṇa's planet known as Goloka Vṛndāvana. The word *goloka* means "planet of the cows." Because Kṛṣṇa is very fond of cows, His abode is known as Goloka. Goloka Vṛndāvana is larger than all the material and spiritual planets put together. In the prayer contained in the *Harivamśa*, Indra admitted that he could not

understand the situation of Goloka even by asking Brahmā. Those who are devotees of the Nārāyaṇa expansion of Kṛṣṇa attain the Vaikuṅṭha planets, but it is very difficult to reach Goloka Vṛndāvana. Indeed, that planet can be reached only by persons who are devotees of Lord Caitanya or Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa. It was Indra who admitted to Lord Kṛṣṇa: “You have descended from that Goloka planet in the spiritual world, and the disturbance which I have created was all due to my foolishness.”

Therefore Indra begged Lord Kṛṣṇa to excuse him.

The last phase of the pastimes of Lord Kṛṣṇa is described in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* as *mausala-līlā*. This includes the mystery of Kṛṣṇa’s disappearance from this material world. In that pastime the Lord played the part of being killed by a hunter. There are many improper explanations of the last portion of Lord Kṛṣṇa’s pastimes (such as descriptions of the incarnation of Kṛṣṇa’s hair), but Lord Caitanya properly described these pastimes and gave them the right interpretation. As far as the incarnation of Kṛṣṇa’s hair is concerned, there is mention in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*, and the *Mahābhārata*. It is stated there that the Lord snatched a gray hair and a black hair from His head and that these two hairs entered into the wombs of two queens of the Yadu dynasty, namely Rohiṇī and Devakī. It is also stated that Lord Kṛṣṇa descends to the material world in order to vanquish all the demons, but some say that Kṛṣṇa is the incarnation of Viṣṇu who lies in the ocean of milk within this universe. Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī in his *Laghu-bhāgavatāmṛta* and his commentator, Śrī Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa, have discussed these points fully and have established the exact truth. Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī also discussed these points in the *Kṛṣṇa-sandarbhā*.

When Lord Caitanya finished His instructions to Śrī Sanātana Gosvāmī, Sanātana, being empowered and enlightened, was so transcendently pleased that he at once fell at the feet of Lord Caitanya and said: “I am born of a very low family, and I have always associated with lowly people; therefore I am the lowest of sinners. Yet You are so kind that You have taught me lessons which are not even understood by Lord Brahmā, the greatest being in this universe. By Your grace I have appreciated the conclusions which You have taught me, but I am so low that I cannot even touch a drop of the ocean of Your instructions. Thus

if You want me, who am nothing but a lame man, to dance, then please give me Your benediction by placing Your feet on my head.”

Thus Sanātana Gosvāmī prayed for the Lord’s confirmation that His teachings would actually evolve in his heart by His grace. Otherwise Sanātana knew that there was no possibility of his being able to describe the Lord’s teachings. The purport of this is that the *ācāryas* (spiritual masters) are authorized by higher authorities. Instruction alone cannot make one an expert. Unless one is blessed by the spiritual master, or the *ācārya*, such teachings cannot become fully manifest. Therefore one should seek the mercy of the spiritual master so that the instructions of the spiritual master can develop within oneself. After receiving the prayers of Sanātana Gosvāmī, Lord Caitanya placed His feet on the head of Sanātana and gave him His benedictions so that all His instructions would develop fully.

Thus the Lord described the ultimate stage of love of Godhead. Lord Caitanya said that such a description cannot be given very elaborately but that He had informed him as far as possible. The conclusion is that anyone who attentively hears these discourses and instructions of Lord Caitanya to Sanātana Gosvāmī very soon attains to Kṛṣṇa consciousness and engages in devotional service to the Lord.

Chapter Fifteen

Explanation of the Ātmārāma Verse in *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*

Lord Caitanya next explained a very famous verse known as the Ātmārāma verse, which appears in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* as follows:

*ātmārāmāś ca munayo
nirgranthā apy urukrame
kurvanty ahaitukīm bhaktim
ittham-bhūta-guno hariḥ*

This verse indicates that those who are liberated souls and are fully self-satisfied will eventually become devotees of the Lord. This injunction is especially meant for the impersonalists, for the impersonalists have no information of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. They try to remain satisfied with the impersonal Brahman, but Kṛṣṇa is so attractive and so strong that He attracts their minds. This is the purport of this verse. This verse had been previously explained to a great Vedāntist known as Sārvabhauma Bhaṭṭācārya. After taking lessons from Lord Caitanya, Sanātana Gosvāmī referred to this incident and prayed to the Lord to again explain the Ātmārāma verse. Kavirāja Gosvāmī, the author of *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, appreciating the Lord's explanation of the Ātmārāma verse, has also glorified Lord Caitanya in his prayers. Falling flat at the feet of Lord Caitanya, Sanātana Gosvāmī requested Him to explain the verse as He had formerly explained it to Sārvabhauma Bhaṭṭācārya. Sanātana explained his eagerness to hear the same explanation in order that he might be enlightened. Being thus requested by Sanātana, the Lord replied: "I do not understand why Sārvabhauma Bhaṭṭācārya so much appreciated My explanation. As far as I am concerned, I don't even remember what I said to him. But because you are asking this of Me, I shall, with the help of your association, try to explain whatever I can remember." Thus the speaker and the audience are very intimately connected; the speaker is enlightened by the presence of the audience. The speaker, or master, can speak very nicely

on transcendental subject matters before an understanding audience; therefore Lord Caitanya said that He did not know how to explain the Sanskrit verse but that since He was in the association of Sanātana He would try to explain it.

The Lord then went on to point out that there are eleven items in the *Ātmārāma* verse: (1) *ātmārāmāḥ*, (2) *ca*, (3) *munayaḥ*, (4) *nirgranthāḥ*, (5) *api*, (6) *urukrame*, (7) *kurvanti*, (8) *ahaitukīm*, (9) *bhaktim*, (10) *ittham-bhūta-guṇaḥ*, (11) *hariḥ*. The Lord then began to explain each and every one of these items. As far as the word *ātmārāma* is concerned, the Lord explained that the word *ātmā* is used to indicate: (1) the Supreme Absolute Truth, (2) the body, (3) the mind, (4) endeavor, (5) conviction, (6) intelligence, and (7) nature. The word *ārāma* means enjoyer; therefore anyone who takes pleasure in the cultivation of the knowledge of these seven items is known as *ātmārāma*. The Lord then explained about the different kinds of *ātmārāmas*, or transcendentalists. As for the word *munayaḥ*, or *muni*, those who are great thinkers are called *munis*. Sometimes the word *muni* is also applied to a person who is very grave. Great sages, great austere persons, great mystics and learned scholars are also called *munis*.

The next word, *nirgrantha*, indicates freedom from the bondage of illusion. *Nirgrantha* also means “One who has no connection with spiritual injunctions.” *Grantha* means revealed scriptures, and *nir* is an affix which is used to mean “no connection,” “constructing,” and also “prohibiting.” There are many instructions for spiritual realization, but persons who have no connection with such scriptural injunctions are also known as *nirgrantha*. There are many people who are foolish, low-born and misbehaved and who have no entrance into the revealed scriptures and injunctions, and therefore they are called *nirgrantha*. Because *grantha* is also used for the purpose of collecting riches, the word *nirgrantha* also indicates a poor man, bereft of all riches, who is attempting to collect riches.

The word *urukrama* is used to indicate a highly powerful person. The word *krama* is used to indicate the act of stepping, and the word *urukrama* indicates one who can step forward very far. The greatest step forward was taken by Lord Vāmanadeva, who covered the whole universe in two steps. Thus the word *urukrama* indicates the Supreme

Lord Vāmanadeva. This extraordinary feature of Lord Vāmanadeva is thus explained in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (2.7.40).

*viṣṇor nu vīrya-gaṇanām katamo 'rhatīha
yaḥ pārvivāny api kavir vimame rajāmsi
caskambha yaḥ sva-ramhasāskhalatā tri-prṣṭham
yasmāt tri-sāmya-sadanād uru-kampayānam*

“No one can estimate the inconceivable potencies of Lord Viṣṇu. Even if one can count the number of atomic combinations in this material world, he still cannot count the different energies of the Supreme Lord. As Vāmanadeva, the Lord was so powerful that simply by stepping forward He covered the whole universe from Brahmaloḥka down to Pātālaloḥka.”

The inconceivable energies of the Lord are spread throughout the creation. He is all-pervading, and by His energy He sustains all planetary systems, yet through His pleasure potency He remains situated in His personal abode known as Goloka. By the expansion of His opulence, He is present in all the Vaikuṅṭha planets as Nārāyaṇa. By expanding His material energy, He creates innumerable universes with innumerable planets within them. Thus no one can estimate the wonderful activities of the Supreme Lord, and therefore the Supreme Lord is known as *urukrama*, the wonderful actor. In the *Viśvaprakāśa* dictionary, the word *krama* is defined as “an expert display of energies,” as well as “stepping forward very quickly.”

The word *kurvanti* is used to mean “working for others.” There is another word similar to this which is used when one’s activities are done for one’s own personal sense gratification, but the word *kurvanti* is used when activities are performed for the satisfaction of the Supreme. Thus in this verse the word can only indicate the rendering of transcendental service to the Lord.

The word *hetu* is used to indicate the reason or cause. Generally people are engaged in transcendental activities for three reasons: some want material happiness, some want mystic perfection and some want liberation from material bondage. As far as material enjoyment is concerned, there are so many varieties that no one can enumerate them. As far as perfections in mystic power are concerned, there are eighteen,

and as far as types of liberation from material bondage are concerned, there are five. The state of being where all these varieties of enjoyment are conspicuous by their absence is called *ahaitukī*. The *ahaitukī* qualification is especially mentioned because by the *ahaitukī* service of the Lord, one can achieve the favor of the Lord.

The word *bhakti* can be used in ten different ways. Out of these ten, there is *sādhana-bhakti*, or occupational devotional service. The other nine are called *prema-bhakti*, love of Godhead. Those who are situated in the neutral position attain perfection up to love of Godhead. Similarly, those who are situated in the relationship of master and servant attain love of Godhead to the stage of attachment. Those who are related in friendship attain love of God to the point of fraternity. Those who are in love with God as His parents are elevated to the point of transcendental emotion. But only those who are related with the Supreme in conjugal love can experience the highest of ecstasies. Thus there are different meanings for the word *bhakti*.

The Lord next explained the different meanings of *ittham-bhūta-guṇa*. *Ittham bhūta* indicates fully transcendental pleasure before which the transcendental pleasure known as *brahmānanda* becomes like straw. In the *Hari-bhakti-sudhodaya* (14.36), a devotee says:

*tvat-sākṣāt-karaṇāhlāda-
viśuddhābdhisthitasya me
sukhāni goṣpadāyante
brāhmāṇy api jagad guro*

“My Lord, O Supreme, simply by understanding You or seeing You, the pleasure which we derive is so great that the pleasure of *brahmānanda* becomes insignificant.” In other words, the pleasure derived by understanding Kṛṣṇa as He is—as the all-attractive reservoir of all pleasures and the reservoir of all pleasure-giving tastes with all transcendental qualifications—attracts one to become His devotee. By virtue of such attraction, one can give up fruitive activities and all endeavors for liberation and can even abandon the intense desire to achieve success in *yoga* mystic power. The attraction of Kṛṣṇa is so intense that one can lose respect for all other means of self-realization and simply surrender unto the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

The Lord also explained the word *guṇa* in all its different meanings. *Guṇa* indicates the unlimited transcendental qualities of Kṛṣṇa, primarily His *sac-cid-ānanda* form. In His transcendental blissful knowledge and eternity, He is fully perfect, and His perfection is increased when He is controlled by the attention of His devotee. God is so kind and merciful that He can give Himself in exchange for the devotional service of the devotee. His transcendental qualities are such that the perfection of His beauty, His perfect reciprocation of love between Himself and His devotees, and the flavor of His transcendental qualities attract different kinds of transcendentalists and liberated souls. For example, He attracted the mind of Sanaka Kumāra simply by the aroma emanating from the flowers offered to Him. The mind of Śukadeva Gosvāmī was attracted by the transcendental pastimes of Lord Kṛṣṇa, and the minds of the damsels of Vṛndāvana were attracted by His personal beauty. Rukmiṇī's attention was attracted by His bodily features and transcendental qualities, and the mind of the goddess of fortune was attracted by His flute playing and other transcendental features. Lord Kṛṣṇa attracts the minds of all young girls and elderly ladies by His childlike activities. He also attracts the minds of His friends by His friendly activities. When He appeared in Vṛndāvana, He even attracted the birds, beasts, trees and plants. Indeed, everyone became attracted in love and affection for Kṛṣṇa.

The word *hari* has different meanings, of which two are foremost. *Hari* means that He takes away all inauspicious things from the devotee's life and that He attracts the mind of the devotee by awarding him transcendental love of Godhead. Kṛṣṇa is so attractive that anyone who can remember Him in some way or another becomes freed from the four kinds of material miseries. The Lord gives special attention to His devotee and banishes the devotee's various sinful activities, which are stumbling blocks for the advancement of devotional service. This is called routing the influence of ignorance. Simply by hearing about Him, one develops love for Him. That is the gift of the Lord. On one side He takes away inauspicious things, and on the other side He awards the most auspicious things. That is the meaning of *hari*. When a person is developed in love of Godhead, his body, mind and everything else are attracted by the transcendental qualities of the Lord. Such is the power

of Kṛṣṇa's merciful activities and transcendental qualities. He is so attractive that out of transcendental attachment, a devotee will abandon all four principles of spiritual life—religiosity, economic development, regulation of sense gratification and salvation. The words *api* and *ca* are adverbs and can be used for virtually any purpose. The word *ca*, or “and,” can render seven different readings to the whole construction.

The Lord thus established the import of the eleven words in the *Ātmārāma* verse, and then He began to explain the import of each item as follows. The word *brahman* indicates the greatest in all respects. The Lord is the greatest in all opulences. No one can excel Him in wealth, strength, fame, beauty, knowledge and renunciation. Thus the word *brahman* indicates the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa. In the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* (1.12.57) the word *brahman* is given to indicate the greatest of all; the Supreme Lord is the greatest, and there is no limit to His expanding as the greatest. One may conceive of Brahman's greatness, yet this greatness grows in such a way that no one can estimate how great He actually is.

The Supreme Personality of Godhead is realized in three aspects, but they are all one and the same. The Absolute Truth, the Supreme Personality, Kṛṣṇa, is everlasting. In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (2.9.33) it is said that He exists before the manifestation of this cosmic world, that He exists during its continuance, and that He continues to exist after its annihilation. Therefore He is the soul of everything great. He is all-pervading and all-witnessing, and He is the supreme form of everything. There are three different kinds of transcendental processes mentioned in Vedic literature by which one can understand and achieve that supreme perfection of the Absolute Truth. They are called the process of knowledge, the process of mystic *yoga*, and the process of devotional service. The followers of these three processes realize the Absolute Truth in three different aspects. Those who follow the process of knowledge realize Him as impersonal Brahman; those who follow the process of *yoga* realize Him as the localized Supersoul; and those who follow the process of devotional service realize Him as the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Śrī Kṛṣṇa. In other words, although the word Brahman indicates Kṛṣṇa and nothing else, still, according to the process

that is followed, the Lord is realized in three different aspects. As far as devotional service is concerned, there are two divisions. In the beginning there is *vidhi-bhakti*, or devotional service with regulative principles. In the higher stage there is *rāga-bhakti*, or devotional service in pure love.

The Supreme Personality of Godhead is the Absolute Truth, but He is manifested by the expansions of His different energies also. Those who follow the regulative principles of devotional service ultimately attain the Vaikuṅṭha planets in the spiritual world, but one who follows the principles of love in devotional service attains to the supreme abode, the highest planet in the spiritual world known as Kṛṣṇaloka or Goloka Vṛndāvana.

Transcendentalists can also be divided into three categories. The word *akāma* refers to one who does not have any material desires. *Mokṣa-kāma* refers to one who seeks liberation from material miseries, and *sarva-kāma* refers to one who has the material desire to enjoy. The most intelligent transcendentalist gives up all other processes and engages himself in the devotional service of the Lord, even though he may have many desires. It is not by any kind of transcendental activity—neither fruitive action, nor the cultivation of knowledge, nor cultivation of mystic *yoga*—that a person can achieve the highest perfection without adding a tinge of devotional service. But for devotional service, all other transcendental processes are just like nipples on the neck of a goat. The nipples on a goat’s neck may be squeezed, but they do not supply milk. If one is to derive actual perfection from his process, he must take to the devotional service of Kṛṣṇa. In *Bhagavad-gītā* it is stated:.

*catur-vidhā bhajante mām
janāḥ sukṛtino ’rjuna
ārto jijñāsur arthārthī
jñānī ca bharatarṣabha*

“O best among the Bhāratas [Arjuna], four kinds of pious men render devotional service unto Me—the distressed, the desirer of wealth, the inquisitive, and he who is searching for knowledge of the Absolute.” (Bg. 7.16)

When these four types of people amass righteous activities, they come to

the devotional service of the Lord. Out of these four, those who are distressed and those who desire wealth are called devotees with desires, whereas the other two, the inquisitive and the searcher for wisdom, are seekers of liberation. Because they worship Kṛṣṇa, they are all considered to be very fortunate. In due course of time, if they give up all desires and become pure devotees of the Supreme Lord, they can be considered most fortunate. Such fortunate beginners can develop only in the association of pure devotees of Lord Kṛṣṇa. When one associates with pure devotees, he becomes a pure devotee himself. This is confirmed in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (1.10.11):

*sat-saṅgān mukta-duḥsaṅgo
hātuṁ notsahate budhaḥ
kīrtiyamānaṁ yaśo yasya
sakṛd ākarṇya rocanam*

“A person who is actually intelligent is able—by association of pure devotees—to hear about Lord Kṛṣṇa and His activities.” These activities are so attractive that when one hears of them, he does not give up his association with the Lord.

But for the association of pure devotees, all other association is *kaitava*, or cheating. This is confirmed in the First Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* wherein it is stated that all cheating processes which obstruct transcendental realization are to be thrown off. By *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* one can understand reality as it is, and such understanding helps one transcend the three kinds of material miseries. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is compiled by the greatest sage, Vyāsadeva, and it is a work coming out of his mature experience. By understanding *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and rendering devotional service, one can immediately capture the Supreme Lord within his heart.

Lord Caitanya then explained that the word *projjhita* means “desire for liberation.” One great commentator explained that desire for liberation is the most obstructive stumbling block on the path of God realization. Somehow or other, if one comes to Kṛṣṇa and begins to hear about Him, Kṛṣṇa is so kind that He awards him His lotus feet as a center. Having such a focal point, a devotee or transcendentalist forgets everything and engages himself in the devotional service of the Lord. When one comes

to the Lord in devotional service, or in full Kṛṣṇa consciousness, the reward is the Supreme Himself. Once engaged for the Supreme, one no longer asks for anything, as do the distressed man and he who desires material possessions. The method of devotional service, the service itself, association of pure devotees and the causeless mercy of the Lord all act so wonderfully that one can give up all activities and become absorbed in Kṛṣṇa, even if he is distressed, in want of material possessions, inquisitive or is actually a wise man cultivating knowledge.

In summary, Kṛṣṇa is the meaning behind all the words in the *Ātmārāma* verse. Up to this point Lord Caitanya spoke only of the introduction to the *Ātmārāma* verse. Next He explains its real position. In the cultivation of knowledge there are two kinds of transcendentalists. One of them worships the impersonal Brahman, and the other desires liberation. Since monists worship the impersonal feature of Brahman, they are therefore called worshipers of Brahman. These Brahman worshipers are further divided into three categories: the neophyte, one who is absorbed in Brahman realization, and one who has actually realized himself as Brahman. If devotional service is added, the knower of Brahman can then become liberated; otherwise there is no possibility of liberation. Anyone who is fully engaged in devotional service in Kṛṣṇa consciousness is understood to be already realized in Brahman. Devotional service is so strong that one is attracted to Kṛṣṇa even from the platform of Brahman worship. The Lord awards the devotee the perfection of a spiritual body, and he eternally engages in the transcendental service of Kṛṣṇa. It is when the devotee understands and becomes attracted by Kṛṣṇa's transcendental qualities that he wholeheartedly engages in devotional service. For instance, the four Kumāras and Śukadeva Gosvāmī were liberated from the beginning, yet in their later life they became attracted to the pastimes of Kṛṣṇa and became devotees. Sanaka Kumāra was attracted by the aroma of the flowers offered to Kṛṣṇa, and the other Kumāras were attracted by the transcendental qualities of the Lord and thus engaged in His devotional service. The nine mystics mentioned in the Eleventh Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* are understood to have been transcendentalists from birth by virtue of hearing of the transcendental qualities of Kṛṣṇa from Brahmā, Lord Śiva and Nārada.

Sometimes one becomes attracted to Kṛṣṇa and His transcendental qualities simply by looking upon the beautiful features of His transcendental body, in which case one abandons the desire for liberation and engages in His devotional service. The devotee regrets his loss of time in the so-called cultivation of knowledge and becomes a pure devotee of the Lord.

There are two kinds of liberated souls having material bodies: the soul liberated by devotional service and the soul liberated by the cultivation of knowledge. The liberated soul in devotional service, attracted by the transcendental qualities of Kṛṣṇa, becomes more and more elevated, whereas those who engage in dry speculation and simply cultivate knowledge without devotion fall due to their many offenses. This is confirmed in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (10.2.32) where it is stated:

*ye 'nye 'ravindākṣa vimukta-māninas
tvayy asta-bhāvād aviśuddha-buddhayaḥ
āruhya kṛcchreṇa param padam tataḥ
patanty adho 'nādrta-yuṣmad-aṅghrayaḥ*

“O Lord, the intelligence of those who think themselves liberated but who have no devotion is not pure. Even though they rise to the highest point of liberation by dint of severe penances and austerity, they are sure to fall down again into this material existence, for they do not take shelter at Your lotus feet.” This is also confirmed in *Bhagavad-gītā*:

*brahma-bhūtaḥ prasannātmā
na śocati na kāṅkṣati
samaḥ sarveṣu bhūteṣu
mad-bhaktiṁ labhate parām*

“One who is transcendently situated at once realizes the Supreme Brahman. He never laments nor desires to have anything; he is equally disposed to every living entity. In that state, he attains pure devotional service unto Me.” (Bg. 18.54)

Thus one who is actually situated in Brahman realization has no reason to lament or desire. He is equal to everyone and is thus eligible for devotional service. This was also accepted by Bilvamaṅgala Ṭhākura, who, in his later life, lamented: “I was situated as a monist in order to

become one with the Supreme, but somehow or other I contacted a naughty boy and became His eternal servitor.” In other words, those who attain self-realization by the execution of devotional service attain a transcendental body, and, being attracted to the transcendental qualities of Kṛṣṇa, engage fully in pure devotional service.

Anyone who is not attracted to Kṛṣṇa is understood to be still under the spell of the illusory energy (*māyā*), but one who is attempting to be liberated by the process of devotional service is actually liberated from the spell of *māyā*. In the Eleventh Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* there are many instances recorded of devotees who became liberated in this life simply by engaging in devotional service.

Chapter Sixteen

Conclusion of Teachings to Sanātana Gosvāmī

There are those who simply desire liberation, those who are liberated already, even while in this material existence, and those who are actually self-realized. There are many persons in this world who desire liberation, and sometimes they engage in devotional service for this purpose. It is corroborated in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (1.2.26) that those who actually desire liberation abandon worship of the demigods, and, without envy, concentrate their minds in the worship of Nārāyaṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. When such persons come in contact with a pure devotee, they engage in the devotional service of Kṛṣṇa and abandon the idea of liberation. In the *Hari-bhakti-sudhodaya* it is stated:

*aho mahātman bahu-doṣa-duṣṭo
'py ekena bhāty eṣa bhavo guṇena
sat-saṅgam ākhyena sukhābahena
kṛtādya no yena kṛśā mumukṣā*

“O great soul, although there are many flaws within this miserable life, there is yet one glory—the association of pure devotees. Cultivate such association. By it our desire for liberation diminishes.”

In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.2.37) it is stated that man’s fear is due to his material conception of life and to his forgetting his eternal relationship with the Supreme Lord. Consequently he finds himself having only perverted memories. This occurs due to the spell of material energy. One who has sufficient intelligence will engage himself in full devotional service and regard the Supreme Lord as his spiritual master and worshipable God. The conclusion is that no one can attain a revolution in consciousness without engaging in devotional service to the Lord. When one is actually free from material contamination, he can fully engage himself in Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (10.14.4) it is again clearly said that one who engages in spiritual life to understand things as they are but who lacks

all intentions of engaging in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, simply achieves trouble for his undertaking. There is no substance to his life. Every living entity is part and parcel of the Supreme Lord, and therefore it is the duty of every living entity to serve that supreme whole. Without such service, the living entity falls into material contamination. Lord Caitanya concluded His teachings to Sanātana Gosvāmī by pointing out that the six kinds of *ātmārāmas* engage in some kind of devotional service to Kṛṣṇa. In other words, at some time or another all the transcendentalists ultimately come to understand the necessity of rendering devotional service to Kṛṣṇa and become fully Kṛṣṇa conscious. Even if one is very learned or extravagant, he can still engage in the devotional service of the Lord.

The transcendentalists can be categorized into six basic types: the neophyte transcendentalist, the absorbed transcendentalist, one who is actually situated in transcendence, one who actually desires liberation, one who is actually liberated, and one who is actually engaged in activities in his constitutional position. All of these are called *ātmārāma*. When a person becomes *ātmārāma*, or a great thinker in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, he fully engages in devotional service. According to the grammatical rules, there are many *ātmārāmas*, but one sense of the word is sufficient to represent the others. In the collective sense, all the *ātmārāmas* are inclined to worship the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa.

The mystic who worships the Supersoul within himself is also called *ātmārāma*. The *ātmārāma yogīs* are of two kinds: *sagarbha* and *nigarbha*. It is stated in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (2.2.8): “Some *yogīs* meditate within their heart on the localized Viṣṇu, who is four-handed and who holds four symbols: conch, disc, mace and lotus.” The *yogī* who thinks of the four-handed Viṣṇu becomes absorbed in devotional ecstasy and evinces the symptoms of that state. Sometimes he cries, and sometimes he feels separation. In this way he merges in transcendental bliss. The result of all this is that he becomes entrapped like a fish.

The *sagarbha* and *nigarbha yogīs* can be further divided into three categories: the beginner, the ascendent, and he who has already attained perfection. These *yogīs* are described in the Sixth Chapter of *Bhagavad-gītā*. Those who are trying to ascend on the path of mystic *yoga* are called *ārurukṣu*. In *ārurukṣu yoga*, various sitting postures are practiced,

and the mind is concentrated. But when one has already ascended to the path of *yoga*, meditation and detachment are the goals, and when one is no longer attached to working for sense gratification, he gradually becomes free. At that time he also attains a state of ecstasy called *yoga ārūḍha*. If these mystic *yogīs* somehow or other come in contact with a saintly person, they become devotees of Kṛṣṇa. The word *urukrama* indicates the Supreme Lord. All the *ātmārāmas* are engaged in devotional service to Urukrama. Before engaging in devotional service, such transcendentalists are called *śāntas*, or pacified devotees. The word *ātmā*, or self, is sometimes translated as “mind.” Sometimes mental speculators present philosophical theories in different ways, but when they come in contact with saintly persons engaged in devotional service, they also become devotees.

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (10.87.18) describes the two classes of *yogīs* (*sagarbha* and *nigarbha*) as follows: “The *yogīs* begin their practice of *yoga* by worshiping the abdomen, and they try to concentrate their attention on their intestines. Gradually their meditation rises to the heart and concentrates on the mind and the heart. Then their attention rises to the top of the head, and one who can rise to that position is understood to have become perfect and to be no longer subjected to birth and death.” Even if such *yogīs* come in contact with pure devotees, they also render causeless devotional service to the Lord.

The word *ātmā* also means “to endeavor.” In every practice there is some endeavor, and the ultimate endeavor is the endeavor to reach the highest perfectional stage of devotional service. In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (1.5.18) it is stated that one should try to attain the highest goal, which cannot be attained either in the higher or lower planetary systems. The idea is that material happiness and misery are available in all planetary systems in the course of time, but the highest achievement, devotional service, cannot be attained anywhere without endeavor. Therefore in the *Bṛhan-nārādīya Purāṇa* it is said that one who is serious about understanding the highest perfectional stage of devotional service can become successful in everything simply by his endeavor. One cannot attain the highest perfectional stage of devotional service without personal endeavor. As Kṛṣṇa states in *Bhagavad-gītā*:

*teṣāṃ satata-yuktānāṃ
bhajatām prīti-pūrvakam
dadāmi buddhi-yogaṃ taṃ
yena mām upayānti te*

“To those who are constantly devoted and worship Me with love, I give the understanding by which they can come to Me.” (Bg. 10.10)
The word *ātmā* also means patience and perseverance. By patience and perseverance one can achieve the highest stage of devotional service. As far as the word *muni* is concerned, there are additional meanings. The word also refers to a bird and a large black bee. Another meaning of the word *nirgrantha* is “a foolish person.” Thus even birds, bees and foolish people engage in the service of the Supreme Lord when they are favored by the pure devotee. Indeed, it is stated in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (10.21.14) that the birds are devoted to the service of the Supreme Lord. It is also stated there (10.15.6) that black bees always follow Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma. Concerning this, Śrī Kṛṣṇa even described the devotional service which the bees and wasps were rendering unto the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Lord Kṛṣṇa said:

*ete 'linas tava yaśo 'khila-loka-tīrtham
gāyanta ādi puruṣānupadam bhajante
prāyo amī muni-gaṇā bhavadīya-mukhyā
gūḍham vane 'pi na jahaty anaghātma-daivam*

“O supremely virtuous one, O Personality of Godhead [Balarāma], just see how these bees and wasps are following You, glorifying Your transcendental fame and worshipping You. Actually these wasps and bees are not as they appear; they are great sages who are taking this opportunity to worship the supreme soul. Although You are not known by ordinary persons, they know You, and they are following and glorifying You.” There is a similar verse in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (10.15.7) which describes the reception given to Balarāma and Kṛṣṇa by the peacocks of Vṛndāvana. “O worshipable one, just see how the peacocks that are returning to their nests are receiving You with full pleasure. These peacocks are just like the damsels of Vraja. The cuckoos on the branches of the trees are also receiving You in their own way. The

residents of Vṛndāvana are so glorious that everyone is prepared to render devotional service to the Lord.” It is stated in another verse of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (10.35.11): “O just see how the cranes and swans on the water are singing the glories of the Lord! Indeed, they are standing in the water meditating and worshiping Him.” It is stated elsewhere in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (2.4.18): “Even the aborigines and uncivilized human beings like Kirātas, Hūṇas, Āndhra, Pulinda, Pulkaśa, Ābhīra, Śumbha, Yavana and Khasa, as well as many other human beings in the lower species, can all be purified simply by taking shelter of the pure devotees.” Therefore Śukadeva Gosvāmī offered his respectful obeisances unto Lord Viṣṇu, whose devotees can work so wonderfully. Another meaning of the word *dhṛti* is “to realize oneself as elevated.” When one realizes his own elevation, he feels that he is free from all miseries and is elevated to the highest platform of life. All devotees of Kṛṣṇa in full Kṛṣṇa consciousness are free from all kinds of material pleasures and miseries. They are fully absorbed in the service of the Lord, and they are always jolly by virtue of their engagement in His transcendental service. They are experienced men of happiness. Indeed, they are so happy that they do not even wish to be promoted to the spiritual planets, for they are happy in every sphere of life. Being full in the transcendental service of the Lord, they desire neither material objects or material sense pleasures. As stated by the Gosvāmīs: “Persons whose senses are fixed in the service of the Supreme Lord can be called peaceful.”

Thus the word *ātmārāma* indicates that even birds, beasts and fools—in short, everyone—can become attracted by the transcendental qualities of Kṛṣṇa, engage in His service and become liberated.

Still another meaning of *ātmā* is “intelligence.” One who has special intelligence is also called *ātmārāma*. The *ātmārāmas* with special intelligence are of two kinds. One is the learned sage, and the other is the fool without book knowledge. Both of these can have an opportunity to associate with the pure devotee. Even the foolish *ātmārāmas* can give up everything and engage themselves in Kṛṣṇa consciousness in pure devotional service. In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* it is stated that the Lord is the origin of everything and that everything emanates from Him. Anyone who is actually intelligent can understand that the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa

is the source of everything and thus engage in His service. As stated in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (2.7.46): “What to speak of persons who are intelligent enough to study the *Vedas*—even less intelligent persons like women, laborers, the *Hūṇa*, *Śabara*, and the birds and beasts can achieve the highest perfectional stage of life.” As previously quoted, *Bhagavad-gītā* (10.10) also indicates that when a person becomes highly intelligent and engages in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, Kṛṣṇa reciprocates by giving him the intelligence by which he can be promoted to the abode of the Supreme Lord.

The Lord then told Sanātana Gosvāmī that the association of good devotees, engagement in the transcendental service of the Lord, the understanding of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, the chanting of the holy name of the Lord, and residence in a holy place like Vṛndāvana or Mathurā are all very important for elevation to the transcendental plane. One need not attain all five of these items; if one is expert in just one of them, he will, without fail, be elevated to the stage of love of Godhead. One who is actually intelligent gives up all material desires and engages in the transcendental service of Kṛṣṇa. The influence of devotional service is such that when a person engages in it, he gives up all material desires and becomes fully attached to Kṛṣṇa, being inspired by the transcendental qualities of the Lord. Such is the beauty of the Lord in the eyes of His devotee.

Another meaning of the word *ātmā* is “nature.” In this case the word *ātmārāma* indicates that everyone is enjoying the particular nature he has acquired. However, the ultimate nature, or the perpetual eternal nature of the living entity, is to serve the Supreme Lord. One who attains to the perfection of understanding his real nature—as eternal servant of the Lord—gives up his designative (material, or bodily) conception of life. That is real knowledge. Those who are in pursuit of knowledge and who get the opportunity to associate with a pure devotee also engage in the devotional service of the Lord. Sages like the four Kumāras, as well as fools and birds, can engage in the Lord’s transcendental service. By being favored with Kṛṣṇa’s causeless mercy, anyone and everyone can be elevated to the platform of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

When one becomes attracted by the transcendental qualities of Kṛṣṇa,

he begins devotional service. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (10.15.8) glorifies the land of Vṛndāvana in this way:

*dhanyeyam adya dharaṇī tṛṇa-vīrudhas tvat-
pāda-spr̥śo druma-latāḥ karajābhimṛṣṭāḥ
nadyo 'drayaḥ khaga-mṛgāḥ sadayāvalokair
gopyo 'ntareṇa bhujayor api yat-spr̥hā śrīḥ*

“This land of Vrajabhūmi is glorified by the touch of Your feet. Being touched by Your fingers, the creepers also glorify You. When You look on the hills, rivers and lower animals, they are all glorified, and the *gopīs*, being embraced by Your transcendental arms, are also glorified.” The *gopīs* (cowherd girls) glorified Vṛndāvana in the following words: “Dear friends, all these inhabitants of Vrajabhūmi—including birds, beasts, and trees—are glorified when they see Lord Kṛṣṇa going to the pasturing ground with His friends and Balarāma.”

The word *ātmā* also means “this body.” The *yogīs* who practice bodily exercises, considering the body to be the self, are also elevated to the transcendental service of the Lord if they associate with pure devotees. There are many people who believe the body to be the self, and they are engaged in many fruitive activities, including bathing rituals and ordinary worldly activities. However, when they come in contact with a pure devotee, they also engage in the transcendental service of the Lord. In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (1.18.12) it is stated: “O my dear Sūta Gosvāmī, even though we have become darkened by the sacrificial smoke of fruitive activities, you have given us the nectar of Kṛṣṇa’s lotus feet.” It is also stated in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (4.21.31): “The waters of the Ganges flow from the tip of the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa, and by bathing in that water, everyone—including fruitive actors and all sages—can wash dirty things from the mind.

Even those who believe that the body is the self, or those who are full of material desires, are also, in a sense, *ātmārāma*. When they associate with the pure devotees of the Lord, they give up their material desires and become perfect in the service of the Lord. The best example of this is found in the *Hari-bhakti-sudhodaya* (7.28), wherein Dhruva Mahārāja said:

*sthānābhilāsī tapasi sthito 'ham
tvām prāptavān deva-munīndra-guhyam
kācam vicinvann aṅgi divya-ratnam
svāmin kṛtārtho 'smi varam na yāce*

“My dear Lord, I came to worship You because I desired some land on this earth, but fortunately I have attained You, who are beyond even the perception of great sages and saintly persons. I came to search out some particles of colored glass, but instead I found a very valuable gem like You. I am satisfied, and I do not desire to ask anything of You.”

There is also another meaning to the word *nirgrantha*. The word can also mean “foolish hunter,” or “wretched poor man.” There is one instance of a hunter who attained salvation and engaged himself in the devotional service of the Lord simply by associating with the pure devotee Nārada. Indeed, Lord Caitanya told Sanātana Gosvāmī the following story of the hunter’s meeting with Nārada.

Once there was a hunter in the forest of Prayāga who was fortunate enough to meet Nārada Muni when the great sage was returning from Vaikuṅṭha after visiting Lord Nārāyaṇa. Nārada came to Prayāga to bathe in the confluence of the Ganges and Yamunā. While passing through the forest, Nārada saw a bird lying on the ground. The bird was half-killed, being pierced by an arrow, and it was chirping pitifully. Further on, Nārada saw a deer flopping about in agony. Further, he saw that a boar was also suffering, and, in another place, he saw a rabbit twitching in pain. All this made him very compassionate, and he began to think, “Who is the foolish man who has committed such sins?”

Devotees of the Lord are generally compassionate upon the miseries of living entities, and what to speak of the great sage Nārada? He became very much aggrieved by this scene, and after proceeding a few steps, he saw the hunter engaged in hunting with bow and arrows. The hunter’s complexion was very dark, and his eyes were red. It appeared to be dangerous just to see him standing there with his bow and arrows, looking just like an associate of Yamarāja, death. Seeing him, Nārada Muni entered deeper into the forest to approach him. As Nārada Muni passed through the forest, all the animals who were caught in the hunter’s traps fled away. The hunter became very angry at this, and he

was just about to call Nārada vile names, but, due to the influence of saintly Nārada, the hunter could not utter such blasphemies. Rather, with gentle behavior, he asked Nārada: “My dear sir, why have you come here while I am hunting? Have you strayed from the general path? Because you have come here, all the animals in my traps have fled.”

“Yes, I am sorry,” Nārada replied. “I have come to you to find my own path and to inquire from you. I have seen that there are many boars, deer and rabbits on the path. They are lying on the forest floor half-dead and flopping about. Who has committed these sinful acts?”

“What you have seen is all right,” the hunter replied. “It was done by me.”

“If you are hunting all these poor animals, why don’t you kill them at once?” Nārada asked. “You half-kill them, and they are suffering in their death pangs. This is a great sin. If you want to kill an animal, why don’t you kill it completely? Why do you leave it half-killed and allow it to die flopping around?”

“My dear Lord,” the hunter replied. “My name is Mṛgāri, enemy of animals. I am simply following the teachings of my father who taught me to half-kill animals and leave them flopping about. When a half-dead animal suffers, I take great pleasure in it.”

“I beg one thing from you only,” Nārada implored. “Please accept it.”

“Oh, yes sir, I shall give you whatever you like,” the hunter said. “If you want some animal skins, come to my house. I have many skins of animals, including tigers and deer. I shall give you whatever you like.”

“I do not want such things,” Nārada replied. “However, I do want something else. If you kindly grant it to me, I shall tell you. Please, henceforth from tomorrow, whenever you kill an animal, please kill it completely. Don’t leave it half-dead.”

“My dear sir, what are you asking of me? What is the difference between half-killing an animal and killing it completely?”

“If you half-kill the animals, they suffer great pain,” Nārada explained.

“And if you give too much pain to other living entities, you commit great sin. There is a great offense committed when you kill an animal completely, but the offense is much greater when you half-kill it. Indeed, the pain which you give half-dead animals will have to be accepted by you in a future birth.”

Although the hunter was very sinful, his heart became softened, and he became afraid of his sins by virtue of his association with a great devotee like Nārada. Those who are grossly sinful are not at all afraid of committing sins, but here we can see that because his purification began in the association of a great devotee like Nārada, the hunter became afraid of his sinful activities. The hunter therefore replied: “My dear sir, from my very childhood I have been taught to kill animals in this way. Please tell me how I can get rid of all the offenses and sinful activities which I have accumulated. I am surrendering unto your feet. Please save me from all the reactions of my sinful activities which I have committed in the past, and please direct me to the proper path so that I can be free.”

“If you actually want to follow my directions, I can tell you the real path by which you can be freed from sinful reactions.”

“I shall follow whatever you say without hesitation,” the hunter agreed. Nārada then told him to first break his bow; only then would he disclose the path of liberation.

“You are asking me to break my bow,” the hunter protested, “but if I break it, what will be the means of my livelihood?”

“Don’t worry about your livelihood,” Nārada said. “I shall send you sufficient grains in order to live.’

The hunter then broke his bow and fell down at the feet of Nārada. Nārada got him to stand up, and he instructed him: “Just go to your home and distribute whatever money and valuables you have to the devotees and the *brāhmaṇas*. Then just come out and follow me wearing only one cloth. Construct a small thatched house on the river bank and sow a *tulasī* plant by that house. Just circumambulate the *tulasī* tree, and every day taste one fallen leaf. Above all, always chant Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare. As far as your livelihood is concerned, I shall send you grains, but you will only accept as much grain as you require for yourself and your wife.”

Nārada then relieved the half-dead animals, and, getting freed from their dreadful condition, they fled away. Upon seeing Nārada execute this miracle, the dark hunter was struck with wonder. After taking Nārada to his home, he bowed down again at his feet.

Nārada returned to his place, and the hunter, after returning home, began to execute the instructions Nārada had given him. In the meantime, news spread amongst all the villages that the hunter had become a devotee. Consequently the residents of the villages came to see the new Vaiṣṇava. It is the Vedic custom to bring grains and fruits whenever one goes to see a saintly person, and since all the villagers saw that the hunter had turned into a great devotee, they brought eatables with them. Thus every day he was offered grains and fruit, so much so that no less than ten to twenty people could have eaten there.

According to Nārada's instructions, he did not accept anything more than what he and his wife required for sustenance.

After some days had passed, Nārada told his friend Parvata Muni: "I have a disciple. Let us go to see him and see if he is doing well."

When the two sages, Nārada and Parvata, went to the hunter's home, the hunter saw his spiritual master coming from the distance, and he began to approach him with great respect. On his way to greet the great sages, the hunter saw that there were ants on the ground before him and that they were hindering his passage. When he reached the sages, he tried to bow down before them, but he saw that there were so many ants that he could not bow down without crushing them. Thus he slowly cleared away the ants with his cloth. When Nārada saw that the hunter was trying to save the lives of the ants in this way, he was reminded of a verse from the *Skanda Purāṇa*: "Is it not wonderful that a devotee of the Lord is not inclined to give any sort of pain to anyone, not even to an ant?"

Although the hunter formerly took great pleasure in half-killing animals, since he became a great devotee of the Lord, he was not prepared to give pain even to an ant. The hunter received the two great sages at his home and offered them a sitting place, brought water, washed their feet, took water to them to drink, and finally both he and his wife touched the water with their heads. After this, they began to feel ecstasy and began to dance and sing Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare. They raised their hands and danced with their clothes flying. When the two great sages saw this ecstasy of love of Godhead manifest in the body of the hunter, Parvata Muni told Nārada: "You are a touchstone, for by

your association even a great hunter has turned into a great devotee.” There is a verse in the *Skanda Purāṇa* which states: “My dear Devarṣi [Nārada], you are glorious, and by your mercy, even the lowest creature, a hunter of animals, also became elevated to the path of devotion and attained transcendental attachment for Kṛṣṇa.”

At length, Nārada inquired of the hunter-devotee: “Are you getting your foodstuff regularly?”

“You send so many people,” the hunter replied, “and they bring so many eatables that we cannot begin to eat them.”

“That’s all right,” Nārada replied. “Whatever you are getting is all right. Now just continue your devotional service in that way.”

After Nārada had spoken this, both Nārada and Parvata Muni disappeared from the hunter’s home. Lord Caitanya recited this story in order to show that even a hunter can engage in the devotional service of Kṛṣṇa by the influence of pure devotees.

Continuing to explain the *Ātmārāma* verse, Lord Caitanya pointed out that the word *ātmā* also indicated all varieties of the Personality of Godhead. Generally the Personality of Godhead Himself, Kṛṣṇa, and His different expansions are all known as the Personality of Godhead.

Anyone who is engaged in the devotional service of any form or extension of the Supreme Personality of Godhead is also called *ātmārāma*. All such devotees engage themselves either in the regulative principles of devotional service or in devotional service in transcendental love. These devotees are also divided into three categories: the associates, those perfected in devotional service, and those newly engaged in devotional service. Newly engaged devotees can be divided into two: those who have already attained attachment for the Lord and those who have not attained such attachment. When considered according to the two divisions of devotional service (namely regulative—and attachment in transcendental love) these classes of devotees become eight in number. By following the regulative principles of devotion, the perfect associates of the Lord are further divided into four classes: the servants, the friends, the parental superiors and the fiancées.

Just as some devotees are perfected by the execution of devotional service, so some of them are eternally perfect. Of those following the

regulative principles of devotional service, there are the advanced and the beginners; and in the transcendental loving service of the Lord, there are sixteen types of devotees. Thus the *ātmārāmas* can be considered to exist in thirty-two divisions. If the words *muni*, *nirgrantha*, *ca* and *api* are applied to the thirty-two classes, then there are fifty-eight different types of devotees. All these devotees can be described by one word: *ātmārāma*. There may be many different kinds of trees standing in the forest, but the word “tree” describes them all.

Thus the Lord gave sixty different meanings to the word *ātmārāma*. In addition, He said that *ātmā* means “the living entity, beginning from the first living creature, Brahmā, down to the ant.” He cited a verse from the Sixth Chapter of *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* in which it is stated that all the energies of the Lord are spiritual. Although this is the case, the energy which is known as the source of the living entity is called spiritual, but the other energy, which is full of ignorance and is manifested in material activities, is called material nature. Even in the material creation, the living entities are innumerable. If by chance a living entity in the material world can associate with a pure devotee, he can engage in the pure devotional service of Kṛṣṇa. “Formerly I thought of sixty different meanings for the word *ātmārāma*,” the Lord told Sanātana Gosvāmī, “but here another meaning comes to My mind by your association.” After hearing the different explanations of the word *ātmārāma*, Sanātana Gosvāmī was struck with wonder, and he fell down in devotion at the feet of Lord Caitanya. “I understand that You are personally the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa,” Sanātana said, “and with Your breathing there are many manifestations of Vedic literature. You are the teacher of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, and You best know the meanings of the verses of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. It is not possible for others to understand the confidential meanings of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* without Your mercy.”

“Do not try to praise Me in that way,” the Lord told Sanātana. “Just try to understand the real nature of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is the sound representation of the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa; therefore *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is not different from Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa is unlimited, and similarly, each word and letter of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* has unlimited meanings. One can understand these meanings through the

association of devotees. Don't, then, say that *Bhāgavatam* is simply a collection of answers to questions.”

There were six questions put by the sages of Naimiṣāraṇya to Sūta Gosvāmī, and Sūta Gosvāmī explained or answered the six questions in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. There is a verse in the Vedic literature in which Lord Śiva says, “As far as *Bhāgavatam* is concerned, I may know it, or Śukadeva or Vyāsadeva may know it, or we may not know it—but actually *Bhāgavatam* is to be understood by devotional service and from a devotee, and not by one's own intelligence or by academic commentaries.” At the beginning of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (1.1.23) the sages of Naimiṣāraṇya asked,

*brūhi yogeśvare kṛṣṇe
brahmaṇye dharma-varmaṇi
svām kāṣṭhām adhunopete
dharmah kaṁ śaraṇam gataḥ*

“My dear Sir, kindly tell us whether the principles of religion have gone with the Lord, after His departure for His own abode. How can we find such principles after His departure?”

The reply was (1.3.43):

*kṛṣṇe sva-dhāmopagate
dharma-jñānādibhiḥ saha
kalau naṣṭa-dṛśām eṣa
purāṇārko 'dhunoditaḥ*

“After Kṛṣṇa departed to His abode with all religious principles, His representative, the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, the *Mahā-Purāṇa*, remains as the blazing, illuminating sun.”

Lord Caitanya then told Sanātana Gosvāmī: “I was just like a madman in describing this *Ātmārāma* verse in so many ways. Do not mind if I have said something mad. But if someone becomes a madman like Me, he can understand the real meaning of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* as I have explained it.”

Then Sanātana Gosvāmī, with folded hands, fell at the feet of Lord Caitanya and prayed. “My dear Lord,” he said, “You have asked me to prepare the regulative principles of devotional service, but I belong to

the lowest caste. I have no knowledge. I do not know how such an important task can be finished by me. If You will kindly give me some hints about the preparation of such a book on devotional service, it may be that I shall be qualified to write it.”

The Lord then blessed him saying, “Whatever you write, by the grace of Kṛṣṇa, will come out of your heart and will be accepted as you have requested. I will also give you some notes that you can take down. The first and foremost point is that one should accept a bona fide spiritual master. That is the beginning of spiritual life.” Lord Caitanya then requested Sanātana Gosvāmī to write down the symptoms of a true *guru* and the symptoms of a true devotee. The symptoms of a devotee are described in the *Padma Purāṇa*: A person who is a qualified *brāhmaṇa* and at the same time has all the symptoms of a devotee can become a spiritual master for all classes of men. Such a devotee and spiritual master must be respected as God Himself. Even though a person may be born in a very respectable *brāhmaṇa* family, he cannot become a bona fide spiritual master if he is not a devotee of the Lord. One should not mistakenly think that a bona fide spiritual master has to be born in a so-called *brāhmaṇa* family. The idea is that a spiritual master must be a qualified *brāhmaṇa*; that is, he must be qualified by his activities. This is confirmed in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* when Nārada speaks of the different symptoms characterizing the four divisions of social life. Nārada therein summarizes that *brāhmaṇas*, *kṣatriyas*, *vaiśyas* and *śūdras* should be selected by their individual qualifications. In his commentary, Śrīdhara Svāmī has noted that birth in a family of *brāhmaṇas* does not necessarily mean that one is a *brāhmaṇa*. One must be qualified with the symptoms of a *brāhmaṇa*, as the symptoms are described in the *śāstras*. In the disciplic succession of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava *sampradāya*, there are two great *ācāryas* (Ṭhākura Narottama and Śyāmānanda Gosvāmī) who were not born in *brāhmaṇa* families but were accepted as spiritual masters by many *brāhmaṇas* of fame, including Gaṅgānārāyaṇa, Rāmakṛṣṇa, etc.

In this way there are symptoms which the prospective devotee evinces, and both the disciple and the spiritual master must see whether each other is eligible to become either a bona fide spiritual master or a bona fide student. One should then know that the only worshipable object is

the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and one should learn the various *mantras* and sacred songs.

The Lord then instructed Sanātana to describe the symptoms of those persons who are eligible to accept the *mantras* and to describe how the *mantras* should be understood and perfected by ritualistic performances. Then the Lord described initiation, morning duties and duties of cleanliness—washing the face and brushing the teeth—the process of work and the prayers to be recited both in the morning and the evening. The Lord also described how one should worship the spiritual master and mark one's body with *gopī-candana*. He also described how one should collect the *tulasī* leaves and wash the room and temple of the Lord, and He also described how one should awaken Kṛṣṇa from His sleep. Lord Caitanya also described different methods for worshiping the Lord, which are the methods of the fivefold paraphernalia and fifty-fold paraphernalia. He described how one should worship the Lord by offering Him *ārati* five times a day, and He described how one should offer food to Kṛṣṇa and lay Him down on the bed. Lord Caitanya also spoke of the effect of going to holy places where there are different temples of the Lord and seeing the form of God in the temple. He also spoke of the glorification of the transcendental name of the Lord and the different offenses which one can commit while worshiping. In the worship of the Lord certain paraphernalia is used, such as conchshell, water, fragrant flowers, prayers and hymns, and there is circumambulation and the offering of obeisances as well. One should follow the regulative principles of *puraścaraṇa* and accept Kṛṣṇa *prasāda*, rejecting foodstuff which is not offered to Kṛṣṇa. Lord Caitanya also cautioned that one should not indulge in defaming a devotee who has the actual symptoms of a devotee.

Lord Caitanya also explained the symptoms of a holy man and the process of satisfying the sage and rejecting the society of undesirable persons. The Lord also advised that one should hear *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* constantly. Also to be followed are duties of the day and duties of the fortnight, as well as fasting on Ekādaśī day. One must also follow the duties of the month and observe ceremonies like the birthday of the Lord, the three specific dates of fasting Ekādaśī, Janmāṣṭamī, Vāmanadvādaśī, Śrī Rāmanavamī and Nṛsimhacaturdaśī. When the fast

days overlap with other days (*viddhā*), they are helpful in the advancement of devotional service. Lord Caitanya further instructed Sanātana Gosvāmī to give documentary evidence from the *purāṇas* in every step. He also mentioned how to establish temples of the Lord, and He described the general behavior, symptoms, and duties and occupation of a Vaiṣṇava. Thus the Lord explained in summary all the details one need know in writing a book on Vaiṣṇava regulative principles. Sanātana Gosvāmī was a great devotee of the Lord, and he was directly instructed to spread the cult of *bhakti* by writing many books. There is a description of Sanātana in *Caitanya-candrodaya*, and it is mentioned there that Sanātana Gosvāmī was one of the most important personalities in the government of Nawab Hussain. His brother, Rūpa Gosvāmī, was also a minister in the government, but both of them gave up their lucrative government posts to become mendicants and serve the Supreme Lord. Externally the brothers became just like ordinary mendicants, but their hearts were filled with transcendental loving service and a great love for the cowherd boy of Vṛndāvana. Indeed, Sanātana Gosvāmī was dear to all pure devotees of his time.

Chapter Seventeen

Lord Caitanya, the Original Personality of Godhead

Following the footsteps of Kavirāja Kṛṣṇadāsa Gosvāmī, we offer our respectful obeisances unto the lotus feet of Lord Caitanya.

Lord Caitanya is described as follows: He is the only shelter for the forlorn, for the most fallen, and He is the only hope for those who are completely devoid of spiritual knowledge. Let us try to discuss His great contribution of devotional service.

The supremely powerful Lord Kṛṣṇa is manifest in five different potencies. Although He is one without a second, in order to serve five specific spiritual purposes, He is manifest in five ways. Such diversity is eternal and blissful, in contrast to the conception of monotonous oneness. From Vedic literatures we can understand that the Absolute Truth, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, eternally exists with His diverse energies. Lord Caitanya appeared with full diverse energies, and they are five in number; therefore Lord Caitanya is said to be Kṛṣṇa with diverse energies.

There is no difference between the energy and the energetic in regard to the Lord's appearance as Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and His four associates—Nityānanda Prabhu, Advaita Prabhu, Gadādhara, and Śrīvāsa. Amongst these five diverse manifestations of the Supreme Lord (as the Lord Himself and His incarnation, expansion and energies) there is no spiritual difference. They are five in one Absolute Truth. For the sake of relishing transcendental flavors in the Absolute Truth, there are five diverse manifestations. These are called the form of a devotee, the identity of a devotee, the incarnation of a devotee, the pure devotee and devotional energy.

Out of the five diversities in the Absolute Truth, the form of Lord Caitanya is that of the original Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa. Lord Nityānanda is the manifestation of the first expansion of the Supreme Lord. Similarly, Advaita Prabhu is an incarnation of the Supreme Lord. These three—Caitanya, Nityānanda and Advaita—belong to the

category of *Viṣṇu-tattva*, or the Supreme Absolute Truth. Śrīvāsa represents the pure devotee, and Gadādhara represents the internal energy of the Lord for the advancement of pure devotion. Therefore Gadādhara and Śrīvāsa, although included in *Viṣṇu-tattva*, are dependent, diverse energies of the Supreme Lord. In other words, they are not different from the energetic, but they are manifest diversely for the sake of relishing transcendental relationships. The whole process of devotional service involves a transcendental reciprocation in the relationship between the worshiper and the worshiped. Without such a diverse exchange of transcendental flavors, devotional service has no meaning.

In the Vedic literature (*Kaṭha Upaniṣad*) it is stated that the Supreme Lord is the supreme living entity amongst all living entities. There are innumerable living entities, but there is one living entity who is the Supreme Absolute Godhead. The difference between the singular living entity and the plural living entities is that the singular living entity is the Lord of all. Lord Caitanya is that supreme living entity, and He descended to reclaim the innumerable fallen living entities. In other words, the specific purpose of Lord Caitanya's advent was to establish the Vedic fact that there is one Supreme Personality of Godhead predominating over and maintaining the innumerable personalities of all living entities. Because the impersonalist (Māyāvādī) philosophers cannot understand this, Lord Caitanya advented Himself to enlighten the people in general about the real nature of the relationship between the Supreme and the many entities.

In *Bhagavad-gītā* Kṛṣṇa's last instructions were that everyone should give up all other engagements and render devotional service unto Him. However, after Kṛṣṇa's disappearance, less intelligent people misunderstood Him. They became contaminated with the Māyāvādī philosophy, which produced so many mental speculators that people forgot the actual position of the Absolute Truth and the living entity. Therefore Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself, as Lord Caitanya, again appeared to teach the fallen souls of this material world the way to approach Lord Kṛṣṇa. The *Bhagavad-gītā* teaches that one should give up everything and be done with this world of material attachment. A pure devotee of Lord Kṛṣṇa and one who follows the philosophy of Lord Caitanya are

one and the same. Caitanya's philosophy is that one should give up everything and worship God, Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa, as the Supreme Lord, the Personality of Godhead, spoke the same words, indicating Himself as the Supreme Lord. However, the Māyāvādī philosophers misunderstood Him. Therefore Lord Caitanya, to clarify the situation, reiterated Lord Kṛṣṇa's message: One should not declare himself to be as good as Kṛṣṇa but should worship Kṛṣṇa as the Supreme Lord.

We make a great mistake if we accept Lord Caitanya as a conditioned soul. He is to be understood as the Supreme Absolute Truth, the Personality of Godhead, Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself. It is therefore said of Lord Caitanya in *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*: "Kṛṣṇa is now present in His five diverse manifestations." Unless one is situated in uncontaminated goodness, it is very difficult to understand Lord Caitanya as the Supreme Personality of Godhead Himself. Thus in order to understand Lord Caitanya, one has to follow the direct disciples of Lord Caitanya—the six Gosvāmīs—and especially the path chalked out by Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī.

The most astonishing fact is that Lord Caitanya, although the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa, never displayed Himself as Kṛṣṇa. Rather, whenever He was detected by intelligent devotees as Lord Kṛṣṇa and was addressed as Lord Kṛṣṇa, He denied it. Indeed, He sometimes placed His hands over His ears, protesting that one should not be addressed as the Supreme Lord. Indirectly, He was teaching the Māyāvādī philosophers that one should not falsely pose himself as the Supreme Lord and thereby misguide people. Nor should followers be foolish enough to accept anyone and everyone as the Supreme Personality of Godhead. One should test by consulting scriptures and by seeing the activities of the person in question. One should not, however, mistake Lord Caitanya and His five diverse manifestations as ordinary human beings. Lord Caitanya is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa Himself. The beauty of Lord Caitanya is that although He is the Supreme Lord, He came as a great devotee to teach all conditioned souls how devotional service should be rendered. Conditioned souls who are interested in devotional service should follow in the exemplary footsteps of Lord Caitanya in order to learn how Kṛṣṇa can be achieved by devotional service. Thus the Supreme Lord Himself teaches the

conditioned soul how He should be approached in devotional service. By analytically studying the five diverse manifestations of the Supreme Lord, we can come to know that Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu is the Supreme Absolute and that Lord Nityānanda is an immediate expansion of the Supreme Absolute Truth. We can also come to understand that Advaita Prabhu is also in the category of the Supreme Personality of Godhead but is subordinate to Lord Caitanya and Nityānanda Prabhu. The Supreme Personality of Godhead and His immediate subordinate expansions are worshipable by the other two—namely the representation of the internal potency and the representation of the marginal potency. The representation of the internal potency, Gadādhara, represents the confidential devotee, and the representation of the marginal potency is the pure devotee. Both of these are worshipers of the other three categories, but all of them are engaged in the transcendental service of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

There is a specific difference between the pure devotee and the confidential devotee. Different potencies of the Lord are engaged in serving the Supreme Lord in different transcendental relationships. They are situated in conjugal love, in parental affection, in friendship and in servitude. By impartially judging, one can find that the internal potencies of the Supreme Lord who are engaged in conjugal love with the Lord are the best of all devotees. Thus both internal devotees and confidential devotees are attracted by the conjugal love of the Supreme Absolute Truth. These are the most confidential devotees of Lord Caitanya. Other pure devotees, who are more or less attached to Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu and Advaita Prabhu, are attracted by other transcendental relationships, such as parental affection, friendship and servitorship. When such devotees are attached to the activities of Lord Caitanya, they at once become confidential devotees in conjugal love with the Supreme Lord.

There is a very nice song sung by Śrī Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura, a great devotee and *ācārya* in the disciplic succession from Lord Caitanya. Narottama dāsa sings: “When will there be transcendental vibrations all over my body simply by my hearing the name of Gaurāṅga? When will tears incessantly flow from my eyes simply by my uttering the names of

the Lord? When will Lord Nityānanda have mercy upon me, and when will all my desires for material enjoyment become insignificant? When shall I be purified by giving up all contaminations of material enjoyment? And when shall I be able to see the transcendental abode, Vṛndāvana? When shall I be eager to accept the six Gosvāmīs as my prime guidance? And when will I be able to understand the conjugal love of Kṛṣṇa?” No one should be eager to understand the conjugal love of Kṛṣṇa without undergoing disciplinary training under the six Gosvāmīs of Vṛndāvana.

The *saṅkīrtana* movement inaugurated by Lord Caitanya is a transcendental pastime of the Lord. “By it I live simultaneously to preach and popularize this movement in the material world.” In that *saṅkīrtana* movement of Lord Caitanya, Nityānanda and Advaita are His expansions, and Gadādhara and Śrīvāsa are His internal and marginal potencies. The living entities are also called marginal potency because they have, potentially, two attitudes—namely the tendency to surrender unto Kṛṣṇa and the tendency to become independent of Him. Due to the propensity for material enjoyment, the living entity becomes contaminated by the material world. When a living entity is dominated by a desire for material enjoyment and becomes entangled in material life, he is subjected to the threefold miseries of material existence. He is just like a seed sown in the earth. If a seed is overpowered by too much water, there is no possibility of its fructifying. Similarly, if a man is captivated by material enjoyment, and even if the seed of such enjoyment is within the heart of the conditioned soul, he can be overpowered by a flood of transcendental activities performed in love of God. In this way his potential seed cannot fructify into a conditional life of material existence. The conditioned living entities in the material world, especially in the present age of Kali, are overpowered by the flood of love of God inaugurated by Lord Caitanya and His associates.

In this connection there is a verse written by His Holiness Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī in his book *Śrī Caitanya-candrāmṛta* which states that materialistic persons are very enthusiastic to maintain their family members, wife and children, and that there are also many mystic speculators who are engaged in speculating about liberation from the miseries of material life and who therefore undergo various austerities

and penances. But those who have discovered the greatest transcendental flavor in the movement of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu no longer have a taste for such activities.

Those who are under the impression that there is material contamination in the form of the Supreme Personality of Godhead and in His devotional service are called Māyāvādī. According to their imperfect speculation, the impersonal Brahman is considered to be the only existence in the cosmic manifestation. As soon as the Supreme Personality of Godhead is introduced, they consider that His personality arises from *māyā*, or the external material energy. Such persons consider all incarnations of the Supreme Lord to be contaminated by this material nature. According to them, the material body and the activities of matter which identify the living entity are all material manifestations. According to them, liberation means the end of individual identification, or of the pure living entity. In other words, the Māyāvādīs maintain that when a living entity is liberated, he becomes one with the supreme impersonal Brahman. According to such Māyāvādī philosophy, the Personality of Godhead, His abode, His devotional service and His emotional devotees are all under the spell of *māyā* and are consequently subjected to the material condition. Those who forget the transcendental nature of the Supreme Lord, His abode, His devotional service and His devotees consider all these to be but manifestations of material activity. When one thinks that there is a possibility of arguing about transcendence, he is called an agnostic, and when he thinks that there is a possibility to criticize transcendence, he is called an atheist. Lord Caitanya wanted to accept all kinds of agnostics, atheists, skeptics and unfaithfuls and swallow them in the flood of love of God. Therefore He accepted the renounced order of life in order to attract all these forces.

Lord Caitanya remained a householder until His twenty-fourth year, and in the twenty-fifth year of His life, He accepted the renounced order. After accepting the renounced order (*sannyāsa*), He attracted many other *sannyāsīs*. When He had been spreading the *saṅkīrtana* movement as a family man, many Māyāvādī *sannyāsīs* did not take His movement very seriously, but after the Lord accepted the *sannyāsa* order of life, He delivered speculative students, atheists and those who are

attached to fruitive activities and unnecessary criticism. The Lord was so kind that He accepted all these people and delivered to them the most important factor in life: love of God.

To fulfill His mission of bestowing love of God upon conditioned souls, Lord Caitanya devised many methods to attract those people disinterested in love of God. After He accepted the renounced order, all agnostics, critics, atheists and mental speculators became His students and followers. Even many who were not Hindus and who did not follow the Vedic principles accepted Lord Caitanya as the supreme teacher. The only persons who avoided the mercy of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu were those *sannyāsīs* who were known as the Māyāvādī philosophers of Benares. The plight of such Māyāvādī philosophers is described by Śrī Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī: “The Māyāvādī philosophers of Benares were less intelligent because they wanted to measure everything by direct perception. But everything that is perceived is calculated by material perception. The Absolute Truth is transcendence, but according to them there is no variegatedness in transcendence, for they say that anything that is full of variegatedness is *māyā*.”

During Caitanya Mahāprabhu’s time there were also other impersonalist philosophers known as the Māyāvādī philosophers of Saranātha. Saranātha is a place near Benares where Buddhist philosophers used to reside, and even today many *stūpas* of the Buddhist Māyāvādīs can be seen. The Māyāvādī philosophers of Saranātha are different from the impersonalists who believe in the impersonal manifestation of Brahman. According to the Saranātha philosophers, there is no spiritual existence at all. The fact is that both the Māyāvādī philosophers of Benares and the philosophers of Saranātha are entrapped by material nature. None of them actually know the nature of Absolute Transcendence. Although superficially accepting the Vedic principles and considering themselves to be transcendentalists, the philosophers of Benares do not accept spiritual variegatedness. Because they have no information about devotional service, they are called nondevotees, or those who are against the devotional service of Lord Kṛṣṇa.

The impersonalists speculate on the Supreme Personality of Godhead and His devotees and subject them to the tests of direct perception. However, the Lord, His devotee and His devotional service are not

subject to direct perception. In other words, spiritual variegatedness is unknown to the Māyāvādī philosophy; therefore all the Māyāvādī philosophers and *sannyāsīs* criticized Lord Caitanya when He was conducting His *saṅkīrtana* movement. They were surprised to see Lord Caitanya after He accepted His *sannyāsa* order from Keśava Bhāratī, for Keśava Bhāratī belonged to the Māyāvādī school. Since Lord Caitanya therefore belonged to the Māyāvādī sect of *sannyāsīs*, the Māyāvādīs were surprised to see Him engaged in chanting and dancing instead of hearing or reading *Vedānta*, as is the custom. The Māyāvādī philosophers are very fond of *Vedānta*, and they misinterpret it in their own way. Instead of understanding their own position, they criticized Lord Caitanya as an unauthorized *sannyāsī*, arguing that because He was a sentimentalist, He was not actually a bona fide *sannyāsī*.

All these criticisms were carried to Lord Caitanya when He was at Benares, and He was not at all surprised at them. He even smiled when the news was carried to Him. He did not associate with the Māyāvādī *sannyāsīs* but remained alone and executed His own mission. After staying for some days in Benares, He started for Mathurā.

Chapter Eighteen

The Conversations with Prakāśānanda

According to the principles of the Māyāvādī *sannyāsīs*, singing, dancing and playing musical instruments are strictly prohibited, for they are considered to be sinful activities. The Māyāvādī *sannyāsī* is simply supposed to engage in the study of *Vedānta*. Therefore when the Māyāvādī *sannyāsīs* in Benares saw that Lord Caitanya was indulging in singing, dancing, playing musical instruments and always chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare, they concluded that He was not educated and that, out of sentiment, He was misleading His followers. Śaṅkarācārya's injunction was that a *sannyāsī* should always be engaged in the study of *Vedānta* and that he should be satisfied by simply having one cloth and nothing more. Because Lord Caitanya neither studied *Vedānta* formally nor ceased from singing and dancing He was criticized by all the *sannyāsīs* at Benares, as well as by their householder followers.

When Lord Caitanya received news of this criticism from His students and disciples, He simply smiled and started for Mathurā and Vṛndāvana. When He returned again to Benares on His way from Mathurā to Jagannātha Purī, He stayed at the house of Candraśekhara, who was considered a *śūdra* because he was a clerk. In spite of this, Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu made His residence at his home. Lord Caitanya made no distinctions between *brāhmaṇas* and *śūdras*; He accepted anyone who was devoted. Customarily, a *sannyāsī* is supposed to take shelter and eat in the home of a *brāhmaṇa*, but Caitanya Mahāprabhu, as the independent Supreme Personality of Godhead, used His own discretion and decided to stay at Candraśekhara's house.

In those days, by misusing their brahminical heritage, the *brāhmaṇas* passed a law to the effect that anyone not born in a *brāhmaṇa* family was to be considered a *śūdra*. Thus even the *kṣatriyas* and *vaidyas* were also considered *śūdras*. Because the *vaidyas* were supposed to be descendants of *brāhmaṇa* fathers and *śūdra* wives, they were sometimes called *śūdras*. Thus Candraśekhara Ācārya, although born in a *vaidya* family, was

called a *śūdra* in Benares. As long as Lord Caitanya stayed in Benares, He remained at Candraśekhara's home, and He took His food at the home of Tapana Miśra.

When Sanātana Gosvāmī met Lord Caitanya at Benares, he learned the process and principles of devotional service during two months of continuous teaching. Lord Caitanya's instructions to Sanātana Gosvāmī have been described in the first part of this book. After receiving these teachings, Sanātana Gosvāmī was authorized to propagate the principles of devotional service and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. It was during this time that both Tapana Miśra and Candraśekhara Ācārya were feeling very sorry about the strong criticism against Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu, and they came together and prayed for the Lord to meet the Māyāvādī *sannyāsīs*.

"We have been mortified by hearing unfavorable criticisms from the Māyāvādī *sannyāsīs* against You," they informed Lord Caitanya. "Indeed, it has become intolerable for us." They requested the Lord to do something so that these criticisms might be stopped. While they were discussing this subject, a *brāhmaṇa* came to Lord Caitanya and invited Him to his home. All the *sannyāsīs* had been invited but Caitanya Mahāprabhu, and now the *brāhmaṇa* came to invite Him. Knowing that the Lord did not associate with Māyāvādī *sannyāsīs*, the *brāhmaṇa* fell down at Caitanya Mahāprabhu's feet and implored Him: "Although I know that You do not accept invitations, I still implore You to come and take *prasāda* at my home with the other *sannyāsīs*. If You accept this invitation, I will consider it a special favor."

The Lord took this opportunity and accepted the *brāhmaṇa*'s invitation in order to meet the Māyāvādī *sannyāsīs*. Actually this was an arrangement made by the Lord Himself. Although the *brāhmaṇa* who invited Him knew that the Lord did not accept any invitations, he was still very eager to invite Him.

The next day Lord Caitanya went to the house of the *brāhmaṇa* and saw that all the Māyāvādī *sannyāsīs* were sitting there. He offered His respects to all the *sannyāsīs* as was customary, and then went to wash His feet. After washing, He sat down beside the foot basin, a little distance from the other *sannyāsīs*. While He was sitting there, the *sannyāsīs* saw a glaring effulgence emanating from His body. Being attracted by this

glaring effulgence, all the Māyāvādī sannyāsīs stood up and showed Him their respects. Amongst them was one *sannyāsī* named Prakāśānanda Sarasvatī. He was the chief amongst the impersonalist *sannyāsīs*, and he addressed Lord Caitanya with great humility, asking Him to come and sit amongst them.

“My dear Sir, why are You sitting in that filthy place?” he asked. “Please come and sit with us.”

“Oh, I belong to an inferior sect of *sannyāsīs*,” Lord Caitanya replied. “Therefore I think that I should not sit with you. Let Me remain down here.”

Prakāśānanda was surprised to hear such a thing from such a learned man, and he actually took the Lord’s hand and requested Him to please come and sit with him. When Lord Caitanya was finally seated amongst them, Prakāśānanda Sarasvatī said, “I think Your name is Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya, and I understand that You belong to our Māyāvādī sect because You have taken *sannyāsa* from Keśava Bhāratī, who belongs to the Śāṅkarācārya *sampradāya*.”

According to the Śāṅkara sect, there are ten different names for *sannyāsīs*. Out of them, three names—Tīrtha, Āśrama and Sarasvatī—are given to the *sannyāsīs* considered to be the most enlightened and cultured. Since Lord Caitanya was a Vaiṣṇava, He was naturally humble and meek, and He wanted to give the better sitting place to Prakāśānanda, who belonged to the Sarasvatī *sampradāya*. According to Śāṅkara’s principles, a *brahmacārī* of the Bhāratī school is called Caitanya. However, although Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Mahāprabhu took *sannyāsa*, He kept His *brahmacārī* name and did not take up the title of Bhāratī.

“Well, Sir,” Prakāśānanda Sarasvatī continued, “You belong to our Śāṅkara sect, and You are living in Benares—so why don’t You mix with us? What is the reason? Another thing—You are a *sannyāsī* and are supposed to engage simply in the study of *Vedānta*, but we see that instead You are always engaged in chanting and dancing and playing music. What is the reason? These are the activities of emotional and sentimental people but You are a qualified *sannyāsī*. Why not engage in the study of *Vedānta*? By Your effulgence it appears to us that You are just like the Supreme Nārāyaṇa, the Personality of Godhead, but by

Your behavior, You appear to be otherwise. So we are inquisitive to know why You act in this way.”

“My dear sir, My spiritual master considered Me a great fool,” Lord Caitanya replied. “Therefore he has more or less punished Me by saying that because I am such a fool I have no capacity to study *Vedānta*. So in turn he gave Me the chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare. My spiritual master told Me, ‘Just go on chanting this Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra*: it will make You all-perfect.’ ”

Actually Lord Caitanya was neither foolish nor ignorant of the principles of *Vedānta*. His purpose was to demonstrate to modern society that fools who have no history of penance and austerity should not try to study *Vedānta* just for some recreational purpose. In His *Śikṣāṣṭaka*, Lord Caitanya said that one should be in a humble state of mind, should think himself lower than the grass on the street, should be more tolerant than a tree, and should be devoid of all sense of prestige and ready to offer all kinds of respects to others. In such a state of mind, one can chant the *Vedānta* philosophy or the holy name of God constantly. The Lord also wanted to teach that a serious student of transcendental science should follow the words of his spiritual master. According to the calculations of the spiritual master, Lord Caitanya appeared to be a fool; therefore he said that He should not indulge in the study of *Vedānta* but should continue chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra*. Lord Caitanya strictly obeyed this order. In other words, Lord Caitanya impressed on the Māyāvādīs that the words of a bona fide spiritual master must be strictly followed. By following them, one becomes perfect in all respects.

Vedānta indicates that the last word of Vedic knowledge is the understanding of Kṛṣṇa. *Vedaiś ca sarvair aham eva vedyo vedānta-kṛd veda-vid eva cāham*: “By all the *Vedas* am I to be known; indeed, I am the compiler of *Vedānta*, and I am the knower of the *Vedas*.” (Bg. 15.15)

When one actually comes to understand the *Vedānta*, he comes to know Kṛṣṇa and his relationship with Kṛṣṇa. One who understands Kṛṣṇa, understands everything. The knower of Kṛṣṇa is always engaged in the transcendental loving service of Kṛṣṇa. This is confirmed by the Lord Himself in *Bhagavad-gītā*:

*aham sarvasya prabhavo
mattaḥ sarvaṁ pravartate
iti matvā bhajante mām
budhā bhāva-samanvitāḥ*

“I am the source of all spiritual and material worlds. Everything emanates from Me. The wise who know this perfectly engage in My devotional service and worship Me with all their hearts.” (Bg. 10.8) A living entity is eternally related with Kṛṣṇa in the relationship of master and servant. Once that service is wanting—or, in other words, when one is not situated in Kṛṣṇa consciousness—it is to be understood that study of *Vedānta* is insufficient. When one does not understand Kṛṣṇa or does not engage in His transcendental loving service, it is to be understood that he is adverse to the study of *Vedānta* and to the understanding of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. The path of *Vedānta* study shown by Lord Caitanya should be followed by all. A person who is puffed up by so-called education and who has no humility does not seek the protection of a bona fide spiritual master. He thinks that he does not require a spiritual master and that he can achieve the highest perfection by his own efforts. Such persons are not eligible for the study of *Vedānta-sūtra*. Those who are under the spell of material energy do not follow the instructions of the disciplic succession but try to manufacture something of their own and thereby step outside the sphere of *Vedānta* study. A bona fide spiritual master must always condemn such independent mental speculators. If the bona fide spiritual master directly points out the foolishness of a disciple, it should not be taken otherwise.

A person who is completely ignorant of the science of God cannot be considered learned. More or less, everyone who is not in Kṛṣṇa consciousness is subject to foolishness. Sometimes we display our foolishness by accepting someone who is barely educated as a spiritual master. It is our duty to understand the Supreme Personality of Godhead, whose lotus feet are worshiped by all the *Vedas*. One who does not understand Him and is proud of a false understanding of *Vedānta* is actually a fool. Mundane attempts at academic knowledge are simply another type of foolishness. As long as one cannot understand the

cosmic manifestation as a representation of the three modes of material nature, he must be considered to be in the darkness of inebriety and caught in the duality of this material world. A person who is in perfect knowledge of *Vedānta* becomes a servitor of the Supreme Lord, who is the maintainer and sustainer of the whole cosmic manifestation. As long as one is not transcendental to the service of the limited, he cannot have knowledge of *Vedānta*.

As long as one is within the limited jurisdiction of fruitive activities or is involved in mental speculation, he may perhaps be eligible to study or teach the theoretical knowledge of *Vedānta-sūtra*, but he cannot understand the supreme, eternal, transcendental (completely liberated) vibration of Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare. One who has achieved perfection in chanting the transcendental Hare Kṛṣṇa vibration does not have to separately learn the philosophy of *Vedānta-sūtra*. According to the teachings of Caitanya Mahāprabhu, the bona fide spiritual master, those who do not understand the transcendental vibration as being nondifferent from the Supreme and who try to become Māyāvādī philosophers or experts in *Vedānta-sūtra* are all fools. Studying *Vedānta-sūtra* by one's own efforts (the ascending process of knowledge) is another sign of foolishness. He who has attained a taste for chanting the transcendental vibration, however, actually attains the conclusion of *Vedānta*. In this connection, there are two verses in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* which are very instructive. The purport of the first is that even if a low caste person is engaged in chanting the transcendental vibration, it is to be understood that he has performed all types of renunciation, austerities and sacrifice and has studied all the *Brahma-sūtras*. Thus one can be able to chant Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare. The purport of the second verse is that one who chants the two syllables Ha-ri must be considered to have studied all the *Vedas*: the *R̥g Veda*, *Atharva Veda*, *Yajur Veda* and *Sāma Veda*.

On the other hand, there are many so-called devotees who think *Vedānta* is not meant for devotees. Such people are ignorant of the fact that *Vedānta* is the only platform of pure devotees. All the great *ācāryas* of the four Vaiṣṇava *sampradāyas* have made commentaries on the

Vedānta-sūtra, but the so-called devotees known as *prākṛta-sahajiyā* carefully avoid the study of *Vedānta-sūtra*. The *prākṛta-sahajiyā* mistakenly take the pure devotees and Vaiṣṇava *ācāryas* to be mental speculators or fruitive actors. Consequently they themselves become *Māyāvādīs* and leave the service of the Supreme Lord.

Understanding the *Vedānta-sūtra* by academic knowledge never enables one to understand the value of the transcendental vibration. People who are entangled in academic knowledge are conditioned souls who are confused about the facts of “I”, “mine” and “my” understanding.

Consequently they are unable to detach their minds from the external energy. When a person actually attains transcendental knowledge, he becomes free from this duality and engages in the transcendental loving service of the Supreme Lord. The Lord’s service is the only means by which one can become detached from material activities. A person properly initiated by a bona fide spiritual master and engaged in chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare gradually becomes freed from the conception of “I” and “mine” and becomes attached to the Lord’s transcendental loving service in one of the five transcendental relationships. Such transcendental service is not a subject matter for gross and subtle bodies. Only when one can understand that there is no difference between the Supreme and His name can one be situated in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. At such a time one no longer needs to make grammatical adjustments. Rather, one becomes more interested in petitioning the Lord: “Hare Kṛṣṇa—O my Lord, O energy of the Lord, please engage me in Your service!”

Lord Caitanya explained all this to Prakāśānanda Sarasvatī and told him that He had heard all this from His spiritual master. He further informed Prakāśānanda Sarasvatī that His spiritual master had taught Him that *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is the actual commentary on *Vedānta-sūtra*, as stated in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* by Vyāsadeva, the author of *Vedānta-sūtra*.

A student is to be considered perfected when he understands the identity of the holy name and the Supreme Lord. Unless one is under the shelter of a realized spiritual master, his understanding of the Supreme is simply foolishness. However, one can fully understand the

transcendental Lord by service and devotion. When Lord Caitanya offenselessly chanted the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra*, He declared that the *mantra* could at once deliver a conditioned soul from material contamination. In this age of Kali there is no alternative to chanting this *mahā-mantra*. It is stated that the essence of all Vedic literature is the chanting of this holy name of Kṛṣṇa: Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare. Lord Caitanya also told Prakāśānanda Sarasvatī, “In order to convince Me about this essential fact of Vedic knowledge, My spiritual master has taught Me a verse from *Bṛhan-nāradya Purāṇa* [38.126]. *Harer nāma harer nāma harer nāmaiva kevalam/ kalau nāsty eva nāsty eva nāsty eva gatir anyathā*: [Adi 17.21] In this age of quarrel and hypocrisy, the only means of deliverance is the chanting of the holy name of the Lord. There is no other way. There is no other way. There is no other way.” In three out of the four millenniums (namely Satya-yuga, Tretā-yuga and Dvāpara-yuga) people had the honor to be able to understand transcendence through the path of disciplic succession. However, in the present age, people have no interest in the disciplic succession. Instead, they have invented many paths of logic and argument. This individual attempt to understand the supreme transcendence (called the ascending process) is not approved by the *Vedas*. The Absolute Truth must descend from the absolute platform. He is not to be understood by the ascending process. The holy name of the Lord—Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare—is a transcendental vibration because it comes from the transcendental platform, the supreme abode of Kṛṣṇa. Because there is no difference between Kṛṣṇa and His name, the holy name of Kṛṣṇa is as pure, perfect and liberated as Kṛṣṇa Himself. Academic scholars have no entrance by means of logic and other argument into the understanding of the transcendental nature of the holy name of God. The single path in understanding the transcendental nature of Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare is the chanting of these names with faith and adherence. Such chanting will release one from designated conditions arising from the gross and subtle bodies.

In this age of logic, argument and disagreement, the chanting of Hare

Kṛṣṇa is the only means for self-realization. Because this transcendental vibration alone can deliver the conditioned soul, it is considered to be the essence of the *Vedānta-sūtra*. According to the material conception, there is duality between the name, form, quality, emotions and activities of a person and the person himself, but as far as the transcendental vibration is concerned, there is no such limitation, for it descends from the spiritual world. In the spiritual world there is no difference between the name of the person and the quality of the person. Of course in the material world there is a difference. Because the Māyāvādī philosophers cannot understand this, they cannot utter the transcendental vibration. Lord Caitanya then told Prakāśānanda Sarasvatī that because He received the order from His spiritual master, He was constantly chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare. “As a result of this chanting,” the Lord said, “I sometimes become very impatient and cannot restrain Myself from dancing and laughing or crying and singing. Indeed, I become just like a madman. When I first wondered whether I had become mad by chanting this Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare, I approached My spiritual master and informed him that I had gone mad by chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare. Thus I asked him what was My actual position.” In the *Nārada-ṣaṅkṛānta* it is stated:

*eṣo vedāḥ ṣaḍ-aṅgāni
chandāmsi vividhāḥ surāḥ
sarvam aṣṭākṣarāntaḥstham
yac cānyad api vāñmayam
sarva-vedānta-sārārthaḥ
saṁsārārṇava-tāraṇaḥ*

“All Vedic rituals, *mantras* and understanding are compressed into eight words: Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare.” Similarly, in the *Kalisantaraṇa Upaniṣad* it is stated:

*hare kṛṣṇa hare kṛṣṇa
kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa hare hare*

*hare rāma hare rāma
rāma rāma hare hare*

*iti ṣoḍaśakam nāmnām
kali-kalmaṣa-nāśanam
nātaḥ parataroṇyāḥ
sarva-vedeṣu dṛśyate*

“The sixteen words—Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare—are especially meant for counteracting the contaminations of Kali. To save oneself from the contamination of Kali, there is no alternative but the chanting of these sixteen words.”

Lord Caitanya informed Prakāśānanda Sarasvatī that when His spiritual master understood Him, he said, “It is the transcendental nature of the holy names of Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare to transport a man into spiritual madness. Anyone who sincerely chants this holy name very soon attains elevation to the platform of love of God and becomes mad after God. This madness arising from love of God is the first perfectional stage for a human being.”

Generally a human being is interested in religion, economic development, sense gratification and liberation, but love of God is above all these. A bona fide spiritual master chants the holy names—Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare—and the transcendental sound vibration enters into the ear of the disciple, and if a disciple follows in the footsteps of his spiritual master and chants the holy name with similar respect, he actually comes to worship the transcendental name. When the transcendental name is worshiped by the devotee, the name Himself spreads His glories within the heart of a devotee. When a devotee is perfectly qualified in chanting the transcendental vibration of the holy name, he is quite fit to become a spiritual master and to deliver all the people of the world. The chanting of the holy name is so powerful that it gradually establishes its supremacy above everything in the world. The devotee who chants it becomes transcendently situated in ecstasy and sometimes laughs, cries and dances in his ecstasy. Sometimes the

unintelligent put hindrances in the path of chanting this *mahā-mantra*, but one who is situated on the platform of love of Godhead chants the holy name loudly for all concerned. As a result, everyone becomes initiated in the chanting of the holy names—Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare. By chanting and hearing the holy names of Kṛṣṇa, a person can remember the forms and qualities of Kṛṣṇa.

Chapter Nineteen

Further Talks with Prakāśānanda

The transcendental ecstatic attachment for Kṛṣṇa which results from perfectly understanding that Kṛṣṇa's person and name are identical is called *bhāva*. One who has attained *bhāva* is certainly not contaminated by material nature. He actually enjoys transcendental pleasure from *bhāva*, and when *bhāva* is intensified, it is called love of Godhead. Lord Caitanya told Prakāśānanda Sarasvatī that the holy name of Kṛṣṇa, called the *mahā-mantra* (great chanting), enables anyone who chants it to attain the stage of love of Godhead, or intensified *bhāva*. Such love of Godhead is the ultimate human necessity, for when one compares it with other necessities (namely religion, economic development, sense gratification and liberation), these other so-called necessities seem most insignificant. When one is absorbed in temporary designated existence, he hankers after sense gratification and liberation. However, love of Godhead is the eternal nature of the soul; it is unchangeable, beginningless and endless. Therefore temporary sense gratification or a desire for liberation cannot compare with the transcendental nature of love of God. Love of God is the fifth dimension in the human endeavor. Compared with the ocean of love of transcendental pleasure, the conception of impersonal Brahman is no more significant than a drop of water.

Lord Caitanya next explained that His spiritual master had confirmed the validity of His ecstasy which resulted from His chanting the holy name of God and also confirmed that the essence of all Vedic literature is the attainment of love of Godhead. Lord Caitanya's spiritual master had said that the Lord was fortunate enough to have attained love of Godhead. By attaining such transcendental love, one's heart becomes very anxious to attain direct contact with the Lord. Feeling such transcendental sentiment, one sometimes laughs and sometimes cries, sings and dances like a madman, and sometimes traverses hither and thither. In this way there are various ecstatic symptoms evinced: crying, changing bodily color, madness, bereavement, silence, pride, ecstasy and

gentleness. Frequently the person in love with God dances, and such dancing places him in the ocean of the nectar of love of Kṛṣṇa. Lord Caitanya said that His spiritual master told Him: “It is very good that You have attained such a perfectional stage of love of Godhead. Because of Your attainment, I am very much obliged to You.” The father becomes more enlivened when he sees his son advance beyond himself. Similarly, the spiritual master takes more pleasure in seeing his disciple advance than in advancing himself. Thus Lord Caitanya’s spiritual master blessed Him, telling Him to “dance, sing, propagate this *saṅkīrtana* movement, and by instructing people about Kṛṣṇa, try to deliver them from nescience.” Lord Caitanya’s spiritual master also taught Him the following verse from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.2.40):

*evam-vrataḥ sva-priya-nāma-kīrtiyā
jātānurāgo druta-citta uccaiḥ
hasaty atho roditi rauti gāyaty
unmāda-van nṛtyati loka-bāhyaḥ*

“A person who is constantly engaged in devotional service to Kṛṣṇa and who chants His holy name becomes so transcendently attached to the chanting that his heart becomes softened without extraneous endeavor. When this happens, he exhibits transcendental ecstasies and sometimes laughs, sometimes cries, sings and dances—not exactly in an artistic way, but just like a madman.”

Lord Caitanya further informed Prakāśānanda Sarasvatī: “Because I have full faith in My spiritual master’s words, I am always engaged in chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare. I do not exactly know how I have become just like a madman, but I believe the name of Kṛṣṇa has induced Me. I realize that the transcendental pleasure derived from chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare is just like an ocean. In comparison, all other pleasures, including the pleasure of impersonal realization, are like shallow water in channels.”

It appears from the talks of Lord Caitanya that a person who cannot keep his faith in the words of the spiritual master and who acts independently cannot attain the desired success in chanting Hare

Kṛṣṇa. In the Vedic literatures it is stated that the import of all transcendental literature is revealed to one who has unflinching faith in the Supreme Lord and his spiritual master. Lord Caitanya firmly believed in the statements of His spiritual master, and He never neglected the instructions of His spiritual master by stopping His *saṅkīrtana* movement. Thus the transcendental potency of the holy name encouraged Him more and more in chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa, the *mahā-mantra*.

Lord Caitanya immediately informed Prakāśānanda that in the modern age people in general are more or less bereft of all spiritual intellect. When such people come under the influence of Śaṅkarācārya's Māyāvādī (impersonalist) philosophy before beginning the most confidential *Vedānta-sūtras*, their natural tendency toward obedience to the Supreme is checked. The supreme source of everything is naturally respected by everyone, but this natural tendency is hampered when one takes to the impersonalist conceptions of Śaṅkara. Thus the spiritual master of Lord Caitanya suggested that it is better that one not study the *Śārīraka-bhāṣya* of Śaṅkarācārya, for it is very harmful to people in general. Indeed, the common man does not even have the intelligence to penetrate into the jugglery of words. He is better advised to chant the *mahā-mantra*: Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare. In this quarrelsome age of Kali there is no alternative for self-realization.

After hearing the arguments and talks of Caitanya Mahāprabhu, all the Māyāvādī *sannyāsīs* who were present became pacified and replied with sweet words: "Dear sir, what You have spoken is all true. A person who attains love of Godhead is certainly very fortunate, and undoubtedly You are very fortunate to have attained this stage. But what is the fault in *Vedānta*? It is the duty of a *sannyāsī* to read and understand *Vedānta*. Why do You not study it?"

According to Māyāvādī philosophers, *Vedānta* refers to the *Śārīraka* commentary of Śaṅkarācārya. When impersonal philosophers refer to *Vedānta* and the *Upaniṣads*, they are actually referring to the commentaries of Śaṅkarācārya, the greatest teacher of Māyāvādī philosophy. After Śaṅkarācārya came Sadānanda-yogī, who claimed that the *Vedānta* and *Upaniṣads* should be understood through the

commentaries of Śaṅkarācārya. Factually, this is not so. There are many commentaries on *Vedānta* and the *Upaniṣads* made by the Vaiṣṇava *ācāryas*, and these are preferred to those of Śaṅkarācārya. However, the Māyāvādī philosophers influenced by Śaṅkarācārya do not attribute any importance to the Vaiṣṇava understandings.

There are four different sects of Vaiṣṇava *ācāryas*—the Śuddhādvaita, Viśiṣṭādvaita, Dvaitādvaita and Acintya-bhedābheda. All the Vaiṣṇava *ācāryas* in these schools have written commentaries on the *Vedānta-sūtra*, but the Māyāvādī philosophers do not recognize them. The Māyāvādīs distinguish between Kṛṣṇa and Kṛṣṇa's body, and therefore they do not recognize the worship of Kṛṣṇa by the Vaiṣṇava philosophers. Thus when the Māyāvādī *sannyāsīs* asked Lord Caitanya why He did not study the *Vedānta-sūtra*, the Lord replied, "Dear sirs, you have asked why I do not study *Vedānta*, and in answer to this I would speak something, but I am afraid that you would be sorry to hear it." "We shall be very much pleased to hear You," all the *sannyāsīs* replied. "You appear just like Nārāyaṇa, and Your speeches are so nice that we are taking great pleasure in them. We are very much obliged to see and hear You. Therefore we shall be very glad to hear patiently and accept whatever You say."

The Lord then began to speak on *Vedānta* philosophy as follows: *Vedānta-sūtra* is spoken by the Supreme Lord Himself. The Supreme Lord, in His incarnation as Vyāsadeva, has compiled this great philosophical treatise. Since Vyāsadeva is an incarnation of the Supreme Lord, he cannot be likened to an ordinary person, who has the four defects which arise due to contact with material existence. The defects of a conditioned soul are: (1) he must commit mistakes; (2) he must be illusioned; (3) he must possess the tendency to cheat others; and (4) all his senses must be imperfect. We must understand that the incarnation of God is transcendental to all these defects. Thus whatever has been spoken and written by Vyāsadeva is considered to be perfect. The *Upaniṣads* and *Vedānta-sūtra* aim at the same goal: the Supreme Absolute Truth. When we accept the import of *Vedānta-sūtra* and the *Upaniṣads* directly as they are stated, we become glorified. The commentaries made by Śaṅkarācārya, however, are indirect and are very dangerous for the common man to read, for by understanding the import

of the *Upaniṣads* in such an indirect, disruptive way, one practically bars himself from spiritual realization.

According to the *Skanda* and *Vāyu Purāṇas*, the word *sūtra* refers to a condensed work which carries meaning and import of immeasurable strength without mistake or fault. The word *vedānta* means “the end of Vedic knowledge.” In other words, any book which deals with the subject matter indicated by all the *Vedas* is called *Vedānta*. For example, *Bhagavad-gītā* is *Vedānta* because in *Bhagavad-gītā* the Lord says that the ultimate goal of all Vedic research is Kṛṣṇa. Thus *Bhagavad-gītā* and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, which aim only at Kṛṣṇa, are to be understood to be *Vedānta*.

In transcendental realization there are three divisions of knowledge called *prasthāna-traya*. That department of knowledge which is proved by Vedic instruction (like the *Upaniṣads*) is called *śruti-prasthāna*. Authoritative books indicating the ultimate goal and written by liberated souls like Vyāsadeva (for example, *Bhagavad-gītā*, *Mahābhārata* and the *Purāṇas*, especially *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, the *Mahā-Purāṇa*) are called *smṛti-prasthāna*. From Vedic literatures we understand that the *Vedas* originated from the breathing of Nārāyaṇa. Vyāsadeva, who is an incarnation of the power of Nārāyaṇa, has compiled the *Vedānta-sūtra* (*nyāya-prasthāna*), but according to Śaṅkara’s commentaries, Apāntaratamā Ṛṣi is also accredited with having compiled the codes of *Vedānta-sūtra*. According to Lord Caitanya, the codes of the *Pañcarātra* and the codes of *Vedānta* are one and the same. Since the *Vedānta-sūtra* is compiled by Vyāsadeva, it should be understood to be spoken by Nārāyaṇa Himself. From all descriptive literatures dealing with *Vedānta-sūtra*, it appears that there were many other ṛṣis contemporary with Vyāsadeva who also discussed *Vedānta-sūtra*. These sages were Ātreya, Āśmarathya, Auḍulomi, Kārṣṇājini, Kāśakṛtsna, Jaimini, Bādarī and other sages such as Pārāśarī and Karmandī.

Actually in the first two chapters of *Vedānta-sūtra* the relationship between the living entities and the Supreme Lord is explained, and in the Third Chapter the discharge of devotional service is explained. The Fourth Chapter deals with the relationship which results from discharging devotional service. The natural commentary on *Vedānta-sūtra* is *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. The great *ācāryas* of the four Vaiṣṇava

communities (*sampradāyas*)—namely, Rāmānujācārya, Madhvācārya, Viṣṇusvāmī and Nimbārka—have also written commentaries on *Vedānta-sūtra* by following the principles of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. At present the followers of all the *ācāryas* have written many books following the principles of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* as the commentary on the *Vedānta*. Śaṅkara’s commentary on *Vedānta-sūtra*, known as *Śārīraka-bhāṣya*, is very much adored by the impersonalist scholars, but commentaries written on the *Vedānta* written from the materialistic point of view are completely adverse to the transcendental service of the Lord. Consequently Lord Caitanya said that direct commentaries on the *Upaniṣads* and *Vedānta-sūtra* are glorious, but that anyone who follows the indirect path of Śaṅkarācārya’s *Śārīraka-bhāṣya* is certainly doomed. Lord Caitanya admitted that Śaṅkarācārya was an incarnation of Lord Śiva, and it is known that Lord Śiva is one of the greatest devotees (a *mahājana*) of the *Bhāgavata* school. There are twelve great authorities on devotional service, and Lord Śiva is one of them. Why, then, did he adopt the process of Māyāvādī philosophy? The answer is given in *Padma Purāṇa*, where Lord Śiva states:

*māyāvādam asac-chāstram
pracchannaṁ bauddham ucyate
mayaiva kalpitaṁ devi
kalau brāhmaṇa-rūṣiṇā*

“The Māyāvādī philosophy is veiled Buddhism.” In other words, the voidist philosophy of Buddha is more or less repeated in the Māyāvādī philosophy of impersonalism, although the Māyāvādī philosophy claims to be directed by the Vedic conclusions. Lord Śiva, however, admits that this philosophy is manufactured by him in the age of Kali in order to mislead the atheists. “Actually the Supreme Personality of Godhead has His transcendental body,” Lord Śiva states. “But I describe the Supreme as impersonal. I also explain the *Vedānta-sūtra* according to the same principles of Māyāvādī philosophy.”

In the *Śiva Purāṇa* the Supreme Lord says:

*dvāparādau yuge bhūtvā
kalayā mānuṣādiṣu*

*svāgamaīḥ kalpitais tvaṁ ca
janān mad-vimukhān kuru*

“In the beginning of the Dvāpara-yuga, directed by My orders, many sages will bewilder the people in general by Māyāvādī philosophy.” In the *Padma Purāṇa* Lord Śiva personally tells *Bhāgavatīdevī*:

*śṛṇu devi parakṣyāmi
tāmasāni yathā-kramam
yeṣāṁ śravaṇa-mātreṇa
pātityaṁ jñāninām api
apārthaṁ śruti-vākyānām
darśayaḥ loka-garhitam
karma-svarūpa-tyājyatvam
atra ca pratipādyate
sarva-karma-paribhraṁśān
naiskarmyaṁ tatra cocyate
parātma jīvayor aikyaṁ
mayātra pratipādyate*

“My dear Devī, sometimes I teach Māyāvādī philosophy for those who are engrossed in the mode of ignorance. But if a person in the mode of goodness happens to hear this Māyāvādī philosophy, he falls down, for when teaching Māyāvādī philosophy, I say that the living entity and the Supreme Lord are one and the same.”

Sadānanda-yogī, one of the greatest Māyāvādī *ācāryas*, has written in his book, *Vedānta-sāra*: “The Absolute Truth of eternity, knowledge and bliss is Brahman. Ignorance and all products of ignorance are non-Brahman. All products of the three modes of material nature are covered by ignorance, and all are different from the supreme cause and effect. This ignorance is manifested in a collective and individual sense. Collective ignorance is called *viśuddha-sattva-pradhāna*. When that *viśuddha-sattva-pradhāna* is manifest within the ignorance of material nature, it is called the Lord, and the Lord manifests all kinds of ignorance. Therefore He is known as *sarvajña*.” Thus according to Māyāvādī philosophy, the Lord is a product of this material nature, and

the living entity is in the lowest stage of ignorance. That is the sum and substance of Māyāvādī philosophy.

If, however, we accept the import of the *Upaniṣads* directly, it is clear that the Supreme Personality of Godhead is a person with unlimited potency. For example, in the *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* it is stated that the Supreme Personality of Godhead is the origin of everything and that He has multiple potencies. The Supreme Personality of Godhead is transcendental to the cosmic manifestation. He is the origin of all religion, the supreme deliverer and the possessor of all opulences. The Supreme Personality of Godhead, who is just like the sun, profusely distributes His energies while situated beyond the cloud of this material cosmic manifestation. He is the master of masters, and He is the Supreme of the supremes. He is known as the greatest Lord, the Personality of Godhead. His energies and potencies are multiple and variously distributed. It is also stated that Viṣṇu is the Supreme and that saintly persons are always anxious to see His lotus feet (*R̥g Veda* 1.22.20). In the *Aitareya Upaniṣad* it is also stated that the cosmic manifestation came about when the Lord glanced over material nature (1.1.1–2). This is also verified by the *Praśna Upaniṣad* (6.3).

In the negative descriptions of the Lord which occur in Vedic literature (as in *apāṇi-pādaḥ*) there are indications that the Lord has no material body and no material form. However, He does have His spiritual transcendental body and His transcendental form. Because the Māyāvādī philosophers misunderstand His transcendental nature, they explain Him as impersonal. The Lord's name, form, quality, entourage and abode are all in the transcendental world. How can He be a transformation of this material nature? Everything connected with the Supreme Lord is eternal, blissful and full of knowledge.

In effect, Śaṅkarācārya preached Māyāvādī philosophy in order to bewilder a certain type of atheist. Actually he never considered the Supreme Lord, the Personality of Godhead, to be impersonal or to have no body or form. It is best for intelligent persons to avoid lectures on Māyāvādī philosophy. We should understand that the Supreme Personality of Godhead Viṣṇu is not impersonal. He is a transcendental person, and the basic principle of the cosmic manifestation is His energy. Māyāvādī philosophy cannot trace the energy of the Supreme

Lord, but all Vedic literatures give evidence of the Supreme Lord's various energetic manifestations. Viṣṇu is not a product of material nature, but material nature is a product of Viṣṇu's potency. The Māyāvādī philosophers understand Viṣṇu to be a product of material nature, but if Viṣṇu is a product of material nature, He can only be counted amongst the demigods. One who considers Viṣṇu to be a demigod is certainly mistaken and misled. How this is so is explained in *Bhagavad-gītā*: "Deluded by the three modes, the whole world does not know Me who am above the modes and inexhaustible. This divine energy of Mine, consisting of the three modes of material nature, is difficult to overcome, but those who have surrendered unto Me can easily cross beyond it." (Bg. 7.13–14)

Chapter Twenty

The Goal of Vedānta Study

It is concluded that Lord Kṛṣṇa, or Viṣṇu, is not of this material world. He belongs to the spiritual world. One who considers Him to be a material demigod is a great offender and blasphemer. Lord Viṣṇu is not subject to perception by material senses, nor can He be realized by mental speculation. There is no difference between the body and soul of the Supreme Lord Viṣṇu, although in the material world there is always a difference between the body and the soul.

Things material are enjoyed by the living entities because the living entities are superior, whereas material nature is of inferior quality. Thus the superior quality, the living entities, can enjoy the inferior quality, matter. Because Lord Viṣṇu is in no way touched by matter, He is not subject to enjoy material nature the way the living entities do. The living entities cannot attain knowledge of Viṣṇu by enjoying their habits of mental speculation. The infinitesimal living entities are not the enjoyers of Viṣṇu, but they are enjoyed by Viṣṇu. Only the greatest offender thinks that Viṣṇu is enjoyed. The greatest blasphemy is to consider Viṣṇu and the living entity on the same level.

The Supreme Absolute Truth, the Personality of Godhead, is compared to a blazing fire, and the innumerable living entities are compared to sparks emanating from that fire. Although both the Supreme Lord and the living entities are qualitatively fire, there is yet a distinction. Viṣṇu the Supreme is infinite, whereas the living entities, which are but sparks, are infinitesimal. The infinitesimal living entities are emanations from the original infinite spirit. In their constitutional position as infinitesimal spirits, there is no trace of matter.

The living entities are not as great as Nārāyaṇa, Viṣṇu, who is beyond this material creation. Even Śaṅkarācārya accepts Nārāyaṇa to be beyond the material creation. Since neither Viṣṇu nor the living entity are of the material creation, someone may inquire, “Why were the small particles of spirit created at all?” The answer is that the Supreme Absolute Truth is complete in His perfection when He is both infinite

and infinitesimal. If He is simply infinite and is not infinitesimal, He is not perfect. The infinite portion is the *Viṣṇu-tattva*, or the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and the infinitesimal portion is the living entity.

Due to the infinite desires of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, there is existence in the spiritual world, and due to the infinitesimal desires of the living entity, there is existence in the material world. When the infinitesimal living entities are engaged in their infinitesimal desires for material enjoyment, they are called *jīva-śakti*, but when they are dovetailed with the infinite, they are called liberated souls. There is no need to ask, therefore, why God created the infinitesimal portions; they are simply the complementary side of the Supreme. It is doubtlessly essential for the infinite to have infinitesimal portions which are inseparable parts and parcels of the supreme soul. Because the living entities are infinitesimal parts and parcels of the Supreme, there is a reciprocation of feelings between the infinite and the infinitesimal. Had there been no infinitesimal living entities, the Supreme Lord would have been inactive, and there would not be variegatedness in spiritual life. There is no meaning to a king if there are no subjects, and there is no meaning to the Supreme God if there are no infinitesimal living entities. How can there be meaning to the word “lord” if there is no one to overlord? The conclusion is that the living entities are considered to be expansions of the energy of the Supreme Lord, and the Supreme Lord, the Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa, is the energetic.

In all Vedic literatures, including *Bhagavad-gītā* and *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*, much evidence is given to distinguish between the energy and the energetic. In *Bhagavad-gītā* (Bg. 7.4) it is clearly stated that earth, water, fire, air and ether are the five principal gross elements of the material world and that mind, intelligence and false ego are the three subtle elements. All material nature is divided into these eight elements which together comprise the inferior nature, or energy, of the Lord. Another name for this inferior nature is *māyā*, or illusion. Beyond these eight inferior elements there is a superior energy, which is called *parā-prakṛti*. That *parā-prakṛti* is the living entity, who is found in great numbers throughout the material world. He is indicated in *Bhagavad-gītā* (Bg. 7.5) as *jīva-bhūtām*. The purport is that the Supreme Lord is the Absolute

Truth, the energetic, and as such He has His energies. When His energy is not properly manifested, or when it is covered by some shadow, it is called *māyā-śakti*. The material cosmic manifestation is a product of that covered *māyā-śakti*.

The living entities are factually beyond this covered inferior energy. They have their pure spiritual existence and their pure identity, as well as their pure mental activities. All of them are beyond the manifestation of this material cosmos. Although the living entity's mind, intelligence and identity are beyond the range of this material world, when he enters into this material world due to his desire to dominate matter, his original mind, intelligence and body become covered by the material energy. When he is again uncovered from these material or inferior energies, he is called liberated. When he is liberated, he has no false ego, but his real ego again comes into existence. Foolish mental speculators think that after liberation one's identity is lost, but that is not so. Because the living entity is eternally part and parcel of God, when he is liberated, he revives his original, eternal, part-and-parcel identity. The realization of *aham brahmāsmi* ("I am not this body") does not mean that the living entity loses his identity. At the present moment a person may consider himself to be matter, but in his liberated state he will understand that he is not matter but spirit soul, part of the infinite. To become Kṛṣṇa conscious or spiritually conscious and to engage in the transcendental loving service of Kṛṣṇa are signs of the liberated stage. In the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* (6.7.61) it is clearly stated:

*viṣṇu-śaktiḥ parā prokta
kṣetra-jñākhyā tathā parā
avidyā-karma-samjñānyā
tṛtīyā śaktir iṣyate
[Cc. Madhya 6.154]*

“The energy of the Supreme Lord is divided into three: *parā*, *kṣetrajñā* and *avidyā*.” The *parā* energy is actually the energy of the Supreme Lord Himself; the *kṣetrajñā* energy is the living entity; and the *avidyā* energy is the material world, or *māyā*. It is called *avidyā*, or ignorance, because under the spell of this material energy one forgets his actual position and his relationship with the Supreme Lord. The conclusion is that the

living entities represent one of the energies of the Supreme Lord, and as infinitesimal parts and parcels of the Supreme, they are called *jīvas*. If the *jīvas* are artificially placed on the same level with the infinite Supreme—for both of them are Brahman, or spirit—bewilderment will certainly be the result.

Generally Māyāvādī philosophers are perplexed before a learned Vaiṣṇava because the Māyāvādīs cannot explain the cause of bondage of the living entities. They simply say, “It is due to ignorance,” but they cannot explain why the living entities are covered by ignorance if they are supreme. The actual reason is that the living entities, although qualitatively one with the Supreme, are infinitesimal, and not infinite. Had they been infinite, there would have been no possibility of their being covered by ignorance. Because the living entity is infinitesimal, he is covered by an inferior energy. The foolishness and ignorance of the Māyāvādīs are revealed when they try to explain how it is the infinite is covered by ignorance. It is offensive to attempt to qualify the infinite as being subject to the spell of ignorance.

Although Śaṅkara was attempting to cover the Supreme Lord by his Māyāvādī philosophy, he was simply following the order of the Supreme Lord. It should be understood that his teachings were a timely necessity but not a permanent fact. In the *Vedānta-sūtra* the distinction between the energy and the energetic is accepted from the very beginning. In that *Vedānta-sūtra* the first aphorism (*janmādy asya* [SB 1.1.1]) clearly explains that the Supreme Absolute Truth is the origin or source of all emanations. Thus the emanations are the energy of the Supreme, whereas the Supreme Himself is the energetic. Śaṅkara has falsely argued that if the transformation of energy is accepted, the Supreme Absolute Truth cannot remain immutable. But this is not true. Despite the fact that unlimited energy is always being generated, the Supreme Absolute Truth remains always the same. He is not affected by the emanation of unlimited energies. Śaṅkarācārya has therefore incorrectly established his theory of illusion.

Rāmānujācārya has discussed this point very nicely: “If you argue that before the creation of this material world there was only one Absolute Truth, then how is it possible that the living entity emanated from Him? If He were alone, how could He have produced or generated the

infinitesimal living entities?” In answer to this question, the *Vedas* state that everything is generated from the Absolute Truth, everything is maintained by the Absolute Truth, and, after annihilation, everything enters into the Absolute Truth. From this statement it is clear that the living entities enter into the supreme existence when they are liberated, and they do not change their original constitutional position.

We must always remember that the Supreme Lord has His creative function and that the infinitesimal living entities have their creative functions also. It is not that their creative function is lost when they are liberated and enter into the Supreme after the dissolution of the material body. On the contrary, the creative function of the living entity is properly manifested in the liberated state. If the living entity's activities are manifest even when he is materially conditioned, then how is it possible for his activities to stop when he attains liberation? The living entity's entering the state of liberation may be compared to a bird entering a tree, or an animal entering the forest, or a plane entering the sky. In no case is identity lost.

When explaining the first aphorism of the *Vedānta-sūtra*, Śaṅkara most unceremoniously tried to explain that Brahman, or the Supreme Absolute Truth, is impersonal. He also cunningly tried to switch the doctrine of by-product into the doctrine of change. For the Supreme Absolute Truth, there is no change. It is simply that a by-product results from His inconceivable powers of action. In other words, a relative truth is produced out of the Supreme Truth. When a chair is produced out of crude wood, it is said that a by-product is produced. The Supreme Absolute Truth, Brahman, is immutable, and when we find a by-product—the living entity or this cosmic manifestation—it is a transformation, or a by-product of the Supreme. It is like milk being transformed into yogurt. In this way, if we study the living entities in the cosmic manifestation, it will appear that they are not different from the original Absolute Truth, but from Vedic literatures we understand that the Absolute Truth has varieties of energy and that the living entities and the cosmic manifestation are but a demonstration of His energies. The energies are not separate from the energetic; therefore the living entity and cosmic manifestation are inseparable truths, part of the Absolute Truth. Such a conclusion regarding the Absolute Truth and

the relative truth should be acceptable to any sane man.

The Supreme Absolute Truth has His inconceivable potency, out of which this cosmos has been manifested. In other words, the Supreme Absolute Truth is the ingredient, and the living entity and cosmic manifestation are the by-products. In the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* it is clearly stated, *yato vā imāni bhūtāni jāyante*: “The Absolute Truth is the original reservoir of all ingredients, and this material world and its living entities are produced from those ingredients.”

Unintelligent persons who cannot understand this doctrine of byproducts cannot grasp how the cosmic manifestation and the living entity are simultaneously one and different from the Absolute Truth. Not understanding this, one concludes, out of fear, that this cosmic manifestation and the living entity are false. Śaṅkarācārya gives the example of a rope being mistaken for a snake, and sometimes the example of mistaking an oyster shell for gold is cited, but surely such arguments are ways of cheating. As mentioned in the *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad*, the rope for a snake and the oyster for gold examples have their different applications and can be understood as follows. The living entity in his original constitutional position is pure spirit. When a human being identifies himself with the material body, he may be said to be mistaking a rope for a snake, or an oyster shell for gold. The doctrine of transformation is accepted when one thing is mistaken for another. Actually the body is not the living entity, but the doctrine of transformation accepts the body as the living entity. Every conditioned soul is undoubtedly contaminated by this doctrine of transformation. The conditional state of the living entity is his diseased condition. Originally the living entity and the original cause of this cosmic manifestation exist outside the state of transformation. However, mistaken thoughts and arguments can overcome a person when he forgets the inconceivable energies of the Supreme Lord. Even in the material world there are many examples. The sun has been producing unlimited energy from time immemorial, and so many by-products result from the sun; yet there is no change in the heat and temperature of the sun itself. Despite its being a material product, if the sun can maintain its original temperature and yet produce so many byproducts, is it difficult for the Supreme Absolute Truth to remain unchanged in spite

of producing so many by-products by His inconceivable energy? Thus there is no question of transformation as far as the Supreme Absolute Truth is concerned.

In Vedic literatures there is information of a material product called “touchstone” which simply by touch can transform iron into gold. The touchstone can produce an unlimited quantity of gold and yet remain the same. Only in the state of ignorance can one accept the Māyāvādī conclusion that this cosmic manifestation and the living entities are false or illusory. No sane man would impose ignorance and illusion upon the Supreme Absolute Truth, who is absolute in everything. There is no possibility of change, ignorance or illusion being in Him. The Supreme Brahman is transcendental and completely different from all material conceptions. In the Supreme Absolute Truth there is every possible inconceivable energy existing. In the *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* it is stated that the Supreme Absolute Personality of Godhead is full of inconceivable energies and that no one else possesses such energies. By misunderstanding the inconceivable energies of the Supreme, one may falsely conclude that the Supreme Absolute Truth is impersonal. Such a deluded conclusion is experienced by a living being when he is in an acute stage of disease. In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* also there are statements to the effect that the supreme *ātmā*, the Lord, has inconceivable and innumerable potencies. (*Bhāg.* 3.33.3) It is also stated in *Brahma-sūtra* that the supreme spirit has many variegated and inconceivable energies. Nor should one think that there is any possibility of ignorance existing in the Absolute Truth. Ignorance and knowledge are conceptions in this world of duality, but in the Absolute there is no duality. It is simply foolishness to consider that the Absolute is covered by ignorance. If the Absolute Truth can possibly be covered by ignorance, how can it be said to be Absolute? Understanding the inconceivability of the Absolute is the only solution to the question of duality. This is because duality arises from the inconceivable energy of the Absolute. By His inconceivable energies, the Supreme Absolute Truth can remain unchanged and yet produce this cosmic manifestation with all its living entities, just as touchstone can produce unlimited quantities of gold and yet remain unchanged. Because the Absolute Truth has such inconceivable energies, the material quality of ignorance

cannot pertain to Him. The true variegatedness which exists in the Absolute Truth is a product of His inconceivable energy. Indeed, it can be safely concluded that this cosmic manifestation is but a by-product of His inconceivable energies. Once we accept the inconceivable energies of the Supreme Lord, we will find that there is no duality at all. The expansion of the energy of the Supreme Lord is as true as the Supreme Lord. As far as the manifestation of the supreme energy is concerned, there is no question of transformation. The same example can be cited: in spite of producing unlimited quantities of gold, the touchstone remains the same. We therefore hear some sages say that the Supreme is the ingredient or cause of this cosmic manifestation.

Actually the example of the rope and the snake is not completely irregular. When we accept a rope to be a snake, it is to be understood that we have experienced a snake previously. Otherwise, how can the rope be mistaken for a snake? Thus the conception of a snake is not untrue or unreal in itself. It is the false identity that is untrue or unreal. When, by mistake, we consider the rope to be a snake, that is our ignorance. But the very idea of a snake is not in itself ignorance. When we accept a mirage to be water in the desert, there is no question of water being a false concept. Water is a fact, but it is a mistake to think that there is water in the desert.

Thus this cosmic manifestation is not false, as Śaṅkarācārya maintains. Actually there is nothing false here. The Māyāvādīs say that this world is false because of their ignorance. It is the conclusion of Vaiṣṇava philosophy that this cosmic manifestation is a by-product of the inconceivable energies of the Supreme Lord.

The principal word in the *Vedas*, *praṇava oṃkāra*, is the sound representation of the Supreme Lord. Therefore *oṃkāra* should be considered the supreme sound. However, Śaṅkarācārya has falsely preached that *tat tvam asi* are the supreme vibrations. *Oṃkāra* is the reservoir of all the energies of the Supreme Lord. Śaṅkara is wrong in maintaining that the words *tat tvam asi* are the supreme vibrations of the *Vedas*, for *tat tvam asi* are secondary words only. *tat tvam asi* suggests only a partial representation. In *Bhagavad-gītā* the Lord has in many places given importance to *oṃkāra*, (Bg. 8.13, 9.17, 17.24). Similarly, *oṃkāra* is given importance in the *Atharva Veda* and the *Māṇḍūkya*

Upaniṣad. In his *Bhagavat-sandarbha*, Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī says: “*Om̐kāra* is the most confidential sound representation of the Supreme Lord.” The sound representation or name of the Supreme Lord is as good as the Supreme Lord Himself. By vibrating the sound of *om̐kāra*, or of Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare, one can be delivered from the contamination of this material world. Because such vibrations of transcendental sound can deliver a conditioned soul, they are known as *tāra*, or deliverers. That the sound vibration of the Supreme Lord is identical with the Supreme Lord is a fact. This is confirmed in the *Nārada-pañcarātra*:

*vyaktam hi bhagavān eva
sākṣān-nārāyaṇaḥ svayam
aṣṭākṣara-svarūpeṇa
mukheṣu parivartate*

“When the transcendental sound vibration is practiced by a conditioned soul, the Supreme Lord is present on his tongue.” In the *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad* it is said that when *om̐kāra* is chanted, whatever is seen as material is seen perfectly as spiritual. In the spiritual world or in spiritual vision there is nothing but *om̐kāra*, or the one alternate, *om*.

Unfortunately, Śaṅkara has abandoned this chief word, *om̐kāra*, and has whimsically accepted *tat tvam asi* as the supreme vibration of the *Vedas*. By accepting such a secondary word and leaving aside the principal vibration, he has given up a direct interpretation of the scripture in favor of his own indirect interpretation.

Śrīpāda Śaṅkarācārya has unceremoniously obscured the Kṛṣṇa consciousness described in the *puruṣa-vedānta-sūtra* by manufacturing an indirect interpretation and abandoning the direct interpretation. Unless we take all the statements of *Vedānta-sūtra* as self-evident, there is no point in studying *Vedānta-sūtra*. Interpreting the verses of *Vedānta-sūtra* according to one’s own whim is the greatest disservice to the self-evident *Vedas*.

As far as the *om̐kāra praṇava* is concerned, it is considered to be the sound incarnation of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. As such, *om̐kāra* is eternal, unlimited, transcendental, supreme and indestructible. He (*om̐kāra*) is the beginning, middle and end, and He is

beginningless as well. When one understands *omkāra* as such, he becomes immortal. One should thus know *omkāra* as a representation of the Supreme situated in everyone's heart. One who understands *omkāra* and Viṣṇu as being one and the same and all-pervading never laments in the material world, nor does he remain a *śūdra*.

Although He (*omkāra*) has no material form, He is unlimitedly expanded, and He has unlimited form. By understanding *omkāra* one can become free from the duality of the material world and attain absolute knowledge. Therefore *omkāra* is the most auspicious representation of the Supreme Lord. Such is the description given by *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad*. One should not foolishly interpret an Upaniṣadic description and say that because the Supreme Personality of Godhead "cannot" appear Himself in this material world in His own form, He sends His sound representation(*omkāra*) instead. Due to such a false interpretation, *omkāra* comes to be considered something material, and consequently *omkāra* is misunderstood and praised as being simply an exhibition or symbol of the Lord. Actually *omkāra* is as good as any other incarnation of the Supreme Lord.

The Lord has innumerable incarnations, and *omkāra* is one of them. As Kṛṣṇa states in *Bhagavad-gītā*: "Amongst vibrations, I am the syllable *om*." (Bg. 9.17) This means that *omkāra* is nondifferent from Kṛṣṇa. Impersonalists, however, give more importance to *omkāra* than to the Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa. The fact is, however, that any representational incarnation of the Supreme Lord is nondifferent from Him. Such an incarnation or representation is as good spiritually as the Supreme Lord. *Omkāra* is therefore the ultimate representation of all the *Vedas*. Indeed, the Vedic *mantras* or hymns have transcendental value because they are prefixed by the syllable *om*. The Vaiṣṇavas interpret *omkāra* as follows: by the letter O, Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, is indicated; by the letter U, Kṛṣṇa's eternal consort Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī is indicated; and by the letter M, the eternal servitor of the Supreme Lord, the living entity, is indicated. Śāṅkara has not given such importance to the *omkāra*. However, importance is given in the *Vedas*, the *Rāmāyaṇa*, the *Purāṇas* and in the *Mahābhārata* from beginning to end. Thus the glories of the Supreme Lord, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, are declared.

Chapter Twenty-one

The Māyāvādī Philosophers are Converted

In this way Lord Caitanya condemned attempts at indirect interpretation of the *Vedānta-sūtra*, and all the *sannyāsīs* present were struck with wonder by His explanation. After hearing the direct interpretation, one of the *sannyāsīs* immediately declared, “O Śrīpāda Caitanya, whatever You have explained in Your condemnation of the indirect interpretation of *omkāra* is most useful. Only a fortunate person can accept Your interpretation as the right one. Actually, every one of us now knows that the interpretations given by Śaṅkara are all artificial and imaginary, but because we belong to Śaṅkarācārya’s sect, we take it for granted that his interpretation is the right one. We shall be very glad to hear You further explain the *Vedānta-sūtra* by direct interpretation.” Being so requested, Lord Caitanya explained each and every verse of *Vedānta-sūtra* according to the direct interpretation. He also explained the word Brahman, indicating that Brahman means the greatest, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Brahman indicates that the greatest is full with six opulences; the Supreme Personality of Godhead is the reservoir of all wealth, all fame, all strength, all beauty, all knowledge and all renunciation. When Lord Kṛṣṇa was present personally on earth, He exhibited these six opulences in full. No one was richer than Lord Kṛṣṇa, no one was more learned than Him, no one more beautiful, no one stronger, no one more famous and no one more renounced. Therefore the Supreme Personality of Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Brahman. This is confirmed by Arjuna in *Bhagavad-gītā* (Bg. 10.12). *param brahma param dhāma*: “You are the Supreme Brahman, the ultimate, the supreme abode.” Therefore Brahman indicates the greatest, and the greatest is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa. He is the shelter of the Absolute Truth (*para-tattva*) because He is *param brahma*. There is nothing material in His opulences and exhibitions of wealth, fame, strength, beauty, knowledge and renunciation. All the Vedic verses and hymns indicate that everything about Him is spiritual and

transcendental. Wherever the word Brahman appears in the *Vedas*, it should be understood that Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, is indicated. An intelligent person at once replaces the word Brahman with the name Kṛṣṇa.

The Supreme Personality of Godhead is transcendental to the material modes of nature, but He is fully qualified with transcendental attributes. To accept the Supreme as impersonal is to deny the manifestation of His spiritual energies. When someone simply accepts the impersonal exhibition of spiritual energy to the exclusion of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, he does not accept the Absolute Truth in full. To accept the Supreme in full is to accept spiritual variegatedness, which is transcendental to the material modes of nature. By failing to indicate the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the impersonalists are left with an incomplete conception.

The approved method for understanding the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa, is the path of devotional service, and this is confirmed in every Vedic scripture. Devotional service of the Lord begins by hearing about Him. There are nine different methods in devotional service, of which hearing is the chief. Hearing, chanting remembering, worshipping—all these are used in the process of attaining the highest perfection by understanding the Supreme Personality of Godhead. This process by which the Supreme Personality of Godhead is understood is known as *abhidheya*, practice of devotional service within conditional life.

It is experienced in practice that when one takes to Kṛṣṇa consciousness, he does not like to deviate into another form of consciousness. Kṛṣṇa consciousness is development of love for Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and this is the fifth dimensional interest of the human being. When one actually takes to this process of transcendental service, he relishes his relationship with Kṛṣṇa directly. When there is reciprocation of transcendental dealings with Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa gradually becomes a personal associate of the devotee. Then the devotee eternally enjoys blissful life. For this reason, it is the purpose of the *Vedānta-sūtra* to reestablish the living entity's lost relationship with the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa and to enable him to execute devotional service and ultimately achieve the highest goal of life, love of Godhead. This is the real purpose

of *Vedānta-sūtra*.

After Lord Caitanya explained the *Vedānta-sūtra* by directly interpreting the verses, the chief disciple of Prakāśānanda Sarasvatī stood up in the assembly and began to praise Lord Caitanya as the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Nārāyaṇa. He not only very much appreciated the explanation of *Vedānta-sūtra* by Lord Caitanya, but he stated publicly that the direct explanation of the *Upaniṣads* and *Vedānta-sūtra* “is so pleasing that we forget ourselves and forget that we belong to the Māyāvādī sect.” Thus it is herein admitted that Śaṅkarācārya’s explanations of the *Upaniṣads* and *Vedānta-sūtra* are all imaginary. We may sometimes accept such imaginary explanations for the sake of sectarian feuds, but actually such explanations do not satisfy us. It is not that one becomes free from material entanglements simply by accepting the order of *sannyāsa*. Yet if we actually understand the explanations given by Lord Caitanya, we will be helped. For instance, when Lord Caitanya explains the meaning of *harer nāma harer nāma harer nāmaiva kevalam* [Adi 17.21], everyone is pleased, for it is a fact that there is no alternative to devotional service. Without devotional service no one can attain liberation from the material clutches.

Especially in this age, one can achieve the highest liberation simply by chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare. In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (10.14.4) it is stated that when a person abandons the path of devotional service and simply labors for knowledge, he has no profit other than the trouble he takes to understand the difference between matter and spirit. It is useless labor to try to get grains from empty husks. Thus it is stated in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (10.2.32) that a person who gives up the transcendental loving service of the Supreme Lord and superficially considers himself liberated, never attains to liberation. With great labor, austerity and penance, he may be elevated to the liberated platform, but for want of shelter at the lotus feet of the Supreme Lord, he falls down again into material contamination.

The Supreme Brahman cannot be accepted as impersonal, otherwise the six opulences, which belong to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, cannot be attributed to Brahman. All the *Vedas* and *Purāṇas* affirm that the Supreme Personality of Godhead is full of spiritual energies, but

foolish people simply reject this and deride His activities. They misinterpret the transcendental body of Kṛṣṇa to be a creation of material nature, and this is considered to be the greatest offense and greatest sin. One should simply accept the words of Lord Caitanya as He spoke them before Prakāśānanda Sarasvatī and the Māyāvādī *sannyāsīs*. The individual personality of the Supreme Absolute Truth is explained in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (3.9.3–4): “O Supreme Lord, the transcendental form which I am seeing is the embodiment of transcendental pleasure. It is eternal and devoid of the contamination of the material modes. It is the greatest manifestation of the Absolute Truth, and it is full of effulgence. O soul of everyone, You are the creator of this cosmic manifestation and all the material elements. I surrender unto You in Your transcendental form, O Kṛṣṇa! O most auspicious universe! You advent Yourself in Your original personal form in order to be worshiped by us, and we perceive You either by meditation or by direct worship. Foolish people contaminated by material nature do not give much importance to Your transcendental form, and consequently they glide down to hell.”

This is also confirmed in *Bhagavad-gītā*:

*avajānanti mām mūḍhā
mānuṣīm tanum āśritam
param bhāvam ajānanto
mama bhūta-maheśvaram*

“Fools deride Me when I descend in the human form. They do not know My transcendental nature and My supreme dominion over all that be.”

(Bg. 9.11)

That such foolish and demoniac persons go to the hellish planets is also confirmed in *Bhagavad-gītā*:

*tān ahaṁ dviṣataḥ krūrān
saṁsāreṣu narādhamān
kṣipāmy ajasram aśubhān
āsurīṣu eva yoniṣu*

“Those who are envious and mischievous, who are the lowest among men, are cast by Me into the ocean of material existence, into various

demoniac species of life.” (Bg. 16.19)

The doctrine of by-products, *pariṇāma-vāda*, is asserted from the very beginning of *Vedānta-sūtra*, but Śaṅkarācārya has superficially tried to hide it and establish the doctrine of transformation, *vivarta-vāda*. He also has the audacity to say that Vyāsa is mistaken. All Vedic literatures, including the *purāṇas*, confirm that the Supreme Lord is the center of all spiritual energy and variegatedness. The Māyāvādī philosopher, puffed-up and incompetent, can not understand variegatedness in spiritual energy. He consequently falsely believes that spiritual variegatedness is no different from material variegatedness. Deluded by this false belief, the Māyāvādīs deride the pastimes of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Such foolish persons, unable to understand the spiritual activities of the Supreme Lord, consider Kṛṣṇa to be a product of this material nature. This is the greatest offense any human being can commit. Lord Caitanya therefore establishes that Kṛṣṇa is *sac-cid-ānanda-vigraha* [Bs. 5.1], the form of eternity, knowledge and bliss, and that He is always engaged in His transcendental pastimes in which there is all spiritual variegatedness.

The student of Prakāśānanda summarized the explanations of Lord Caitanya and concluded: “We have practically given up the path of spiritual realization. We simply engage in nonsensical talk. Māyāvādī philosophers who are serious about attaining benediction should engage in the devotional service of Kṛṣṇa, but instead they take pleasure in useless argument only. We hereby admit that the explanation of Śaṅkarācārya hides the actual import of Vedic literature. Only the explanation given by Caitanya is acceptable. All other interpretations are useless.”

After thus explaining his position, the chief student of Prakāśānanda Sarasvatī began to chant Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare. When Prakāśānanda Sarasvatī saw this, he also admitted the fault of Śaṅkarācārya and said, “Because Śaṅkarācārya wanted to establish the doctrine of monism, he had no alternative but to interpret the *Vedānta-sūtra* in a different way. Once one accepts the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the doctrine of monism cannot be established. Therefore by mundane scholarship Śaṅkarācārya has tried to obscure the actual

meaning of the *Vedānta-sūtra*. Not only has Śaṅkarācārya done this, but all authors who attempt to give their own views of necessity misinterpret *Vedānta-sūtra*.”

Thus Lord Caitanya gave the direct meaning of *Vedānta-sūtra*. No Vedic scripture should be used for indirect speculation. In addition to Śaṅkarācārya, other materialistic philosophers like Kapila, Gautama, Aṣṭāvakra and Patañjali have put forward philosophical speculation in various ways. Indeed, the philosopher Jaimini and his followers, who are all more or less logicians, have abandoned the real meaning of the *Vedas* (devotional service) and have tried to establish the Absolute Truth as subject to the material world. It is their opinion that if there is a God, He will be pleased with man and give man all desired results if man simply performs his material activities nicely. Similarly, the atheist Kapila tried to establish that there is no God who created the material world. Kapila has even tried to establish that a combination of material elements caused creation. Similarly, Gautama and Kaṇāda have given stress to this theory that the creation resulted from a fortunate combination of material elements, and they have tried to establish that atomic energy is the origin of creation. Similarly, impersonalists and monists like Aṣṭāvakra have tried to establish the impersonal effulgence (*brahmajyoti*) as the Supreme. And Patañjali, one of the greatest authorities on the *yoga* system, has tried to conceive an imaginary form of the Supreme Lord.

In summary it should be understood that all these materialistic philosophers have tried to avoid the Supreme Personality of Godhead by putting forward their own mentally concocted philosophies. However, Vyāsadeva, the great sage and incarnation of God head, has thoroughly studied all these philosophical speculations and in answer has compiled the *Vedānta-sūtra*, which establishes the relationship between the living entity and the Supreme Personality of Godhead and the importance of devotional service in ultimately achieving love of Godhead. The verse *janmādy asya yataḥ* [SB 1.1.1], which appears in the very beginning of *Vedānta-sūtra*, is explained in Vyāsadeva’s *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* Vyāsadeva establishes from the very beginning that the supreme source of everything is a cognizant, transcendental person. The impersonalist tries to explain that the impersonal effulgence of the

Supreme Lord (*brahmajyoti*) is beyond these material modes of nature, but at the same time he tries to establish that the Supreme Personality of Godhead is contaminated by the modes of material nature. The *Vedānta-sūtra* asserts that the Supreme Personality of Godhead is not only transcendental to the material modes of nature but that He also has innumerable transcendental qualities and energies. All these various speculative philosophers are one in denying the existence of the Supreme Lord Viṣṇu, and they are very much enthused to propagate their own theories and be recognized by the people. Unfortunate people become enamored of these atheistic philosophers and consequently can never understand the real nature of the Absolute Truth. It is far better to follow in the footsteps of great souls (*mahājanas*). According to *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, there are twelve *mahājanas*, or great souls, and these are: (1) Brahmā, (2) Lord Śiva, (3) Nārada, (4) Vaivasvata Manu, (5) Kapila (not the atheist, but the original Kapila), (6) the Kumāras, (7) Prahlāda, (8) Bhīṣma, (9) Janaka, (10) Bali, (11) Śukadeva Gosvāmī and (12) Yamarāja. According to the *Mahābhārata*, there is no point in arguing about the Absolute Truth because there are so many different Vedic scriptures and philosophical understandings that no one philosopher can agree with another. Since everyone is trying to present his own point of view and reject others, it is very difficult to understand the necessity for religious principles. Therefore it is better to follow in the footsteps of the great *mahājanas*, great souls; then one can achieve the desired success. Lord Caitanya's teachings are just like nectar, and they hold whatever is needed. The best way is to take to this path and follow it.

Chapter Twenty-two The *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*

After the conversion of the Māyāvādī *sannyāsīs* to the path of Caitanya Mahāprabhu, many scholars and inquisitive people visited the Lord at Benares. Since it was not possible for everyone to see Caitanya Mahāprabhu at His residence, people used to stand in line to see Him as He passed on His way to the temple of Viśvanātha and Bindumādhava. One day, when the Lord visited the temple with His associates, Candraśekhara Ācārya, Paramānanda, Tapana Miśra, Sanātana Gosvāmī and others, He was singing:

*haraye namaḥ kṛṣṇa yādavāya namaḥ
gopāla govinda rāma śrī-madhusūdana*

When the Lord sang in this way, chanting and dancing, thousands of people gathered around Him, and when the Lord chanted, they roared. The vibration was so tumultuous that Prakāśānanda Sarasvatī, who was sitting nearby, immediately joined the crowd with his disciples. As soon as he saw the beautiful body of Lord Caitanya and the Lord dancing with His associates, Prakāśānanda Sarasvatī also joined and began to sing: “Hari! Hari!” All the inhabitants of Benares were struck with wonder upon seeing the ecstatic dancing of Lord Caitanya. However, Lord Caitanya checked His continuous ecstasy and stopped dancing when He saw the Māyāvādī *sannyāsīs*. As soon as the Lord stopped chanting and dancing, Prakāśānanda Sarasvatī fell at His feet. Trying to stop him, Lord Caitanya said, “Oh, you are the spiritual master of the whole world, *jagad-guru*, and I am not even equal to your disciples. You should therefore not worship an inferior like Me. You are exactly like the Supreme Brahman, and if I allow you to fall down at My feet, I will commit a very great offense. Although you have no vision of duality, for the sake of teaching the people in general you should not do this.” “Previously I spoke ill of You many times,” Prakāśānanda Sarasvatī replied. “Now in order to free myself from the results of my offense, I fall down at Your feet.” He then quoted a verse from Vedic literatures which

states that when even a liberated soul commits an offense against the Supreme Lord, he again becomes a victim of material contamination. Prakāśānanda Sarasvatī then quoted another verse from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (10.34.9) regarding Nanda Mahārāja’s being attacked by a serpent who was previously Vidyādharcita. When the serpent was touched by the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa, he regained his previous body and was freed from the reactions of his sinful activities. When Lord Caitanya thus heard Himself equated with Kṛṣṇa, He mildly protested. He wanted to warn people in general not to compare the Supreme Lord with any living entity, and although He was the Supreme Lord Himself, He protested against this comparison in order to teach us. Thus He said that it is the greatest offense to compare anyone with the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa. Lord Caitanya always maintained that Viṣṇu, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, is great and the living entities, however great they may be, are but infinitesimal. In this connection, He quoted a verse from *Padma Purāṇa* which is found in the Vaiṣṇava *tantra* (*Hari-bhakti-vilāsa* 1.73): “A person who compares the Supreme Lord even with the greatest of demigods like Brahmā and Śiva must be considered a number one atheist.”

“I can understand that You are the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa,” Prakāśānanda Sarasvatī continued, “and even though You present Yourself as a devotee, You are still worshipable because You are greater than all of us in education and realization. Therefore by blaspheming You, we have committed the greatest offense. Please excuse us.”

How a devotee becomes the greatest of all transcendentalists is stated in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (6.14.5):

*muktānām api siddhānām
nārāyaṇa-ṣarāyaṇaḥ
sudurlabhaḥ praśāntātmā
koṭiṣv api mahāmune*

“There are many liberated souls and perfected souls, but out of all of them he who is a devotee of the Supreme Personality of Godhead is best. The devotees of the Supreme Lord are always calm and quiet, and their perfection is very rarely seen, even in millions of persons.”

Prakāśānanda also quoted another verse (*Bhāg.* 10.4.46) in which it is stated that one's duration of life, prosperity, fame, religion and the benediction of higher authorities are all lost when one offends a devotee. Prakāśānanda also quoted another verse from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (7.5.32) which said that all the misgivings of the conditioned soul disappear at the touch of the lotus feet of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. However, one cannot touch the lotus feet of the Supreme Lord unless one receives the benediction of the dust of the lotus feet of the Lord's pure devotee. In other words, one cannot become a pure devotee of the Supreme Personality of Godhead unless he is favored by another pure devotee of the Lord.

"Now I am taking shelter of Your lotus feet," Prakāśānanda Sarasvatī said, "for I want to be elevated to the position of a devotee of the Supreme Lord."

After talking in this way, both Prakāśānanda Sarasvatī and Lord Caitanya sat together. "Whatever You have said concerning discrepancies in the Māyāvādī philosophy is also known by us," Prakāśānanda said. "Indeed, we know that all the commentaries on Vedic scriptures by Māyāvādī philosophers are erroneous, especially those of Śāṅkarācārya. Śāṅkarācārya's interpretations of *Vedānta-sūtra* are all figments of his imagination. You have not explained the codes of the *Vedānta-sūtra* and *Upaniṣads* according to Your own imagination but have presented them as they are. Thus we are all pleased to have heard Your explanation. Such explanations of the codes of *Vedānta-sūtra* and the *Upaniṣads* cannot be given by anyone but the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Since You have all the potencies of the Supreme Lord, please explain the *Vedānta-sūtra* further so that I may be benefited."

Lord Caitanya protested against being called the Supreme Lord, and He said, "My dear sir, I am an ordinary living entity. I cannot know the real meaning of *Vedānta-sūtra*, but Vyāsadeva, who is an incarnation of Nārāyaṇa, knows its real meaning. No ordinary living entity can interpret *Vedānta-sūtra* according to his mundane conceptions. In order to curb commentaries on *Vedānta-sūtra* by unscrupulous persons, the author himself, Vyāsadeva, has already commentated upon the *Vedānta-sūtra* by writing *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*." In other words, the best

explanation of a book is written by the author himself. No one can understand the author's mind unless the author himself discloses the purpose behind his writing. Therefore *Vedānta-sūtra* should be understood through *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, the commentary written by the author of *Vedānta-sūtra*.

Praṇava, or *omkāra*, is the divine substance of all the *Vedas*. *Omkāra* is further explained in the *gāyatrī mantra* exactly as it was explained in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. There are four verses written in this connection, and these are explained to Brahmā by Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself. In his turn, Brahmā explains them to Nārada, and Nārada explains them to Vyāsadeva. In this way the purport of the verses of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* come down through disciplic succession. It is not that anyone and everyone can make his own foolish commentaries on *Vedānta-sūtra* and mislead readers. Anyone who wants to understand *Vedānta-sūtra* must read *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* carefully. Under the instructions of Nārada Muni, Vyāsadeva compiled *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* with the purpose of explaining the *Vedānta-sūtra*. In writing *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, Vyāsadeva collected all the essence of the *Upaniṣads*, the purpose of which was also explained in *Vedānta-sūtra*. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is thus the essence of all Vedic knowledge. That which is stated in the *Upaniṣads* and restated in *Vedānta-sūtra* is explained very nicely in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

There is a passage in *Īsopaniṣad* similar to a verse found in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (8.1.10) which states that whatever one sees in the cosmic manifestation is but the Supreme Lord's energy and is nondifferent from Him. Consequently He is the controller, friend and maintainer of all living entities. We should live by the mercy of God and take only those things which are allotted to us. In this way, by not encroaching on another's property, one can enjoy life.

In other words, the purpose of the *Upaniṣads*, *Vedānta-sūtra* and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is one and the same. If one studies *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* carefully, he will find that all the *Upaniṣads* and the *Vedānta-sūtra* are nicely explained therein. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* teaches us how to reestablish our eternal relationship with the Supreme Lord, how to act in that relationship, and, lastly, how to achieve the highest benefit from it.

The four verses beginning with *aham eva* are the gist of the whole

Bhāgavatam. These are: “I am the supreme center for the relationships of all living entities, and My knowledge is the supreme knowledge. That process by which I can be attained by the living entity is called *abhidheya*. By it, one can attain the highest perfection of life, love of Godhead. When one attains love of Godhead, his life becomes perfect.” The explanation of these four verses is given in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, and Lord Caitanya gave a short description of the principles of these verses. He said that no one can understand the constitutional position of the Supreme Lord—His situation, His transcendental qualities, His transcendental activities and His six opulences. These cannot be understood by mental speculation or academic education; they can only be understood by the mercy of the Lord. As stated in *Bhagavad-gītā*, one who is fortunate enough to receive the Lord’s favor can understand all these explanations by the mercy of the Lord.

The Lord existed before the material creation; therefore the material ingredients, nature and the living entities all emanated from Him, and after dissolution they rest in Him. When the creation is manifest, it is maintained by Him; indeed, whatever manifestation we see is but a transformation of His external energy. When the Supreme Lord withdraws His external energy, everything enters into Him. In the first of the four verses, the word *aham* is given three times in order to stress that the Supreme Personality of Godhead is full with all opulences. *Aham* is stated three times just to chastise one who cannot understand or believe in the transcendental nature and form of the Supreme Lord. The Lord possesses His internal energy, His external, marginal and relative energies, the manifestation of the cosmic world and the living entities. The external energy is manifested by the qualitative modes (*guṇas*) of material nature. One who can understand the nature of the living entity in the spiritual world can actually understand *vedyam*, or perfect knowledge. One cannot understand the Supreme Lord simply by seeing the material energy and the conditioned soul, but when one is in perfect knowledge, he is freed from the influence of the external energy. The moon reflects the light of the sun, and without the sun the moon cannot illuminate anything. Similarly, this material cosmic manifestation is but the reflection of the spiritual world. When one is actually liberated from the spell of the external energy, he can

understand the constitutional nature of the Supreme Lord. Devotional service to the Lord is the only means by which the Lord can be attained, and this devotional service can be accepted by everyone and anyone in any country and under any circumstance. Devotional service is above the four principles of religion and the understanding derived from liberation. Even the preliminaries of devotional service are transcendental to the highest understanding derived from liberation and the understanding derived from ordinary religion.

One should therefore approach a bona fide spiritual master—irrespective of caste, creed, color, country, etc.—and hear from him everything about devotional service. The real purpose of life is to revive our dormant love of God. Indeed, that is our ultimate necessity. How that love of God can be attained is explained in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. There is theoretical knowledge and specific or realized knowledge, and perfect realized knowledge is attained when one realizes the teachings received from the spiritual master.

Chapter Twenty-three

Why Study the *Vedānta-sūtra*?

Knowledge is information gathered from the scriptures, and science is practical realization of that knowledge. Knowledge is scientific when it is gathered from the scriptures through the bona fide spiritual master, but when it is interpreted by speculation, it is mental concoction. By scientifically understanding the scriptural information through the bona fide spiritual master, one learns, by one's own realization, the actual situation of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. The transcendental form of the Supreme Personality of Godhead is different from material manifestations, and it is above the reactions of matter. Unless one scientifically understands the spiritual form of the Personality of Godhead, one becomes an impersonalist. The sunshine in itself is illumination, but that illumination is different from the sun. Yet the sun and the sunshine are not differently situated, for without the sun there can be no sunshine, and without sunshine there is no meaning to the word sun.

Unless one is freed from the influence of material energy, he cannot understand the Supreme Lord and His different energies. Nor can one who is captivated by the spell of material energy understand the spiritual form of the Supreme Lord. Unless there is realization of the transcendental form of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, there is no question of love of God. Unless one can realize the transcendental form of the Supreme Lord, he cannot actually attain love of God, and without love of God there is no perfection in human life. Just as the five gross elements of nature—namely earth, water, fire, air and ether—are both within and without all living beings in this world, the Supreme Lord is both inside and outside this existence, and those who are His devotees can realize this.

Pure devotees know that they are meant to serve the Supreme Personality of Godhead and that all things that exist can be means by which one can serve the Supreme. Because a devotee has been blessed by the Supreme from within his heart, he can see the Supreme Lord

wherever he looks. Indeed, he can see nothing else. In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.2.55) the relationship between the devotee and the Supreme Lord is confirmed as follows:

*viṣṛjati hṛdayam na yasya sākṣād
dharir avasābhihito 'py aghaughā-nāśaḥ
praṇaya-raśanayā dhṛtānghri-padmah
sa bhavati bhāgavata-pradhāna uktaḥ*

“If a person’s heart is always tied to the lotus feet of the Supreme Lord with the rope of love, the Lord does not leave him. Indeed, even if his remembrance is not perfect, he is to be considered a first class devotee.” There is an example of this described in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, Daśa-skandha* (10.30.4). When the *gopīs* assembled to join the *rāsa* dance with Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa left them. Consequently the *gopīs* began to chant the holy name of Kṛṣṇa and, being overwhelmed with madness, began to inquire about Kṛṣṇa from the flowers and the creepers in the forest. Kṛṣṇa is like the sky; He is situated everywhere.

By studying *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, we can obtain information about our eternal relationship with the Supreme Lord, understand the procedure by which the Lord can be attained and receive the ultimate realization, which is love of Godhead. In explaining to Prakāśānanda Sarasvatī how one can achieve the Supreme Personality of Godhead by devotional service, Lord Caitanya quoted a verse from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.14.21) in which the Lord says that He can be realized only through devotional service executed with faith and love. Indeed, it is devotional service alone which purifies the heart of the devotee and elevates him to the ultimate realization by which he, established in faith, renders service unto the Supreme Lord. Even if one is born in a low family, like a family of *caṇḍālas* (dog-eaters), one can become filled with transcendental symptoms through realization of the supreme stage of love of Godhead. These transcendental symptoms are described in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.3.31):

*smarantaḥ smārayantaś ca
mitho 'ghaughā-haram harim
bhaktyā samjātayā bhaktyā*

bibhraty utpulkām tanum

“When devotees discuss subjects dealing with the Supreme Lord, who can cleanse the heart of His devotee from all kinds of sinful reactions, they become overwhelmed with ecstasy and display different symptoms due to their devotional service.” The *Bhāgavatam* further states: “Due to their spontaneous attachment for the Lord, when they chant His holy names they sometimes cry, sometimes laugh, dance, sing and so on, not caring for any social convention.” (*Bhāg.* 11.2.40)

We should understand that *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is the real explanation of the *Brahma-sūtra*, and it is compiled by Vyāsadeva himself. In the *Garuḍa Purāṇa* it is said:

*artho 'yaṁ brahma-sūtrāṇām
bhāratārtha-vinirṇayaḥ
gāyatrī-bhāṣya-rūpo 'sau
vedārtha-paribṛmhitah*

*grantho 'ṣṭādaśa-sāhasraḥ
śrīmad-bhāgavatābhidhaḥ*

“The *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is the authorized explanation of *Brahma-sūtra*, and it is a further explanation of *Mahābhārata*. It is the expansion of the *gāyatrī mantra* and the essence of all Vedic knowledge. This *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, containing eighteen thousand verses, is known as the explanation of all Vedic literature.” In the very First Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* the sages of Naimiṣāraṇya asked Sūta Gosvāmī how one can know the essence of Vedic literature. In answer, Sūta Gosvāmī presented *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* as the essence of all the *Vedas*, histories and other Vedic literatures. Elsewhere in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (12.13.15) it is clearly stated that *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is the essence of all *Vedānta* knowledge and that one who relishes the knowledge of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* has no taste for studying any other literature. In the very beginning of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, the meaning and purpose of the *gāyatrī mantra* are also described: “I offer my obeisances unto the Supreme Truth.” This is the first introductory verse dealing with the Supreme Truth, which is described in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* as the source of creation, maintenance and destruction for the cosmic manifestation. Obeisances unto the

Personality of God head, Vāsudeva (*om namo bhagavate vāsudevāya*), directly indicate Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who is the divine son of Vasudeva and Devakī. This fact is more explicitly presented later in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. Vyāsadeva asserts that Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the original Personality of Godhead and that all others are either His direct or indirect plenary portions or portions of those portions. Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī has later still more explicitly developed this subject in his *Kṛṣṇa-sandarbhā*, and Brahmā, the original living being, has explained Śrī Kṛṣṇa substantially in his treatise *Brahma-saṁhitā*. The *Sāma Veda* also verifies the fact that Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the divine son of Devakī.

In his prayer, the author of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* first proposes that Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the primeval Lord and that if any transcendental nomenclature for the Absolute Personality of Godhead is to be accepted, it should be the name Kṛṣṇa, the all-attractive. In *Bhagavad-gītā* the Lord has affirmed in many passages that He is the original Personality of Godhead, and this was also confirmed by Arjuna, who cited great sages like Nārada, Vyāsa and many others. In *Padma Purāṇa* it is also stated that of the innumerable names of the Lord, the name of Kṛṣṇa is the principal one. Although the name Vāsudeva indicates the plenary portion of the Personality of Godhead, and although all the different forms of the Lord are identical with Vāsudeva, in this text Vāsudeva principally indicates the divine son of Vasudeva and Devakī. Śrī Kṛṣṇa is always meditated upon by the *paramahamsas*, those who are most perfect in the renounced order of life. Vāsudeva, or Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, is the cause of all causes, and everything that exists is an emanation from Him. How this is so is explained in later chapters of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

Caitanya Mahāprabhu describes *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* as the spotless *Purāṇa* because it contains transcendental narrations of the pastimes of the Supreme Personality of Godhead Śrī Kṛṣṇa. The history of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is also very glorious. It was compiled by Vyāsadeva, who drew from his mature experience of transcendental knowledge under the instruction of Śrī Nārada Muni, his spiritual master. Vyāsadeva compiled all the Vedic literatures—the four *Vedas*, the *Vedānta-sūtra* or *Brahma-sūtras*, the *purāṇas* and the *Mahābhārata*. Yet he was not satisfied until he wrote *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. His dissatisfaction was observed by his spiritual master, and consequently Nārada advised him

to write on the transcendental activities of the Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Śrī Kṛṣṇa's transcendental activities are specifically described in the Tenth Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, the canto which is considered to contain the substance of the whole work. One should not approach the Tenth Canto immediately but should approach it gradually by developing knowledge of the subject matters first presented.

Generally a philosophical mind is inquisitive to learn of the origin of all creations. When one who is philosophical sees the night sky, he naturally raises questions about the stars, how they are situated, who lives there, etc. All these inquiries are quite natural for a human being, for the human being has a greater developed consciousness than the animals. In answer to such an inquiry, the author of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* says that the Lord is the origin of all creations. He is not only the creator but the maintainer and annihilator as well. The manifested cosmic creation is created at a certain period by the will of the Lord, is maintained for some time and is finally annihilated by His will. Thus He is the supreme will behind all activities.

Of course there are atheists of various categories who do not believe in the creator, but that is due simply to their poor fund of knowledge. The modern scientist creates rockets, and by some arrangement or other they are thrown into outer space to fly for some time under the control of a scientist far away. All the universes and the innumerable planets within them are similar to such rockets, and they are all controlled by the Personality of Godhead.

In the Vedic literatures it is said that the Absolute Truth, the Personality of Godhead, is the foremost amongst all living personalities. All living beings, from the first created being, Brahmā, down to the smallest ant, are individual living entities. Even above Brahmā there are many other living beings with individual capacities. The Personality of Godhead Himself is also a living being and is as much an individual as the other living beings. However, the Supreme Lord is the supreme living being, and He has the greatest mind and possesses the supermost inconceivable energies in great variety. If a man's mind can produce rockets and spaceships, it is conceivable that a mind higher than man's can produce superior things. A reasonable person will accept this argument but stubborn obstinate people will not.

Śrīla Vyāsadeva at once accepts the supreme mind as the *parameśvara*, the supreme controller. As stated in *Bhagavad-gītā* and all other scriptures written by Śrīla Vyāsadeva, that *parameśvara* is Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself. This is specifically validated in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. In *Bhagavad-gītā* also the Lord Himself says that there is no *paratattva* (*summum bonum*) superior to Himself. Therefore the author at once worships the *paratattva*, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, whose transcendental activities are described in the Tenth Canto.

Unscrupulous people go at once to the Tenth Canto, especially to the five chapters which describe the Lord's *rāsa* dance. However, this portion of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is the most confidential part of that great literature. Unless one is thoroughly accomplished in the transcendental knowledge of the Lord, he is sure to misunderstand the Lord's worshipable transcendental pastimes in the *rāsa* dance and the Lord's love affairs with the *gopīs*. This subject matter is highly spiritual and technical, and only liberated personalities who have gradually attained the stage of *paramahansa* can transcendently relish the worshipable *rāsa* dance.

Therefore Śrīla Vyāsadeva gives the reader a chance to gradually develop in spiritual realization before actually relishing the essence of the pastimes of the Lord. Thus Vyāsadeva purposefully invokes the *gāyatrī mantra: dhīmahī*. This *gāyatrī mantra* is especially meant for spiritually advanced people. When one attains success in chanting *gāyatrī mantra*, he can enter into the transcendental position of the Lord. First, however, one must acquire the brahminical qualities and become perfectly situated in the mode of goodness in order to chant the *gāyatrī mantra* successfully. From that point one can begin to transcendently realize the Lord, His name, His fame, His qualities, etc. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is a narration dealing with the *svarūpa* (form) of the Lord, which is manifested by His internal potency. This potency is distinguished from the external potency, which has manifested the cosmic world within our experience. Śrīla Vyāsadeva makes a clear distinction between the internal and external potencies in the very first verse of the First Chapter of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. In that verse he says that the internal potency is factual reality, whereas the external manifested energy in the form of material existence is temporary and

illusory, no more real than a mirage in the desert. Water may appear present in a mirage, but real water is somewhere else. Similarly, the manifested cosmic creation appears to be reality, but it is simply a reflection of the true reality which exists in the spiritual world. In the spiritual world there are no mirages. Absolute Truth is there; it is not here in the material world. Here, everything is relative truth; one truth seems to depend upon another. This cosmic creation results from an interaction of the three modes of material nature. The temporary manifestations are so created as to present an illusion of reality to the bewildered mind of the conditioned soul. Thus there appear to be so many species of life, including the higher demigods like Brahmā, Indra, Candra, etc. In fact there is no reality in the manifested world, but there appears to be reality because the true reality exists in the spiritual world, where the Personality of Godhead eternally abides with His transcendental paraphernalia.

The chief engineer of a complicated construction does not personally take part in the construction itself, but it is he only who knows all the nooks and corners of the construction because everything is carried out under his instructions only. In other words, he knows everything about the construction directly and indirectly. Similarly, the Personality of Godhead, who is the supreme engineer of this cosmic creation, knows very well what is happening in every nook and corner of the cosmic creation, although activities appear to be performed by someone else. In actuality no one is independent in the material creation; the hand of the Supreme Lord is everywhere. All material elements, as well as all spiritual sparks, are but emanations from Him only. Whatever is created in this material world is created by the interaction of the two energies, material and spiritual. These energies belong to the Absolute Truth, the Personality of Godhead, Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

A chemist can manufacture water in the laboratory by mixing hydrogen and oxygen, but in reality the living entity can only work under the direction of the Supreme Lord. Indeed, all materials used by a chemist are supplied by the Lord. The Lord knows everything directly and indirectly, and He is cognizant of all the minute details of everything. He is fully independent as well. He can be compared to a gold mine, and the cosmic creations can be compared to ornaments made from that

gold, such as gold rings, necklaces, etc. The gold ring and necklace are qualitatively one with the gold in the mine, but quantitatively the gold in the mine and the gold in the earring or necklace are different. Lord Caitanya's philosophy of the Absolute Truth centers about the fact that the Supreme Lord is simultaneously one with and different from His creation. Nothing is absolutely equal to the Absolute Truth, but at the same time nothing is independent of it.

Conditioned souls, beginning from Brahmā, the engineer of this particular universe, down to an insignificant ant, are all creating something, but none of them are independent of the Supreme Lord. The materialist wrongly thinks that there is no creator outside his own good self, and this is called *māyā*, or illusion. Due to his poor fund of knowledge, the materialist cannot see beyond the purview of his imperfect senses; thus he thinks that matter automatically takes its own shape independent of a conscious background. This is refuted by Śrīla Vyāsadeva in the first verse of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. As stated before, Vyāsadeva is a liberated soul, and he compiled this book of authority after attaining spiritual perfection. Since the complete whole, or the Absolute Truth, is the source of everything, nothing is independent of Him. Everything exists within the body of the Absolute Truth. Any action or reaction of a part of a body becomes a cognizable fact to the embodied whole. Similarly, if the creation abides in the body of the Absolute Truth, then nothing is unknown to the Absolute, directly or indirectly.

In the *śruti-mantra* it is stated that the absolute whole, or Brahman, is the ultimate source of everything. Everything emanates from Him, everything is maintained by Him, and at the end everything enters into Him again. That is the law of nature. This is also confirmed in the *smṛti-mantra*. There it is said that at the beginning of Brahma's millennium, the source from which everything emanates is the Absolute Truth, or Brahman, and at the end of that millennium the reservoir into which everything enters is that same Absolute Truth. Material scientists haphazardly take it for granted that the ultimate source of this planetary system is the sun, but they are unable to explain the source of the sun. In Vedic literatures the ultimate source is explained; Brahmā is the creator of this universe, but because he had to meditate in order to receive the

inspiration for such a creation, he is not the ultimate creator. As stated in the first verse of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, Brahmā was taught Vedic knowledge by the Personality of Godhead. In the first verse of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* it is said that the Supreme Lord inspired a secondary creator, Brahmā, and enabled him to carry out his creative functions. In this way the Supreme Lord is the supervising engineer; the real mind behind all creative agents is the Absolute Personality of Godhead, Śrī Kṛṣṇa. In *Bhagavad-gītā* Śrī Kṛṣṇa personally admits that it is He only who superintends the creative energy (*prakṛti*), the sum total of matter. Thus Śrī Vyāsadeva neither worships Brahmā nor the sun but the Supreme Lord, who guides both Brahmā and the sun in their creative activities.

The Sanskrit words *abhijñā* and *svarāt*, appearing in the first verse of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, are significant. These two words distinguish the Lord from all other living entities. No living entity other than the supreme being, the Absolute Personality of Godhead is either *abhijñā* or *svarāt*—that is, none of them are either fully cognizant or fully independent. Everyone has to learn from his superior about knowledge; even Brahmā, who is the first living being within this material world, has to meditate upon the Supreme Lord and take help from Him in order to create. If Brahmā or the sun cannot create anything without acquiring knowledge from a superior, then what is the situation with the material scientists who are fully dependent on so many things? Modern scientists like Jagadisha Chandra Bose, Isaac Newton, Albert Einstein, etc., may be very boastful of their respective creative energies, but all were dependent on the Supreme Lord for so many things. After all, the highly intelligent brains of these gentlemen were certainly not products of any human being. The brain is created by another agent. If brains like those of Einstein or Newton could have been manufactured by a human being, then mankind would produce many such brains instead of eulogizing their passing. If such scientists cannot even manufacture such brains, what to speak of foolish atheists who defy the authority of the Lord?

Even the Māyāvādī impersonalists who flatter themselves and believe that they have become the Lord themselves are not *abhijñāḥ* or *svarāt*, fully cognizant or fully independent. The Māyāvādī monists undergo a

severe process of austerity and penance to acquire knowledge of becoming one with the Lord, but ultimately they become dependent on some rich follower who supplies them with requisite paraphernalia to construct great monasteries and temples. Atheists like Rāvaṇa and Hiraṇyakaśipu had to undergo severe penances before they could flout the authority of the Lord, but ultimately they were so helpless that they could not save themselves when the Lord appeared before them as cruel death. This is also applicable to the modern atheists who dare flout the authority of the Lord. Such atheists will be dealt the same awards as were given in the past to great atheists like Rāvaṇa and Hiraṇyakaśipu. History repeats itself, and what was occurring in the past will recur again and again when there is necessity. Whenever the authority of the Lord is neglected, the penalties dealt by the laws of nature are always there. That the Supreme Lord, the Personality of Godhead, is all-perfect is confirmed in all *śruti-mantras*. It is said in the *śruti-mantras* that the all-perfect Lord glanced over matter and thus created all living beings. The living beings are parts and parcels of the Lord, and He impregnates the vast material nature with the seeds of the spiritual sparks. Thus the creative energies are set in motion for so many wonderful creations. When one atheist argued that God is no more expert than the manufacturer of a subtle watch which has so many delicate parts, we had to reply that God is a greater mechanic than the watchmaker because He simply creates one machine in male and female forms, and the male and female forms go on producing innumerable similar machines without the further attention of God. If a man could manufacture a set of machines capable of producing other machines without the man giving the matter any further attention, then a man could be said to equal the intelligence of God. Of course this is not possible. Each and every one of man's imperfect machines has to be handled individually by a mechanic. Because no one can be equal in intelligence to God, another name for God is *asamaurdhva*, which indicates that no one is equal to or greater than Him. Everyone has his intellectual equal and superior, and no one can claim that he has neither. However, this is not the case with the Lord. The *śruti-mantras* indicate that before the creation of the material universe, the Lord was existing, and He was master of everyone. It was the Lord who instructed Brahmā in Vedic knowledge. That

Personality of Godhead has to be obeyed in all respects. Anyone who wants to become freed from material entanglement must surrender unto Him, and this is confirmed in *Bhagavad-gītā*.

Unless one surrenders unto the lotus feet of the Personality of Godhead, it is certain that one will be bewildered, even if he happens to be a great mind. Only when great minds surrender unto the lotus feet of Vāsudeva and know fully that Vāsudeva is the cause of all causes, as confirmed in *Bhagavad-gītā* (7.19), can they become *mahātmās*, or truly broad-minded. However, such broad-minded *mahātmās* are rarely seen. Only they, however, can understand the Supreme Lord as the Absolute Personality of Godhead, the primeval cause of all creations. He is *parama*, ultimate truth, because all other truths are dependent on Him. Because He is the source of all knowledge, He is omniscient; there is no illusion for Him as there is for the relative knower.

Some Māyāvādī scholars argue that *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* was not compiled by Śrīla Vyāsadeva, and some suggest that the book is a modern creation written by someone named Vopadeva. In order to refute this meaningless argument, Śrīla Śrīdhara Svāmī points out that there are many of the oldest *purāṇas* which make reference to the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. The first *śloka*, or verse, of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* begins with the *Gāyatrī mantra*, and there is reference to this in the *Matsya Purāṇa* (the oldest *Purāṇa*). With reference to the context of *Gāyatrī mantra* in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, in this *Purāṇa* it is said, “That which contains many narrations of spiritual instruction, begins with the *Gāyatrī mantra* and also contains the history of Vṛtrāsura, is known as the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. Whoever makes a gift of this great work on a full moon day attains to the highest perfection of life and goes back to Godhead. There is also reference to *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* in other *Purāṇas* which even indicate that the work consists of Twelve Cantos and eighteen thousand *ślokas*. In *Padma Purāṇa* also there is reference about the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* during a conversation between Gautama and Mahārāja Ambarīṣa. Mahārāja Ambarīṣa was advised to read *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* regularly if he at all desired liberation from material bondage. Under these circumstances, there is no doubt regarding the authority of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. For the past five hundred years many scholars have made elaborate commentaries upon *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and have

displayed unique scholarship. The serious student will do well to attempt to go through them in order to more happily relish the transcendental messages of the *Bhāgavatam*.

Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura specifically deals with original and pure sex psychology (*ādi-rasa*) devoid of all mundane inebriety. The entire material world turns due to the basic principle of sex life. In modern human civilization, sex is the central point of all activities; indeed, wherever we turn our face we see sex life prominent.

Consequently sex life is not unreal; its true reality is experienced in the spiritual world. Material sex is but a perverted reflection of the original; the original is found in the Absolute Truth. This validates the fact that the Absolute Truth is personal, for the Absolute Truth cannot be impersonal and have a sense of pure sex life. The impersonal monist philosophy gives an indirect impetus to abominable mundane sex because it overly stresses the impersonality of the ultimate truth. The result is that men who lack knowledge have accepted the perverted material sex life as all in all because they have no information of the actual spiritual form of sex. There is a distinction between sex in the diseased condition of material life and sex in the spiritual existence. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* gradually elevates the unbiased reader to the highest perfectional stage of transcendence above the three modes of material activities, fruitive actions, speculative philosophy and above worship of functional deities indicated in the *Vedas*. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is the embodiment of devotional service to the Supreme Personality of Godhead Kṛṣṇa and is therefore situated in a position superior to other Vedic literatures.

Religion includes four primary subjects: (1) pious activities, (2) economic development, (3) satisfaction of the senses, and (4) liberation from material bondage. Religious life is distinguished from the irreligious life of barbarism. Indeed, it may be said that human life actually begins with religion. The four principles of animal life—eating, sleeping, defending and mating—are common both to the animals and human beings, but religion is the special concern of human beings. Since human life is no better than animal life without religion, in real human society there is some form of religion aiming at self-realization and referring to one's eternal relationship with God.

In the lower stage of human civilization there is always competition between men in their attempt to dominate material nature. In other words, there is continuous rivalry in an attempt to satisfy the senses. Thus driven by sense gratificatory consciousness, men enact religious rituals. Thus pious activities and religious functions are performed with an aim to acquire some material gain, and if such material gain is obtainable in another way, this so-called religion is neglected. This can be seen in modern human civilization. Since the economic desires of the people appear to be fulfilled in another way, no one is interested in religion now. The churches, mosques and temples are practically vacant, for people are more interested in factories, shops and cinemas. Thus they have deserted the religious places erected by their forefathers. This is evidence that religion is generally performed for the sake of economic development, and economic development is required for sense gratification. When one is baffled in his attempt to attain sense gratification, he takes to the cause of salvation in order to become one with the supreme whole. All these activities arise with the same aim in view—sense gratification.

In the *Vedas*, the four primary subjects mentioned above are prescribed in a regulative way so that there will not be undue competition for sense gratification. However, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is transcendental to all the sense gratifying activities of the material world. It is a pure transcendental literature, understandable by the devotees of the Lord who are above competition in sense gratification. In the material world there is keen competition between animals, men, communities and even nations in an attempt to gratify the senses, but the devotees of the Lord are above all this. Devotees have no need to compete with materialists because they are on the path back to Godhead, back home where everything is eternal, full and blissful. Such transcendentalists are a hundred percent nonenvious and are therefore pure in heart. Because everyone in the material world is envious, there is competition. The devotees of the Lord are not only free from all material envy, but they are also kind to everyone in an attempt to establish a competitionless society with God in the center.

The socialist's idea of a society devoid of competition is artificial because even in the socialist states there is competition for power. It is a fact that

the principle of sense gratification is the basic principle of materialistic life, and this can be realized either from reading the *Vedas* or simply from observing common human activities. The *Vedas* recommend fruitive activities by which people can advance to higher planets, and they also recommend worship of the various demigods for the purpose of attaining their planets. Ultimately the *Vedas* recommend activities by which one can reach the Absolute Truth and realize His impersonal feature in order to become one with Him. However, the impersonal aspect of the Absolute Truth is not the last word. Above the impersonal feature is the Paramātmā, or the Supersoul, and above that is the Supreme Personality. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* gives information about the personal qualities of the Absolute Truth, qualities which are beyond the impersonal aspect. Topics concerning these qualities are greater than topics of impersonal philosophical speculation; consequently *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is given higher status than the *jñāna-kāṇḍa* portions of the *Vedas*. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is also greater than the *karma-kāṇḍa* and *upāsana-kāṇḍa* portions as well because it recommends the worship of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the divine son of Vasudeva. The *karma-kāṇḍa* portion of the *Vedas* is fraught with competition to reach heavenly planets for better sense gratification, and this competition is also seen in the *jñāna-kāṇḍa* and *upāsana-kāṇḍa* portions. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is above all of these because it aims only at the Supreme Truth, the substance or root of all categories.

In other words, from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* we can know the substance as well as the relativities in their true sense and perspective. The substance is the Absolute Truth, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and the relativities are the different forms of energy which emanate from Him. Since the living entities are also related to His energies, there is nothing really different from the substance. At the same time, the energies are different from the substance. In the material sense, this conception is self-contradictory, but *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* explicitly deals with this aspect of simultaneous oneness and difference. This philosophy is also found in the *Vedānta-sūtra* beginning with the *janmādy asya sūtra* [SB 1.1.1]. Knowledge of the simultaneous oneness and difference found in the Absolute Truth is imparted for the well-being of everyone. Mental speculators mislead people by establishing the energy of the Lord as

absolute, but when the truth of simultaneous oneness and difference is understood, the imperfect concepts of monism and dualism cease to satisfy. By understanding the Lord's simultaneous oneness with and difference from His creation, one can immediately attain freedom from the threefold miseries—miseries inflicted by the body and mind, by other living entities and by acts of nature.

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam begins with the surrender of the living entity unto the Absolute Person. This surrender is made with clear consciousness and awareness of the devotee's oneness with the Absolute, and, at the same time, of his eternal position of servitorship. In the material conception, one thinks himself to be the Lord of all he surveys; consequently he is always troubled by the threefold miseries of life. As soon as one comes to know his real position in transcendental service, he at once becomes freed from all these miseries. The position of servitor is wasted in the material conception of life. In an attempt to dominate material nature, the living entity is forced to offer his service to relative material energy. When this service is transferred to the Lord in pure consciousness of spiritual identity, the living entity at once becomes free from the encumbrances of material affection.

Over and above this, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is the personal commentary on *Vedānta-sūtra* made by Vyāsadeva when he had attained maturity in spiritual realization. He was able to write it by the help of Nārada's mercy. Vyāsadeva is also an incarnation of Nārāyaṇa, the Personality of Godhead; therefore there is no question about his authority. Although he is the author of all Vedic literature, he specifically recommends the study of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. In other *purāṇas* various methods for worshiping demigods are mentioned, but in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* only the Supreme Personality of Godhead is mentioned. The Supreme Lord is the total body, and the demigods are different parts of that body. Thus if one worships the Supreme Lord, he need not worship the demigods, for the Supreme Lord is in the hearts of all demigods. Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu distinguished *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* from all other *purāṇas* by recommending it as the spotless *Purāṇa*.

The method by which the transcendental message is received is the method of submissive hearing. A challenging attitude cannot help one receive or realize the transcendental message; therefore in the second

verse of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* the word *śuśrūṣu* is used. This word indicates that one should be anxious to hear the transcendental message. The desire to hear with interest is the primary qualification for assimilating transcendental knowledge. Unfortunately many people are not interested in patiently hearing the message of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. The process is simple but the application difficult. Those who are unfortunate will find time to hear ordinary social and political topics, but when they are invited to attend an assembly to hear *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, they are reluctant to attend. Sometimes people indulge in hearing portions of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* which they are not prepared to hear. Professional readers of the *Bhāgavatam* indulge in reading the confidential portions dealing with the pastimes of the Supreme Lord. These portions appear to read like sex literature. However, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is meant to be heard from the beginning, and those who are fit to assimilate the messages of *Bhāgavatam* are mentioned in the very beginning (*Bhāg.* 1.1.2): A bona fide audience fit to hear *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is generated after many pious deeds. An intellectual person can believe in the assurances of the great sage Vyāsadeva and patiently hear the messages of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* in order to realize the Supreme Personality of Godhead directly. One need not struggle through the different Vedic stages of realization, for one can be lifted to the position of *paramahansa* simply by agreeing to hear the message of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* with patience. The sages of Naimiṣāraṇya told Sūta Gosvāmī that they were intensely desirous of understanding *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. They were hearing from Sūta Gosvāmī about Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and they were never satiated by these discussions. People who are really attached to Kṛṣṇa never want to stop hearing about Him.

Lord Caitanya therefore advised Prakāśānanda Sarasvatī: “Always read *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and try to understand each and every verse. Then you will actually understand *Brahma-sūtra*. You say that you are very anxious to study *Vedānta-sūtra*, but you cannot understand *Vedānta-sūtra* without understanding *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.” He also advised Prakāśānanda Sarasvatī to always chant Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare. “And, by doing so, you will very easily be liberated. After liberation you

will be eligible to achieve the highest goal of life, love of Godhead.”
 The Lord then recited many verses from authoritative scriptures like *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, *Bhagavad-gītā* and *Nṛsiṃha-tāpanī*. In particular, he quoted the following verse from *Bhagavad-gītā*.

*brahma-bhūtaḥ prasannātmā
 na śocati na kāṅkṣati
 samaḥ sarveṣu bhūteṣu
 mad-bhaktiṃ labhate parām*

“One who is transcendently situated at once realizes the Supreme Brahman. He never laments nor desires to have anything; he is equally disposed to every living entity. In that state he attains pure devotional service unto Me.” (Bg. 18.54)

When a person reaches this *brahma-bhūta* platform, he sees all living entities equally and becomes a pure devotee of the Supreme Lord. In the *Nṛsiṃha-tāpanī* (2.5.16) it is said that when a person is actually liberated he can understand the transcendental pastimes of the Supreme Lord and thus engage in His devotional service. Lord Caitanya also quoted a verse from the Second Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (2.1.9) in which Śukadeva Gosvāmī admits that although he was elevated to the liberated stage and free from the clutches of *māyā*, he was still attracted by the transcendental pastimes of Kṛṣṇa. Consequently he studied *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* from his great father, Vyāsadeva.

Lord Caitanya also quoted another *śloka* from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (3.15.43) dealing with the Kumāras. When the Kumāras entered the temple of the Lord, they were attracted by the aroma of flowers and *tulasī* leaves offered to the lotus feet of the Lord with pulp of sandalwood. Simply by smelling the aroma of these offerings, the minds of the Kumāras turned to the service of the Supreme Lord, despite the fact that the Kumāras were already liberated souls. It is stated elsewhere in *Bhāgavatam* (1.7.10) that even if one is a liberated soul and is actually free from material contamination, he can still, without cause, become attracted to the devotional service of the Supreme Lord. Thus God is so attractive, and because He is so attractive, He is called Kṛṣṇa.

In this way Lord Caitanya discussed the *Ātmārāma* verse from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* with Prakāśānanda Sarasvatī. Lord Caitanya’s admirer, the

Mahārāṣṭrīya *brāhmaṇa*, related that the Lord explained this verse in sixty-one different ways. Everyone assembled was very eager to hear the different versions of the *Ātmārāma śloka* again, and since they were so eager, Lord Caitanya again explained the *śloka* in the same way that He had explained it to Sanātana Gosvāmī. Everyone who heard the explanations of the *Ātmārāma śloka* was amazed. Indeed, everyone considered Lord Caitanya to be none other than Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself.

Chapter Twenty-four

Talks with Sārvabhauma Bhaṭṭācārya

When Lord Caitanya met Sārvabhauma Bhaṭṭācārya at Jagannātha Purī, Bhaṭṭācārya, being the greatest logician of the day, also wanted to teach the Lord *Vedānta*. Since Bhaṭṭācārya was an elderly man, the age of Lord Caitanya’s father, He took compassion on the young *sannyāsī* and requested Him to learn *Vedānta-sūtra* from him. Otherwise, Bhaṭṭācārya maintained, it would be difficult for Lord Caitanya to continue as a *sannyāsī*. When the Lord finally agreed, Bhaṭṭācārya began to teach Him in the temple of Jagannātha. Bhaṭṭācārya lectured on the *Vedānta-sūtra* continuously for seven days, and the Lord heard him without speaking a word. On the eighth day, Bhaṭṭācārya said: “You have been hearing *Vedānta-sūtra* from me for the past week, but You have not asked any questions, nor have You indicated that I am explaining it nicely. Therefore I cannot tell whether You are understanding me or not.” “I am a fool,” the Lord replied. “I have no capacity to study *Vedānta-sūtra*, but since you asked Me to hear you, I am trying to listen. I am simply listening to you because you said that it is the duty of every *sannyāsī* to hear *Vedānta-sūtra*. But as far as the meaning you are conveying is concerned—I cannot understand that.” Thus the Lord indicated that in the Māyāvādī *sampradāya* there are many so-called *sannyāsīs* who, even though illiterate and unintelligent, hear *Vedānta-sūtra* from their spiritual master just as a matter of formality. Although they listen, they do not understand anything. As far as Lord Caitanya was concerned, He said that He did not understand the explanation of Bhaṭṭācārya not because it was too difficult for His understanding but because He did not approve of the Māyāvādī interpretation. When the Lord said that He was an uneducated fool and could not follow the expositions, Bhaṭṭācārya replied: “If You do not follow what I am saying, why don’t You inquire? Why do You simply sit silently? It appears that You do have something to say about my explanations.” “My dear sir,” the Lord replied. “As far as the *Vedānta-sūtra* or the codes of *Vedānta* are concerned, I can understand the meaning quite well.

However, I cannot understand your explanations. There is nothing really difficult about the meaning of the original *Vedānta-sūtra*, but the way you explain *Vedānta-sūtra* appears to obscure the real meaning. You do not elucidate the direct meaning but imagine something and consequently obscure the true meaning. I think that you have a particular doctrine which you are trying to expound through the codes of *Vedānta-sūtra*.”

According to *Muktika Upaniṣad*, there are 108 *Upaniṣads*. Among these are: (1) *Īśa*, (2) *Kena*, (3) *Kaṭha*, (4) *Praśna*, (5) *Muṇḍaka*, (6) *Māṇḍūkya*, (7) *Tittiri*, (8) *Aitareya*, (9) *Chāndogya*, (10) *Bṛhad-āraṇyaka*, (11) *Brahma*, (12) *Kaivalya*, (13) *Jāvāla*, (14) *Śvetāśva*, (15) *Hansa*, (16) *Arunih*, (17) *Garbha*, (18) *Narayana*, etc. These 108 *Upaniṣads* contain all knowledge about the Absolute Truth. Sometimes people inquire about the meaning of these 108 prayer beads, but because we think there are 108 *Upaniṣads* which contain full knowledge of the Absolute Truth, therefore 108 beads are accepted. Sometimes on the other hand, the Vaiṣṇava transcendentalists think that the 108 beads represent the 108 companions of Lord Kṛṣṇa in His *rāsa* dance, and therefore 108 beads are accepted.

Lord Caitanya protested against misinterpretations of the *Upaniṣads*, and He rejected any explanation which did not give the direct meaning of the *Upaniṣads*. The direct interpretation is called *abhidhā-vṛtti*, whereas the indirect interpretation is called *lakṣanā-vṛtti*. The indirect interpretation serves no purpose. There are four kinds of understanding, called: (1) direct understanding (*pratyakṣa*), (2) hypothetical understanding (*anumāna*), (3) historical understanding (*aitihya*) and (4) understanding through sound (*śabda*). Of these four, understanding from the Vedic scriptures (which are the sound representations of the Absolute Truth) is the best method. The traditional Vedic students accept understanding through sound to be the best.

The stool and bone of any living entity are considered to be impure according to Vedic literatures, yet the Vedic literatures assert that cow dung and conchshells are pure. Apparently these statements are contradictory, but because cow dung and conchshells are considered pure by the *Vedas*, they are accepted as pure by the followers of the *Vedas*. If we want to understand the statements by indirect

interpretation, then we have to challenge the Vedic statements. In other words, Vedic statements cannot be accepted by our imperfect interpretations; they must be accepted *as they are*. If they are not accepted in this way, there is no authority in the Vedic statements. According to Lord Caitanya, those who try to give personal interpretations to the Vedic statements are not at all intelligent. They mislead their followers by inventing their own interpretations. In India there is a class of men known as *ārya-samāja* who say that they accept the original *Vedas* only and reject all other Vedic literatures. The motive of these people, however, is to give their own interpretation. According to Lord Caitanya, such interpretations are not to be accepted. They are simply not Vedic. Lord Caitanya said that the Vedic statements of the *Upaniṣads* are like sunlight. Everything is clear and very distinct when it is seen in the sunlight; the statements of the *Vedas* are similarly clear and distinct. The Māyāvādī philosophers simply cover the sunlight with the cloud of misinterpretation.

Lord Caitanya then said that all the Vedic statements of the *Upaniṣads* aim at the ultimate truth known as Brahman. The word Brahman means “the greatest,” and when we speak of the greatest we immediately refer to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the source of all emanations. Unless the greatest possesses six opulences in full, he cannot be called the greatest. The greatest, who is full in six opulences, is the Supreme Personality of Godhead. In other words, the Supreme Brahman is the Supreme Personality of Godhead as well. In *Bhagavad-gītā* (10.12) Kṛṣṇa is accepted by Arjuna as the Supreme Brahman (*param brahma*). The conceptions of the impersonal Brahman and the localized Supersoul are contained within the understanding of the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

Whenever we speak of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, we add the word *śrī*, indicating that He is full with six opulences. In other words, He is eternally a person; if He were not a person, the six opulences could not be present in fullness. If we say that the Supreme Absolute Truth is impersonal, we mean that His personality is not material. Thus in order to distinguish His transcendental body from ordinary material bodies, some philosophers have explained Him as being impersonal from the material point of view. In other words, material personality is denied,

and spiritual personality is established. In the *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* (3.19) it is clearly explained that the Absolute Truth has no material legs and hands, but in that scripture it is indicated that He has spiritual hands by which He accepts everything offered to Him. Similarly, He has no material eyes, but He does have spiritual eyes by which He can see everything and anything. Although He has no material ears, He can hear everything and anything. Having perfect senses, He knows past, future and present. Indeed, He knows everything, but no one can understand Him, for by material senses He cannot be understood. Being the origin of all emanations, He is the supreme, the greatest, the Personality of Godhead.

There are many similar Vedic hymns which definitely establish that the Supreme Absolute Truth is a person who is not of this material world. For instance, in the *Hayaśīrṣa-pañcarātra* it is explained that although in each and every *Upaniṣad* the Supreme Brahman is first viewed as impersonal, at the end the personal form of the Supreme Lord is accepted. A similar verse occurs in *Śrī Īsopaniṣad*:

*hiraṇmayena pātreṇa
satyasyāpihitam mukham
tat tvaṁ pūṣann apāvṛṇu
satya-dharmāya dṛṣṭaye*

“O my Lord, sustainer of all that lives, Your real face is covered by Your dazzling effulgence. Please remove that covering and exhibit Yourself to Your pure devotee.” (*Īśa.* 15)

This verse indicates that everyone should engage in devotional service to the Supreme Lord, who is the maintainer of this whole universe. Everyone is sustained by His mercy; therefore devotional service unto Him constitutes the true religion. The Supreme Personality of Godhead is the eternal form of *sac-cid-ānanda*, and His effulgence is spread throughout the creation, just as sunshine is spread throughout the solar system. And just as the sun disc is covered by the glaring effulgence of the sunshine, the transcendental form of the Lord is covered by the glaring effulgence called *brahmajyoti*. Indeed, in this verse it is clearly stated that the eternal, blissful, cognizant form of the Supreme Lord is to be found within the glaring effulgence of the *brahmajyoti*, which

emanates from the body of the Supreme Lord. Thus the personal body of the Lord is the source of the *brahmajyoti*, as confirmed in *Bhagavad-gītā* (Bg. 14.27). That the impersonal Brahman is dependent on the Supreme Personality is stated in the *Hayaśīrṣa-pañcarātra* and in every other *Upaniṣad* or Vedic scripture. Indeed, whenever there is talk of the impersonal Brahman in the beginning, the Supreme Personality is finally established at the end. Just as *Īśopaniṣad* indicates, the Supreme Absolute Truth is both impersonal and personal eternally, but His personal aspect is more important than the impersonal one.

According to a *mantra* in *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* (*yato vā imāni bhūtāni jāyante*) this cosmic manifestation is but an emanation from the Supreme Absolute Truth, and it rests in the Supreme Absolute Truth. The Absolute Truth has been called the ablative, causative and locative performer. Thus as a performer, He is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, for these are symptoms of personality. As the ablative performer of this cosmic manifestation, all thinking, feeling and willing come from Him. Without thinking, feeling and willing, there is no possibility of arrangement and design in the cosmic manifestation. Then again, He is causative, for He is the original designer of the cosmos. And He is locative: that is, everything is resting in His energy. These attributes are all clearly attributes of personality.

In the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* (5.2.3), it is said that when the Supreme Personality of Godhead desires to become many, He turns over material nature. As also confirmed in *Aitareya Upaniṣad* (1.1), *sa aikṣata*: “The Lord glanced at material nature.” The cosmic manifestation did not exist before His glance; therefore His glance is not materially contaminated. His seeing power existed before the material creation; therefore His body is not material. His thinking, feeling and acting are all transcendental. In other words, it should be concluded that the mind by which the Lord thinks, feels and wills is transcendental, and the eyes by which He glances over material nature are also transcendental. Since His transcendental body and all His senses existed before the material creation, the Lord also has a transcendental mind and transcendental thinking, feeling and willing. This is the conclusion of all Vedic literature.

The word Brahman is found everywhere throughout the *Upaniṣads*. In

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, Brahman, Paramātmā and Bhagavān, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, are all taken together as the Absolute Truth. Brahman and Paramātmā realization are considered stages toward the ultimate realization, which is realization of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. This is the real conclusion of all Vedic literatures.

Thus according to the evidences afforded by various Vedic scriptures, the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa is accepted as the ultimate goal of Brahman realization. *Bhagavad-gītā* (Bg. 7.7) also confirms that there is nothing superior to Kṛṣṇa. Madhvācārya, one of the greatest *ācāryas* in Brahmā's disciplic succession, has stated in his explanation to the *Vedānta-sūtra* that everything can be seen through the authorities of the scriptures. He quoted a verse from *Skanda Purāṇa* in which it is stated that the *Ṛg Veda*, *Sāma Veda*, *Atharva Veda*, *Mahābhārata*, *Pañcarātra* and the original *Rāmāyaṇa* are actually Vedic evidence. The *Purāṇas*, which are accepted by the *Vaiṣṇavas*, are also considered to be Vedic evidence. Indeed, whatever is contained in that literature should be taken without argument as the ultimate conclusion, and all these literatures proclaim Kṛṣṇa to be the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

Chapter Twenty-Five

Personal and Impersonal Realization

The *Purāṇas* are called supplementary Vedic literatures. Because sometimes in the original *Vedas* the subject matter is too difficult for the common man to understand, the *Purāṇas* explain matters simply by the use of stories and historical incidents. In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (10.14.32) it is stated that Mahārāja Nanda and the cowherd men and inhabitants of Vṛndāvana are very fortunate because the Supreme Brahman, the Personality of Godhead, full of bliss, engages in His eternal pastimes as their friend.

According to *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad*, the *apāṇi-pādo javano grahītā mantra* confirms that although Brahman has no material hands and legs, He nonetheless walks in a very stately way and accepts everything that is offered to Him. This suggests that He has transcendental limbs and is therefore not impersonal. One who does not understand the Vedic principles simply stresses the impersonal material features of the Supreme Absolute Truth and thus incorrectly calls the Absolute Truth impersonal. The impersonalist Māyāvādī philosophers want to establish the Absolute Truth as impersonal, but this is in contradiction to Vedic literature. Although Vedic literatures confirm the fact that the Supreme Absolute Truth has multiple energies, the Māyāvādī impersonalists still try to establish that the Absolute Truth has no energy. The fact remains, however, that the Absolute Truth is full of energy and is a person as well. It is not possible to establish Him as impersonal.

According to the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* (6.7.61–3), the living entities are considered *kṣetrajña* energy. Although the living entity is part and parcel of the Supreme Lord and is fully cognizant, he nonetheless becomes entrapped by material contamination and suffers all the miseries of material life. Such living entities live in different ways in accordance to the degree of their entanglement in material nature. The original energy of the Supreme Lord is spiritual and nondifferent from the Supreme Absolute Personality of Godhead. The living entity is called the marginal energy of the Supreme Lord, and the material energy

is called the inferior energy. Due to his material inebriety, the living entity in the marginal position becomes entangled with the inferior energy, matter. At such a time he forgets his spiritual significance, identifies himself with material energy and thereby becomes subjected to the threefold miseries. Only when he is free from such material contamination can he be situated in his proper position.

According to Vedic instructions, one should understand the constitutional position of the living entity, the position of the Lord, and the position of material energy in their interrelation. First of all, one should try to understand the constitutional position of the Supreme Lord, the Personality of Godhead. That Supreme Lord has an eternal, cognizant, blissful body, and His spiritual energy is distributed as eternity, knowledge and bliss. In His blissful identity can be found His pleasure potency, and in His eternal identity He can be seen as the cause of everything. In His cognizant identity, He is the supreme knowledge. Indeed, the word *kṛṣṇa* indicates that supreme knowledge. In other words, the Supreme Personality, Kṛṣṇa, is the reservoir of all knowledge, pleasure and eternity. The supreme knowledge of Kṛṣṇa is exhibited in three different energies—internal, marginal and external. By virtue of His internal energy, He exists in Himself with His spiritual paraphernalia; by means of His marginal energy, He exhibits Himself as the living entities, and by means of His external energy He exhibits Himself as material energy. Behind each and every energetic exhibition there is the background of eternity, pleasure, potency and full cognizance.

The conditioned soul is the marginal potency overpowered by the external potency. However, when the marginal potency comes under the jurisdiction of the spiritual potency, it becomes eligible for love of Godhead. The Supreme Lord enjoys six kinds of opulences, and no one can establish that He is formless or that He is without energy. If someone claims so, his contention is completely opposed to the Vedic instructions. Actually the Supreme Personality of Godhead is the master of all energies. It is only the living entity, who is an infinitesimal part and parcel of Him, who is overpowered by the material energy. In the *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* it is stated that there are two birds sitting on the same tree, and one of these birds is eating the fruit of this tree while

the other bird is simply witnessing his activities. Only when the bird eating the fruit looks at the other bird does he become free from all anxieties. This is the position of the infinitesimal living entity. As long as he is forgetful of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who witnesses all his activities, he is subjected to the threefold miseries. But when he looks to the Supreme Lord and becomes the Supreme Lord's devotee, he becomes free from all anxieties and material miseries. The living entity is eternally subordinate to the Supreme Lord; the Supreme Lord is always the master of all energies, whereas the living entity is always under the domination of the Lord's energies. Although qualitatively one with the Supreme Lord, the living entity has the tendency to lord it over material nature; however, being infinitesimal, he is actually controlled by material nature. Thus the living entity is called the marginal potency of the Lord.

Because the living entity tends to be controlled by material nature, he cannot at any stage become one with the Supreme Lord. If a living entity were equal to the Supreme Lord, there would be no possibility of his being controlled by material energy. In *Bhagavad-gītā* the living entity is described as one of the energies of the Supreme Lord. Although inseparable from the energetic, energy is still energy, and it cannot be equal with the energetic. In other words, the living entity is simultaneously one and different from the Supreme Lord. *Bhagavad-gītā* (7.4–5) clearly states that earth, water, fire, air, ether, mind, intelligence and false ego are the eight elementary energies of the Supreme Lord and are of inferior quality, whereas the living entity is of superior quality. The Vedic literatures confirm the fact that the transcendental form of the Supreme Lord is eternal, blissful and full of knowledge.

The form of the Supreme Lord which is beyond the modes of material nature is not like the forms of this material world. His form is fully spiritual and cannot be compared with any material form. According to Vedic literatures, one who does not accept the spiritual form of the Supreme Lord is an atheist. Because Lord Buddha did not accept these Vedic principles, the Vedic teachers consider him to be an atheist. Although Māyāvādī philosophers pretend to accept the Vedic principles, they indirectly preach Buddhist philosophy, or atheistic philosophy, and do not accept the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Māyāvādī

philosophy is inferior to Buddhist philosophy, which directly denies Vedic authority. Because it is disguised as *Vedānta* philosophy, Māyāvādī philosophy is more dangerous than Buddhism or atheism.

Vedānta-sūtra is compiled by Vyāsadeva for the benefit of all living entities. It is through *Vedānta-sūtra* that the philosophy of *bhakti-yoga* can be understood. Unfortunately, the Māyāvādī commentary, *Śārīraka-bhāṣya*, has practically defeated the purpose of *Vedānta-sūtra*. In the Māyāvādī commentary, the spiritual, transcendental form of the Supreme Personality of Godhead has been denied, and the Supreme Brahman has been dragged down to the level of the individual Brahman, the living entity. Both the Supreme Brahman and the individual Brahman have been denied spiritual form and individuality, although it is clearly stated that the Supreme Lord is the one supreme living entity and the other living entities are the many subordinate living entities. Thus reading the Māyāvādī commentaries on *Vedānta-sūtra* is always dangerous. The chief danger is that through these commentaries one may come to consider the living entity to be equal to the Supreme Lord. It is easy for a conditioned living entity to be falsely directed in this way, and once he is so directed he can never come to his actual position or enjoy his eternal activity in *bhakti yoga*. In other words, the Māyāvādī philosophy has rendered the greatest disservice to humanity by promoting the impersonal view of the Supreme Lord. Thus Māyāvādī philosophers deprive human society of the real message of *Vedānta-sūtra*. From the very beginning of *Vedānta-sūtra* it is accepted that the cosmic manifestation is but an energetic display of the Supreme Lord. The very first aphorism (*janmādy asya* [SB 1.1.1]) describes the Supreme Brahman as He from whom everything emanates. Everything is maintained by Him, and everything is dissolved in Him. Thus the Absolute Truth is the cause of creation, maintenance and dissolution. The cause of a piece of fruit is the tree; when a tree produces a piece of fruit, one cannot say that the tree is impersonal. The tree may produce hundreds and thousands of fruits, but it remains as it is. The fruit is produced, and it develops and stays for some time; then it dwindles and vanishes. This does not mean that the tree also vanishes. Thus from the very beginning the *Vedānta-sūtra* explains the doctrine of by-products. These activities of production, maintenance and dissolution are carried out by the

inconceivable energy of the Supreme Lord. The cosmic manifestation is a transformation of the energy of the Supreme Lord, although the energy of the Supreme Lord and the Supreme Lord Himself are nondifferent and inseparable. A touchstone may produce great quantities of gold in contact with iron, but still the touchstone remains as it is. Despite His producing huge material cosmic manifestations, the Supreme Lord is always in His transcendental form.

Māyāvādī philosophy has the audacity to reject the purpose of Vyāsadeva, as explained in the *Vedānta-sūtra*, and to attempt to establish a doctrine of transformation which is totally imaginary. According to the Māyāvādī philosophy, the cosmic manifestation is but the transformation of the Absolute Truth, and the Absolute Truth has no separate existence outside the cosmic manifestation. This is not the message of *Vedānta-sūtra*. The transformation has been explained by Māyāvādī philosophers as false, but it is not false. It is only temporary. The Māyāvādī philosophers maintain that the Absolute Truth is the only truth and that this material manifestation known as the world is false. Actually this is not the case. The material contamination is not exactly false; because it is relative truth, it is temporary. There is a difference between something that is temporary and something that is false.

Praṇava, or *omkāra*, is the chief vibration found in the Vedic hymns, and *omkāra* is considered to be the sound form of the Supreme Lord. From *omkāra* all Vedic hymns have emanated, and the world itself has also emanated from this *omkāra* sound. The words *tat tvam asi*, also found in the Vedic hymns, are not the chief vibrations but are explanations of the constitutional position of the living entity. *Tat tvam asi* means that the living entity is a spiritual particle of the supreme spirit, but this is not the chief motif of the *Vedānta* or Vedic literatures. The chief sound representation of the Supreme is *omkāra*.

All these faulty explanations of *Vedānta-sūtra* are considered atheistic. Because the Māyāvādī philosophers do not accept the eternal transcendental form of the Supreme Lord, they are unable to engage in real devotional service. Thus the Māyāvādī philosopher is forever bereft of Kṛṣṇa consciousness and Kṛṣṇa's devotional service. The pure devotee of the Personality of Godhead never accepts the Māyāvādī philosophy as

an actual path to transcendental realization. The Māyāvādī philosophers hover in the moral and immoral material atmosphere of the cosmic world and consequently are always engaged in rejecting and accepting material enjoyment. They have falsely accepted the nonspiritual as the spiritual, and as a result they have forgotten the spiritual eternal form of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, as well as His name, quality and entourage. They consider the transcendental pastimes, name, form and qualities of the Supreme to be products of material nature. Because of their acceptance and rejection of material pleasure and misery, the Māyāvādī philosophers are eternally subjected to material misery. The actual devotees of the Lord are always in disagreement with the Māyāvādī philosophers. There is no way that impersonalism can possibly represent eternity, bliss and knowledge. Being situated in imperfect knowledge of liberation, the Māyāvādī decries eternity, knowledge and bliss as materialism. Because they reject devotional service, they are unintelligent and unable to understand the effects of devotional service. The word jugglery they use in an attempt to amalgamate knowledge, the knowable and the knower simply reveals them to be unintelligent. The doctrine of by-product is the real purport of the beginning of *Vedānta-sūtra*. The Lord is empowered with innumerable unlimited energies, and consequently He displays the by-products of these energies in different ways. Everything is under His control. The Supreme Lord is also the supreme controller, and He is manifested in innumerable energies and expansions.

Chapter Twenty-six **Bhaṭṭācārya is Converted**

For the impersonalist and voidist philosophers, the next world is a world of senseless eternity and bliss. The voidist philosophers want to establish that ultimately everything is senseless, and the impersonalists want to establish that in the next world there is simply knowledge devoid of activity. Thus less intelligent salvationists try to carry imperfect knowledge into the sphere of perfect spiritual activity. Because the impersonalist experiences material activity as miserable, he wants to establish spiritual life without activity. He has no understanding of the activities of devotional service. Indeed, spiritual activity in devotional service is unintelligible to the voidist philosophers and impersonalists. The Vaiṣṇava philosophers know perfectly well that the Absolute Truth, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, can never be impersonal or void because He possesses innumerable potencies. Through His innumerable energies, He can present Himself in multiple forms and still remain the Absolute Supreme Personality of Godhead. Thus despite expanding Himself in multiple forms and diffusing His innumerable energies, He can maintain His transcendental position.

Thus Lord Caitanya exposed many defects in the Māyāvādī philosophy, and although Bhaṭṭācārya tried to establish himself by logic and word jugglery, Lord Caitanya was able to maintain Himself from his attacks. The Lord established that Vedic literature is meant for three things: understanding our relationship with the Absolute Supreme Personality of Godhead, acting according to that understanding, and achieving the highest perfection of life, love of Godhead. Anyone who tries to prove that the Vedic literatures aim at anything else is of necessity a victim of his own imagination.

The Lord then quoted some verses from the *Purāṇas* by which He established that Śaṅkarācārya was deputed to teach by the order of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. He quoted a verse from the *Padma Purāṇa* (62.31) in which it is stated that the Lord ordered Mahādeva, Lord Śiva, to present some imaginary interpretations of Vedic literatures

in order to divert people from the actual purpose of the *Vedas*. “By doing so you will attempt to make them atheists,” the Lord said. “After that, they can produce more population.” It is also stated in *Padma Purāṇa* (25.9) that Lord Śiva explained to his wife, Pārvatī, that in the age of Kali he would come in the form of a *brāhmaṇa* to preach an imperfect interpretation of the *Vedas*, known as Māyāvādism, which in actuality is but a second edition of atheistic Buddhist philosophy.

Bhaṭṭācārya was overwhelmed by these explanations of Lord Caitanya. After hearing Māyāvāda philosophy explained by Lord Caitanya, he could not speak. After he remained silent for some time, Lord Caitanya asked him, “My dear Bhaṭṭācārya, don’t be confused by this explanation. Please take it from Me that the devotional service of the Supreme Lord is the highest perfectional stage of human understanding. Indeed, it is so attractive that even those who are already liberated become devotees by the inconceivable potency of the Supreme Personality of Godhead.”

There are many such conversions in Vedic literature. For instance, in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (1.7.10) the famous *Ātmārāma* verse is especially meant for those who are attracted to self-realization and liberated from all material attachments. Such liberated impersonalists become attracted to devotional service by the various activities of Lord Kṛṣṇa. Such are the transcendental qualities of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Actually, in pure consciousness the living entity understands himself as the eternal servant of the Supreme Lord. Under the spell of illusion, a person accepts the gross and subtle bodies as his self; such a conception is the basis of the doctrine of transference. Actually the part and parcel of the Supreme is not eternally subjected to gross and subtle bodily life. The gross and subtle coverings do not comprise the living entity’s eternal form; they can be changed. In other words, the living entity, who is originally pure spirit, can be conditioned by the gross and subtle bodies and, by freeing himself from these gross and subtle conditionings, again attain his situation as pure spirit. Māyāvādī philosophers take advantage of this doctrine of transference by saying that the living entity is under the wrong impression when he thinks himself to be part and parcel of the Supreme. They maintain that the living entity is the Supreme Himself. This doctrine cannot be tenable.

Bhaṭṭācārya then asked Lord Caitanya to explain the famous *Ātmārāma*

verse, for he desired to hear it from the Lord Himself. Lord Caitanya replied that first of all Bhaṭṭācārya should explain the verse according to his own understanding, and then Lord Caitanya would explain it. Bhaṭṭācārya then began to explain the *Ātmārāma śloka*, using his methods of logic and grammar. Thus he explained the *Ātmārāma śloka* in nine different ways. The Lord appreciated his erudite scholarship in explaining the verse and said: “My dear Bhaṭṭācārya, I know that you are a representative of the learned scholar Bṛhaspati and can explain any portion of the *śāstras* nicely. Yet your explanation is more or less based on academic education only. Aside from this academic scholarly approach, there is another explanation.”

Then, at the request of Bhaṭṭācārya, Lord Caitanya explained the *Ātmārāma śloka*. The words of the verse were analyzed thus: (1) *ātmārāmāḥ*, (2) *ca*, (3) *munayaḥ*, (4) *nirgranthāḥ*, (5) *api*, (6) *urukrame*, (7) *kurvanti*, (8) *ahaitukīm*, (9) *bhaktim*, (10) *itthambhūta-guṇaḥ*, (11) *hariḥ*. This verse has already been explained in the Lord’s teachings to Sanātana Gosvāmī. Lord Caitanya did not mention the nine different explanations of Bhaṭṭācārya, but He did explain the verse by analyzing these eleven words. In this way, He expounded sixty-one different explanations of the verse. In summary He said that the Supreme Personality of Godhead is full of innumerable potencies; no one can estimate how many transcendental qualities He possesses. His qualities are always inconceivable, and all processes of self-realization inquire into the potencies, energies and qualities of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. However, the devotees of the Lord immediately accept the inconceivable position of the Lord. Lord Caitanya explained that even great liberated souls like the Kumāras and Śukadeva Gosvāmī were also attracted to the transcendental qualities of the Supreme Lord.

Bhaṭṭācārya appreciated Lord Caitanya’s explanation, and he concluded that Lord Caitanya was none other than Kṛṣṇa Himself. Bhaṭṭācārya then began to deprecate his own position, relating that he had at first considered Lord Caitanya to be an ordinary human being and therefore committed an offense. He then fell down at the lotus feet of Lord Caitanya, deprecating himself, and requested the Lord to show His causeless mercy upon him. Lord Caitanya appreciated the humility of this great scholar and therefore exhibited His own form, first with four

hands, and then with six hands (*ṣaḍbhujā*). Sārvabhauma Bhaṭṭācārya then repeatedly fell down at the Lord's lotus feet and composed various prayers to Him. He was undoubtedly a great scholar, and after receiving the causeless mercy of the Lord, he was empowered to explain the Lord's activities in different ways. Indeed, he was able to express the method of chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare.

It is said that Sārvabhauma Bhaṭṭācārya composed a hundred verses in appreciation of the Lord's activities, and that those verses were so great that they could not even be surpassed by Bṛhaspati, the greatest learned scholar in the heavenly planets. The Lord was very pleased to hear these hundred verses, and He embraced Bhaṭṭācārya. Bhaṭṭācārya became overwhelmed with ecstasy by the Lord's touch, and he practically fell unconscious. He cried, trembled, shivered and perspired, and sometimes he danced and sang and fell at the lotus feet of Lord Caitanya.

Bhaṭṭācārya's brother-in-law, Gopīnātha Ācārya, and the devotees of the Lord were surprised to see the Bhaṭṭācārya transformed into a great devotee.

Gopīnātha Ācārya then began to thank the Lord: "It is by Your grace only that Bhaṭṭācārya has been transformed from his stonelike position into such a devotee." Lord Caitanya then replied to Gopīnātha Ācārya that it was due to a devotee's favor that a stonelike man could be transformed into a mild, flowerlike devotee. Actually Gopīnātha Ācārya had sincerely wished that his brother-in-law, Bhaṭṭācārya, would become a devotee of the Lord. He had sincerely desired that the Lord favor Bhaṭṭācārya, and he was glad to see that his desire was fulfilled by Lord Caitanya. In other words, a devotee of the Lord is more merciful than the Lord Himself. When a devotee desires to show his mercy to a person, the Lord acts, and by His grace one becomes a devotee.

Lord Caitanya pacified Bhaṭṭācārya and asked him to go home.

Bhaṭṭācārya again began to praise the Lord and said, "You have descended Yourself to deliver all the fallen souls of this material world. Such an undertaking is not very difficult for You, but You have turned a stonehearted man like me into a devotee, and that is very wonderful indeed. Although I was very expert at logical arguments and grammatical explanations of the *Vedas*, I was as hard as a lump of iron.

But Your influence and temperature were so great that You could melt away a piece of iron like me.”

Lord Caitanya then returned to His place, and Bhaṭṭācārya sent Gopinātha Ācārya to Him with various kinds of *prasāda* from Jagannātha temple. The next day the Lord went to the temple of Jagannātha early in the morning to attend *maṅgala ārati*. The priests in the temple brought Him a garland from the Deity and also offered Him various kinds of *prasāda*. The Lord was very much pleased to receive them, and He at once went to the house of Bhaṭṭācārya, taking the *prasāda* and the flowers to present to him. Although it was early in the morning, Bhaṭṭācārya understood that the Lord had come and was knocking on his door. He at once rose from his bed and began to say, “Kṛṣṇa! Kṛṣṇa!” This was heard by Lord Caitanya. When Bhaṭṭācārya opened the door, he saw the Lord standing there, and he was so pleased to see Him early in the morning that he tried to receive Him with all care. He offered Him a nice seat, and both of them sat there. Lord Caitanya then offered him the *prasāda* which He had received in the temple of Jagannātha, and Bhaṭṭācārya was very glad to receive this *prasāda* from the hands of Lord Caitanya Himself. Indeed, without taking his bath and without performing his daily duties or even washing his teeth, he began immediately to eat the *prasāda*. In this way, he was freed from all material contamination and attachment, and as he began to eat the *prasāda*, he cited a verse from *Padma Purāṇa*. In *Padma Purāṇa* it is stated that when *prasāda* is brought or received, it must be eaten immediately, even if it has become very dry or old, or even if it is brought from a distant place, or even if one has not completed executing his daily duties. Since it is enjoined in the *śāstras* that *prasāda* should immediately be taken, there is no restriction of time and space; the order of the Supreme Personality of Godhead must be followed. There are restrictions one must follow before accepting food from various people, but there are no restrictions on accepting *prasāda* from all kinds of people. *prasāda* is always transcendental and can be taken under any condition. Lord Caitanya was very pleased to see that Bhaṭṭācārya, who had always obeyed the rules and regulations strictly, accepted *prasāda* without following any rules and regulations. Being so pleased, Lord Caitanya embraced Bhaṭṭācārya, and they both began to dance in

transcendental ecstasy. In that ecstasy, Lord Caitanya exclaimed: “My mission in Jagannātha Purī is now fulfilled! I have converted a person like Sārvabhauma Bhaṭṭācārya. I shall now be able to attain Vaikuṅṭha without fail.”

The missionary goal of a devotee is to convert simply one person into a pure devotee. In this way his admission to the spiritual kingdom is guaranteed. The Lord was so pleased with Bhaṭṭācārya that He began to bless him repeatedly: “Dear Bhaṭṭācārya, now you are a completely pure devotee of Lord Kṛṣṇa, and Kṛṣṇa is now very much pleased with you. From today you are freed from the contamination of this material body and the entanglement of material energy. You are now fit to go back to Godhead, back home.” The Lord then cited a verse from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (2.7.42)

*yeṣāṁ sa eva bhagavān dayayed anantaḥ
sarvātmanāśrita-pado yadi nirvyalīkam
te dustarāṁ atitaranti ca deva-māyāṁ
naiṣāṁ mamāham-iti dhīḥ śva-śṛgāla-bhakṣye*

“Whoever takes complete shelter of the lotus feet of the Supreme Lord is favored by the Supreme Lord, who is known to be unlimited. Such a person also receives permission to cross the ocean of nescience. However, one who thinks this material body to be himself cannot receive the causeless mercy of the Supreme Personality of Godhead.” After this incident, Lord Caitanya returned to His place, and Bhaṭṭācārya became a pure and faultless devotee. Since he was formerly a great academic scholar, Bhaṭṭācārya could only have been converted by the causeless mercy of Caitanya Mahāprabhu. From that day forward Bhaṭṭācārya never explained any Vedic literature without explaining devotional service. Gopīnātha Ācārya, his brother-in-law, was so pleased to see Bhaṭṭācārya’s condition that he began to dance in ecstasy and vibrate the transcendental sound Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare. The next day, after visiting Jagannātha temple early in the morning, Bhaṭṭācārya went to visit Lord Caitanya, and he offered his respects by falling down before the Lord. He then began to explain his past undesirable behavior. When he asked the Lord to speak something of

devotional service, the Lord began to explicitly explain the verses of *Bṛhan-nārādīya Purāṇa*, in which it is stated: *harer nāma harer nāma* [Adi 17.21]. Upon hearing this explanation, Bhaṭṭācārya became more and more ecstatic. Seeing the condition of his brother-in-law, Gopīnātha Ācārya said, “My dear Bhaṭṭācārya, previously I had said that when one is favored by the Supreme Lord, he will understand the techniques of devotional service. Today I am seeing this fulfilled.” Bhaṭṭācārya offered him his due respect and replied, “My dear Gopīnātha Ācārya, it is through your mercy that I have received the mercy of the Supreme Lord.” The mercy of the Supreme Personality of Godhead can be obtained by the mercy of a pure devotee. Lord Caitanya’s mercy was bestowed upon Bhaṭṭācārya because of Gopīnātha Ācārya’s endeavor. “You are a great devotee of the Lord,” Bhaṭṭācārya continued, “and I was simply blinded by my academic education. Yes, I have obtained the mercy of the Lord through your agency only.” Lord Caitanya Himself was greatly pleased to hear Bhaṭṭācārya say that a man can obtain the mercy of the Lord through the agency of a devotee. He appreciated his words and embraced Bhaṭṭācārya, confirming his statement.

The Lord then requested Bhaṭṭācārya to go to Jagannātha temple again, and Bhaṭṭācārya started out for the temple accompanied by Jagadānanda and Dāmodara, two principal associates of Lord Caitanya. After seeing Jagannātha temple, Bhaṭṭācārya returned home and brought with him much *prasāda* purchased from the temple. He sent all this *prasāda* to Lord Caitanya through his *brāhmaṇa* servant.

He also dispatched two verses written on palm tree leaves and requested Jagadānanda to render him a favor by delivering them. Thus Lord Caitanya was offered the *prasāda* and the verses on the palm leaves. However, before reaching the Lord, Mukunda Datta, who had also undertaken the delivery of the verses, had copied the verses in his book. When Lord Caitanya read the verses on the palm leaf, he tore them to pieces, for He never liked to be praised by anyone. The verses only survive because they had been copied by Mukunda Datta. These verses praised the Lord, the Supreme Original Personality of Godhead who had descended as Lord Caitanya to preach detachment, transcendental knowledge and devotional service to the people in general. Lord

Caitanya was praised as the original Personality of Godhead and was compared with an ocean of mercy. “Let me surrender unto that Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu,” the verses stated. “The Lord, seeing that devotional service was absent, descended Himself in the form of Caitanya Mahāprabhu to preach devotional service. Let us all surrender unto His lotus feet and learn from Him what devotional service actually is.” These verses are considered to be most important jewels by the devotees of the Lord in disciplic succession, and by virtue of these famous verses Sārvabhauma Bhaṭṭācārya has become known as the highest of devotees.

Thus Sārvabhauma Bhaṭṭācārya was converted into one of the most important devotees of the Lord, and he had no other interest than to serve the Lord. He thought of Lord Caitanya constantly, and meditation and chanting became the main purpose of his life.

One day Sārvabhauma Bhaṭṭācārya came before the Lord, offered his respects and began to read a verse from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (10.14.8). This verse dealt with Lord Brahmā’s prayer to the Lord. The verse read:

*tat te ’nukampām susamīkṣamāṇo
bhuñjāna evātma-kṛtaṁ vipākam
hṛd-vāg-vaṇurbhir vidadhan namas te
jīveta yo mukti-pade sa dāya-bhāk*

“A person who devotes his mind, body and speech to the service of the Lord, even though in the midst of a miserable life fraught with past misdeeds, is assured of liberation.” Bhaṭṭācārya changed the word *mukti* (liberation) to *bhakti* (devotional service).

“Why have you changed the original verse?” the Lord asked Bhaṭṭācārya. “The word is *mukti*, and you have changed it to *bhakti*.” Bhaṭṭācārya then replied that *mukti* is not as valuable as *bhakti* and that *mukti* is actually a sort of punishment for the pure devotee. For this reason he changed the word *mukti* to *bhakti*. Bhaṭṭācārya then began to explain his realization of *bhakti*. “Anyone who does not accept the transcendental Personality of Godhead and His transcendental form cannot know the Absolute Truth,” he said.

One who does not understand the transcendental nature of the body of Kṛṣṇa becomes Kṛṣṇa’s enemy and defies or fights with Him. The

enemies eventually merge into the Lord’s Brahman effulgence. Such *mukti* or liberation into the Brahman effulgence is never desired by the Lord’s devotees. There are five kinds of liberation: (1) attaining the planet where the Lord resides, (2) associating with the Lord, (3) attaining a transcendental body like the Lord’s, (4) attaining opulence like the Lord, and (5) merging into the existence of the Lord. A devotee has no particular interest in any of these types of liberation. He is satisfied simply by being engaged in the transcendental loving service of the Lord. A devotee is especially adverse to merging into the existence of the Lord and losing his individual identity. Indeed, a devotee considers oneness with the Lord to be hellish. He will, however, accept one of the four other kinds of liberation in consideration for being engaged in the service of the Lord. Out of the two possibilities of merging in transcendence—namely becoming one with the impersonal Brahman effulgence and becoming one with the Personality of Godhead—the latter is more abominable to the devotee. The devotee has no aspiration other than engaging in the transcendental loving service of the Lord.

On hearing this, Lord Caitanya informed Bhaṭṭācārya that there is another purport to the word *mukti*. The word *mukti-pade* directly indicates the Personality of Godhead. The Personality of Godhead has innumerable liberated souls engaged in His transcendental loving service, and He is the ultimate resort of liberation. In any case, Kṛṣṇa is the ultimate shelter.

“Despite this reading,” Sārvabhauma Bhaṭṭācārya replied, “I prefer *bhakti* to *mukti*. Although according to You there are two meanings to the word *mukti*, still, because this word is equivocal, I prefer *bhakti* to *mukti* because when one hears the word *mukti*, he immediately thinks of becoming one with the Supreme. I therefore even hate to utter the word *mukti*. However, I am very enthusiastic to speak of *bhakti*.”

Lord Caitanya laughed very loudly at this and embraced Bhaṭṭācārya with great love.

Thus Bhaṭṭācārya, who had taken pleasure in explaining Māyāvādī philosophy, became such a staunch devotee that he even hated to utter the word *mukti*. This is only possible by the causeless mercy of the Lord Śrī Caitanya. The Lord is like a touchstone, for by His grace He can turn

iron into gold. After his conversion, everyone marked a great change in Bhaṭṭācārya, and they concluded that this change was made possible only by the inconceivable power of Lord Caitanya. Thus they took it for granted that Lord Caitanya was none other than Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself.

Chapter Twenty-seven

Lord Caitanya and Rāmānanda Rāya

The author of *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* has described Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu as the ocean of transcendental knowledge and Śrī Rāmānanda Rāya as the cloud which is produced from that ocean. Rāmānanda Rāya was a greatly advanced scholar in devotional service, and by the grace of Lord Caitanya he gathered all transcendental conclusions just as a cloud gathers water from the ocean. As clouds appear from the ocean, distribute water all over the world, and return to the ocean, so by the grace of Lord Caitanya, Rāmānanda Rāya attained his higher knowledge of devotional service and again, after retiring from service, resolved to see Lord Caitanya in Purī.

When Lord Caitanya visited the southern part of India, He first went to the great temple known as Jiyara-nṛsimha-kṣetra. This temple is situated in a place known as Simhācalam, five miles from the Viśākhāpattana railway station. The temple is situated on the top of a hill. There are many temples in that area, but Jiyara-nṛsimha-kṣetra temple is the largest of all. This temple is filled with beautiful sculpture, of interest to many students, and due to its popularity it is a very rich temple. An inscription in the temple states that the King of Vijayanagara formerly decorated this temple with gold and even smeared the body of the Deity with gold. To facilitate attendance, there are free apartments for visitors at the temple. The temple is managed by priests of the Rāmānujācārya sect.

When Lord Caitanya visited this temple, He praised the Deity and quoted a verse from Śrīdhara Svāmī's commentary on *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (7.9.1):

*ugro 'py anugra evāyaṁ
sva-bhaktānāṁ nṛkeśarī
keśarīva svapotānām
anyeṣāṁ ugra-vikramaḥ*

“Although Lord Nṛsimha is very severe to demons and nondevotees, He

is very kind to His submissive devotees like Prahlāda.” Lord Nṛsimha appeared as a half-man, half-lion incarnation of Kṛṣṇa when Prahlāda, a boy devotee of the Lord, was harassed by his demoniac father Hiraṇyakaśipu. Just as a lion is very ferocious to other animals but very kind and submissive to his cubs, so Lord Nṛsimha appeared ferocious to Hiraṇyakaśipu and very kind to His devotee Prahlāda.

After visiting the temple of Jiyara-nṛsimha, the Lord proceeded further south into India and ultimately reached the bank of the Godāvarī. While on the bank of this river, the Lord remembered the Yamunā River in Vṛndāvana, and He considered the trees on the bank to be the forest of Vṛndāvana. Thus He was in ecstasy there. After taking a bath on the banks of the Godāvarī, the Lord sat near the bank and began chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare. While sitting and chanting, the Lord saw that the governor of the province, Śrī Rāmānanda Rāya, had reached the banks of the river accompanied by his associates, which included many *brāhmaṇas*. Previously the Lord had been asked by Sārvabhauma Bhaṭṭācārya to visit the great devotee Rāmānanda Rāya at Kabur. The Lord could understand that the man approaching the river bank was Rāmānanda Rāya, and He desired to see him immediately. However, because He was in the renounced order of life, He restrained Himself from going to see a political personage. Being a great devotee, Rāmānanda Rāya was attracted by the features of Lord Caitanya, who appeared as a *sannyāsī*, and he himself came to see the Lord. Upon reaching Caitanya Mahāprabhu, Rāmānanda Rāya prostrated himself and offered his obeisances and respects. Lord Caitanya received him by vibrating Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma Hare Hare.

When Rāmānanda Rāya presented his credentials, Lord Caitanya embraced him, and both of them were overwhelmed with ecstasy. The *brāhmaṇas* who accompanied Rāmānanda Rāya were surprised to see them embracing in transcendental ecstasy. The *brāhmaṇas* were all stalwart followers of the rituals, and they could not understand the meaning of such devotional symptoms. Indeed, they were rather surprised to see such a great *sannyāsī* touch a *śūdra*, and they were also surprised to see Rāmānanda Rāya, who was a great governor and

practically king of that province, crying simply by touching a *sannyāsī*. Lord Caitanya understood the *brāhmaṇas*' thoughts, and, considering the unfavorable situation, He pacified Himself.

After this, Lord Caitanya and Rāmānanda Rāya sat down together.

“Sārvabhauma Bhaṭṭācārya has spoken very highly of you,” Lord Caitanya informed him. “So I have come to see you.”

“Sārvabhauma Bhaṭṭācārya considers me to be one of his devotees,” Rāmānanda Rāya replied. “Therefore he has kindly recommended that You see me.”

Rāmānanda Rāya very much appreciated the Lord's touching a man of wealth. A king, governor or any politician is always absorbed in thoughts of political affairs and pounds-shilling-pence; therefore such persons are avoided by *sannyāsīs*. Lord Caitanya, however, knew Rāmānanda Rāya to be a great devotee, and therefore He did not hesitate to touch and embrace him. Rāmānanda Rāya was surprised by Lord Caitanya's behavior, and he cited a verse from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (10.8.4): “The great personalities and sages appear in the homes of worldly men just to show them mercy.”

Lord Caitanya's special treatment of Rāmānanda Rāya indicated that although Rāmānanda Rāya was born in a nonbrahminical family, he was far, far advanced in spiritual knowledge and activity. Therefore he was more respectable than one who simply happens to be born in a brahminical family. Although Rāmānanda, out of his meek and gentle behavior, considered himself to be born in a lower *śūdra* family, Lord Caitanya nonetheless considered him to be situated in the highest transcendental stage of devotion. Devotees never advertise themselves as great, but the Lord is very anxious to advertise the glory of His devotees. After meeting for the first time that morning on the banks of the Godāvarī, Rāmānanda Rāya and Lord Caitanya separated with the understanding that Rāmānanda Rāya would come in the evening to see the Lord.

That evening, after the Lord had taken His bath and seated Himself, Rāmānanda Rāya came to see Him with a servant. He offered his respects and sat down before the Lord. Before Rāmānanda Rāya could even ask the Lord a question about the advancement of spiritual knowledge, the Lord Himself said, “Please quote some verses from

scripture about the ultimate goal of human life.”

Śrī Rāmānanda Rāya at once replied: “A person who is sincere in his occupational duty will gradually develop a sense of God consciousness.” He also quoted a verse from *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* (3.8.9) which states that the Supreme Lord is worshiped by one’s occupational duty and that there is no alternative for satisfying Him. The purport is that human life is meant for understanding one’s relationship with the Supreme Lord, and by acting in that way any human being can dovetail himself in the service of the Lord by discharging his prescribed duties. For this purpose human society is divided into four classes: the intellectuals (*brāhmaṇas*), the administrators (*kṣatriyas*), the merchants (*vaiśyas*), and the laborers (*śūdras*). For each class there are prescribed rules and regulations as well as occupational functions. The prescribed duties and qualities of the four classes are described in *Bhagavad-gītā* (18.41–44). A society which is civilized and organized should follow the prescribed rules and regulations for the particular classes. At the same time, for spiritual advancement, the four stages of *āśrama* must also be followed: namely, student life (*brahmacarya*), householder (*gṛhastha*), retired (*vānaprastha*) and the renounced life (*sannyāsa*).

Rāmānanda Rāya stated that those who strictly follow the rules and regulations of these eight social divisions can actually satisfy the Supreme Lord, and one who does not follow them certainly spoils his human form of life and glides toward hell. One can peacefully execute the goal of human life simply by following the rules and regulations which apply to one’s self. The character of a particular person develops by following the regulative principles in accordance with one’s birth, association and education. The divisions of society are so designed that many people of different character can be regulated under them for the peaceful administration of society and for spiritual advancement as well. The social classes can be further characterized as follows: (1) He whose aim is to understand the Supreme Lord, the Personality of Godhead, and devote himself to the learning of the *Vedas* and similar literatures is called a *brāhmaṇa*. (2) He who has taken to displaying force and entering government administration is called a *kṣatriya*. (3) He who is engaged in agriculture, herding cows and carrying out a trade or business is called a *vaiśya*. (4) He who has no special knowledge but is satisfied by

serving the other three classes is called a *śūdra*. If one faithfully discharges his prescribed duties, he is sure to advance toward perfection. Thus regulated life is the source of perfection for everyone. When regulated life culminates in devotional service to the Lord, one attains his perfection. Otherwise such regulations are simply a useless waste of time.

After hearing Rāmānanda Rāya expound upon the proper execution of a regulated life, Lord Caitanya said that such regulations are simply external. Indirectly He asked Rāmānanda to expound on something superior to such an external exhibition. Formal execution of rituals and religion is useless unless it culminates in the perfection of devotional service. Lord Viṣṇu is not satisfied simply by a ritualistic adherence to Vedic instructions; He is actually pleased when one attains the stage of devotional service.

According to the verse cited by Rāmānanda Rāya, one can rise to the point of devotional service by ritualistic performance. In *Bhagavad-gītā*, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who appeared to deliver all classes of people, states that a human being can attain the highest perfectional stage of life by worshiping the Supreme Lord, from whom everything has emanated, through his occupational duty.

*sve sve karmaṇy abhirataḥ
saṁsiddhiṁ labhate naraḥ
svakarma-nirataḥ siddhiṁ
yathā vindati tac chr̥ṇu

yataḥ pravṛttir bhūtānām
yena sarvam idaṁ tatam
svakarmaṇā tam abhyarcya
siddhiṁ vindati mānavaḥ*

“By following his qualities of work, every man can become perfect. Now please hear from Me how this can be done. By worship of the Lord, who is the source of all beings and who is all-pervading, man can, in the performance of his own duty, attain perfection.” (Bg. 18.45–46) This perfectional process is followed by great devotees like Bodhāyana, Ṭaṅka, Dramiḍa, Guhadeva, Kapardi and Bhāruci. All these great

personalities have followed this particular path of perfection. The Vedic injunctions also aim in this direction. Rāmānanda Rāya wanted to present these facts before the Lord, but apparently discharge of ritualistic duties wasn't sufficient, for Lord Caitanya said that it was external. Lord Caitanya was pointing out that if a man has a material conception of life, he cannot attain the highest perfection even if he follows all the ritualistic regulations.

Chapter Twenty-eight Relationship with the Supreme

Lord Caitanya rejected the statement cited by Rāmānanda Rāya from *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* because the Lord wished to reject a class of philosophers known as *karma-mīmāṃsa*. *Karma-mīmāṃsa* followers accept God to be subject to one’s work. Their conclusion is that if one works nicely, God is bound to give good results. Thus one can understand from the statement of *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* that Viṣṇu, the Supreme Lord, has no independence but is bound to award a certain kind of result to the worker. Such a dependent goal becomes subjected to the worshiper, who accepts the Supreme Lord to be both impersonal and personal, as he may wish. Actually this philosophy stresses the impersonal feature of the Supreme Absolute Truth. Because Lord Caitanya did not like such impersonalism, He rejected it.

“Tell Me if you know something beyond this conception of the Supreme Absolute Truth,” Lord Caitanya finally said.

Rāmānanda Rāya understood the purpose of Lord Caitanya, and, stating that it is better to give up the results of fruitive activities, he quoted a verse from *Bhagavad-gītā*:

*yat karoṣi yad aśnāsi
yaj juhoṣi dadāsi yat
yat tapasyasi kaunteya
tat kuruṣva mad-arpaṇam*

“O son of Kuntī, all that you do, all that you eat, all that you offer and give away, as well as all austerities that you may perform, should be done as an offering unto Me.” (Bg. 9.27) There is also a similar passage in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.2.36) which states that one should submit everything—his fruitive activities, body, speech, mind, senses, intelligence, soul and modes of nature—to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Nārāyaṇa.

Lord Caitanya, however, also rejected this second statement, saying, “If you know of something higher, state it.”

Offering everything to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, as enjoined by *Bhagavad-gītā* and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, is better than impersonally making the Supreme Lord subject to our work, but it is still short of surrendering activities to the Supreme Lord. A worker's identification with material existence cannot be changed without proper guidance. Such fruitive activity will continue one's material existence. A worker is simply instructed here to offer the results of his work to the Supreme Lord, but there is no information given to enable one to get out of the material entanglement. Therefore Lord Caitanya rejected his proposal. After having his suggestions rejected twice, Rāmānanda proposed that one should forsake his occupational activities altogether and by detachment rise to the transcendental plane. In other words, he recommended complete renunciation of worldly life, and to support this view he cited evidence from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.11.32) wherein the Lord says: "In the scriptures I have described the ritualistic principles and the way one can become situated in devotional service. That is the highest perfection of religion." Rāmānanda also quoted Lord Kṛṣṇa's injunction in *Bhagavad-gītā*:

*sarva-dharmān parityajya
mām ekaṁ śaraṇaṁ vraja
aham tvām sarva-pāpēbhyo
mokṣayiṣyāmi mā śucaḥ*

"Abandon all varieties of religion and just surrender unto Me. I shall deliver you from all sinful reactions. Do not fear." (Bg. 18.66)

Lord Caitanya also rejected this third proposal, for He wanted to demonstrate that renunciation in itself is not sufficient. There must be positive engagement. Without positive engagement, the highest perfectional stage cannot be attained. Generally there are two kinds of philosophers in the renounced order of life. The goal of one is *nirvāṇa*, and the goal of the other is the impersonal Brahman effulgence. Such philosophers cannot imagine that they can reach beyond *nirvāṇa* and the Brahman effulgence to the Vaikuṅṭha planets of the spiritual sky. Because in simple renunciation there is no conception of spiritual planets and spiritual activities, Lord Caitanya rejected this third proposal.

Rāmānanda Rāya then cited more evidence from *Bhagavad-gītā*:

*brahma-bhūtaḥ prasannātmā
na śocati na kāṅkṣati
samaḥ sarveṣu bhūteṣu
mad-bhaktiṁ labhate parām*

“One who is thus transcendently situated at once realizes the Supreme Brahman. He never laments, nor desires to have anything; he is equally disposed to every living entity. In that state he attains pure devotional service unto Me.” (Bg. 18.54) Rāmānanda Rāya first suggested devotional service rendered with renunciation of fruitive activities, but here he suggests that devotional service with full knowledge and spiritual realization added is superior.

Lord Caitanya, however, rejected this proposal also because simply by renouncing material results in Brahman realization one does not realize the spiritual world and spiritual activities. Although there is no material contamination when one attains the stage of Brahman realization, that stage is not perfect because there is no positive engagement in spiritual activity. Because it is still on the mental plane, it is external. The pure living entity is not liberated unless he is completely engaged in spiritual activity. As long as one is absorbed in impersonal thoughts or in thoughts of the void, his entrance into an eternal blissful life of knowledge is not completed. When spiritual knowledge is not complete, one will be hindered in his attempt to cleanse the mind of all material variegatedness. Thus impersonalists are frustrated in their attempts to make the mind void by artificial meditation. It is very difficult to void the mind of all material conceptions. As stated in *Bhagavad-gītā*:

*kleśo 'dhikataras teṣām
avyaktāsakta-cetasām
avyaktā hi gatiḥ duḥkham
dehavadbhir avāpyate*

“For those whose minds are attracted to the unmanifested, impersonal feature of the Supreme, advancement is very troublesome. To make progress in that discipline is always difficult for those who are embodied.” (Bg. 12.5) The liberation which is obtained by such

impersonal meditation is not complete; therefore Lord Caitanya rejected it.

After his fourth proposal was rejected, Rāmānanda Rāya said that devotional service rendered without any attempt at cultivation of knowledge or mental speculation is the highest stage of perfection. To support this view, he gave evidence from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (10.14.3) wherein Lord Brahmā tells the Supreme Personality of Godhead:

*jñāne prayāsam udapāsyā namanta eva
jīvanti san-mukharitām bhavadīya-vārtām
sthāne sthitāḥ śruti-gatām tanu-vāñ-manobhir
ye prāyaśo 'jita jito 'py asi tais tri-lokyām*

“My dear Lord, one should give up monistic speculation and the cultivation of knowledge altogether. He should begin his spiritual life in devotional service by receiving information of the Lord’s activities from a realized devotee of the Lord. If one cultivates his spiritual life by following these principles and keeping himself on the honest path in life, then although Your Lordship is never conquered, You become conquered by such a process.”

When Rāmānanda Rāya presented this proposal, Lord Caitanya at once said, “Yes, this is right.” In this age there is no possibility of acquiring spiritual knowledge by renunciation, by mixed devotional service, by fruitive activity in mixed devotional service, or by the culture of knowledge. Because most people are fallen and because there is no time to elevate them by a gradual process, the best course, according to Lord Caitanya, is to let them remain in whatever condition they are in but to engage them in hearing of the activities of the Supreme Lord as those activities are explained in *Bhagavad-gītā* and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. The transcendental messages of the scriptures should be received from the lips of realized souls. In this way a person may continue to live in whatever condition he is in and still make progress in spiritual advancement. Thus one can surely advance and fully realize the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

Although Lord Caitanya accepted these principles, He still requested Rāmānanda Rāya to further explain advanced devotional service. Thus Lord Caitanya gave Rāmānanda Rāya a chance to discuss gradual

advancement from the principles of *varṇāśrama-dharma* (the four castes and four orders of spiritual life). Lord Caitanya rejected the *varṇāśrama-dharma* and the offering of fruitive activity because in the field of executing pure devotional service, there is very little use for such principles. Without self-realization, the artificial methods of devotional service cannot be accepted as pure devotional service. Self-realized pure devotional service is completely different from all other kinds of transcendental activity. The highest stage of transcendental activity is always free from all material desires, fruitive efforts and speculative attempts at knowledge. The highest stage concentrates on the simple, favorable execution of pure devotional service.

Rāmānanda Rāya could understand the motive of Lord Caitanya; therefore he stated that attainment of pure love of Godhead is the highest perfectional stage. There is a very nice verse in *Padyāvalī* which is said to be composed by Rāmānanda Rāya himself. The purport of the verse is: “As long as there is hunger in the belly and one feels like eating and drinking, one can become happy by taking anything eatable. Similarly, there may be much paraphernalia for worshiping the Supreme Lord, but when that is mixed with pure love of Godhead, it becomes an actual source of transcendental happiness.” Rāmānanda Rāya also composed another verse which stated that even after millions and millions of births one cannot achieve a sense of devotional service, but if, somehow or other, one desires to attain devotional service, the association of a pure devotee will render it possible. Thus one should have a strong desire to engage in devotional service. In these two verses, Rāmānanda Rāya has described the regulative principles and developed love of Godhead. Lord Caitanya wanted to bring him to the stage of developed love of Godhead, and He wanted him to speak from that platform. Thus the discussion between Rāmānanda Rāya and Lord Caitanya proceeds on the basis of love of Godhead.

If love of Godhead is elevated to the personal platform, it is called *prema-bhakti*. In the beginning of *prema-bhakti*, a particular relationship between the Supreme Lord and the devotee is not established, but when *prema-bhakti* develops, a relationship with the Supreme Lord is manifested in different transcendental flavors. The first stage is that of servitude, wherein the Supreme Lord is accepted as the master and the

devotee as the eternal servitor. When Lord Caitanya accepted this process, Rāmānanda Rāya described the relationship between the servitor and the master. As described in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (9.5.16), Durvāsā Muni, a great mystic yogī who considered himself very elevated, envied Mahārāja Ambarīṣa, who was known as the greatest devotee of the time. In an attempt to harass Mahārāja Ambarīṣa, Durvāsā Muni met with a great catastrophe and was defeated by the *sudarśana-cakra* of the Lord. Durvāsā Muni admitted his fault and said, “For pure devotees who are always engaged in the transcendental loving service of the Lord, nothing is considered impossible, for they are engaged in the service of the Supreme Lord, whose very name is sufficient for liberation.”

In *Stotra-ratna* (46), Yāmunācārya writes: “My Lord, those who keep themselves independent of Your service are helpless. They work on their own account, and they receive no support from superior authority. Therefore I long for the time when I shall engage fully in Your transcendental loving service without any desire for material satisfaction and without being confined to the mental plane. Only when I engage in such unalloyed devotional service will I enjoy actual spiritual life.”

Upon hearing this statement, the Lord requested Rāmānanda Rāya to go even further.

Chapter Twenty-nine

Pure Love for Kṛṣṇa

Encouraged by Lord Caitanya to proceed further, Rāmānanda Rāya said that the fraternal relationship with Lord Kṛṣṇa is on an even higher transcendental plane. In this way Rāmānanda Rāya points out that when the relationship with Kṛṣṇa increases in affection, the mood of fear and the consciousness of the superiority of the Supreme Lord diminish. At this point, the mood of faith increases, and this faith is called friendship. In the fraternal relationship, there is a sense of equality between Kṛṣṇa and His friends.

In this regard, Rāmānanda Rāya quoted a verse from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (10.12.11) in which Śukadeva Gosvāmī describes Lord Kṛṣṇa's lunch with His friends in the forest. Lord Kṛṣṇa and His friends went to the forest to play with the cows, and it is said that the boys who accompanied Kṛṣṇa enjoyed transcendental friendship with the Supreme Personality of Godhead. The Supreme Lord is considered to be the impersonal Brahman by great sages, the Supreme Personality of Godhead by the devotees, and an ordinary human being by common men.

Lord Caitanya appreciated this statement very much, yet He said, "You can go even further." Being so requested, Rāmānanda Rāya then stated that the paternal relationship with Kṛṣṇa is a still higher transcendental position. When the affection of the fraternal relationship increases, it develops into the paternal relationship that is found between father and son. Regarding this, Rāmānanda Rāya quoted a verse from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (10.8.46) wherein Mahārāja Parīkṣit inquired from Śukadeva Gosvāmī about the magnitude of righteous activity performed by Yaśodā, the mother of Kṛṣṇa, enabling her to be called "mother" and her breasts be sucked by the Supreme Personality of Godhead. He also quoted another verse from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (10.9.20) in which it is stated that Yaśodā received such incomparable mercy from the Supreme Personality of Godhead that it cannot even be compared to the mercy received by Brahmā, the first created living being, or by Lord Śiva, or even by the goddess of fortune, Lakṣmī, who is always situated on the

chest of Lord Viṣṇu.

Lord Caitanya then asked Rāmānanda Rāya to proceed further in order to come to the point of conjugal love. Understanding the mind of Lord Caitanya, Rāmānanda Rāya immediately answered that it was indeed conjugal love with Kṛṣṇa that constituted the highest relationship. In other words, intimate relationships with Kṛṣṇa develop from an ordinary conception of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, to the conception of master and servant, and, when this becomes confidential, it develops into a friendly relationship, and when this relationship further develops, it becomes paternal, and when this develops to the highest point of love and affection, it is known as conjugal love with the Supreme Lord.

Rāmānanda Rāya quoted another verse from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (10.47.60) stating that the transcendental mode of ecstasy exhibited during the *rāsa* dance between the *gopīs* and Kṛṣṇa was never relished even by the goddess of fortune, who is always situated on the chest of the Lord in the spiritual kingdom. And what to speak of the experience of ordinary women?

Rāmānanda Rāya then explained the gradual process by which pure love for Kṛṣṇa is developed. He pointed out that the living entity is related to the Supreme Personality of Godhead in one of the relationships just suitable for him. Actually, relationships with the Supreme Lord begin with the master and servant relationship and further develop into friendship, paternal love and conjugal love. One who attains his particular relationship with the Supreme Personality of Godhead should be known to be in the best relationship for him, but when these transcendental relationships are studied, it can be seen that the neutral stage of realization (*brahma-bhūta*) is the first. When one accepts the Lord as master and himself as servant, the relationship develops, and it develops further when one becomes a friend of the Supreme Lord, and yet still further when one becomes a father. Thus the relationship advances from friendship to paternal love and finally to conjugal love, which is the supreme relationship with the Lord.

Self-realization in the relation as servitor is certainly transcendental, and when a sense of fraternity is added, the relationship develops. As affection increases, this relationship develops into paternity and conjugal love. Rāmānanda Rāya quoted a verse from *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-*

sindhu (2.5.38) stating that spiritual affection for the Supreme Lord is transcendental in all cases, but the individual devotee has a specific aptitude for a particular relationship, and that relationship is more relishable for him than the others.

Such transcendental relationships with the Supreme Lord cannot be manufactured by the mental concoctions of pseudo-devotees. In *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* (1.2.101) Rūpa Gosvāmī has stated that devotional service that makes no reference to Vedic scriptures or Vedic literatures and that does not follow the principles set forth therein can never be approved. Śrī Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Mahārāja has also remarked that professional spiritual masters, professional *Bhāgavatam* reciters, professional *kīrtana* performers and those engaged in self-concocted devotional service cannot be accepted. In India there are various professional communities known as Aula, Vāula, Kartābhajā, Neḍā Daraveśa, Snāi, Atibāḍi, Cūḍādhārī, and Gaurāṅganāgarī. A member of the Vento Gosvāmī Society, or the caste called *gosvāmī*, cannot be accepted as a descendant of the six original Gosvāmīs. Nor can so-called devotees who manufacture songs about Lord Caitanya, nor those who are professional priests or paid reciters, be accepted. One who does not follow the principles of *pañcarātra*, or one who is an impersonalist or addicted to sex life, cannot be compared with those who have dedicated their lives to the service of Kṛṣṇa. A pure devotee who is always engaged in Kṛṣṇa consciousness can sacrifice everything for the service of the Lord. One who has dedicated his life to the service of Lord Caitanya, Kṛṣṇa and the spiritual master, or a person who is following the principles of householder life, as well as one following the principles of the renounced life in the order of Caitanya Mahāprabhu, is a devotee and cannot be compared to professional men.

When one is freed from all material contaminations, any one of the relationships with Kṛṣṇa is transcendently relishable. Unfortunately, those who are inexperienced in the transcendental science cannot appreciate the different relationships with the Supreme Lord. They think that all such relationships arise from *māyā*. *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* states that earth, water, fire, air and ether (the five gross elements) are developed from subtle forms to grosser forms. For example, sound is found in ether, but in air there is sound and touch. When fire is added,

there is sound, touch and form as well. When water is added, there is sound, touch, form and taste, and when earth is added, there is sound, touch, form, taste and smell. Just as various characteristics develop in the progression from ether down to earth, so the five characteristics of devotion develop and are all found in the relationship of conjugal love. Thus the relationship with Kṛṣṇa in conjugal love is accepted as the highest perfectional stage of love of God.

As stated in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (10.82.44): “Devotional service to the Supreme Personality of Godhead is the life of every living entity.” Indeed, the Lord informed the damsels of Vraja that their love for Him was the only cause of their achieving His association. It is said that Lord Kṛṣṇa, in relation with His devotees, accepts all kinds of devotional service according to the aptitude of the devotee. In this way, Kṛṣṇa reciprocates to a devotee’s needs. If one wants a relationship with Kṛṣṇa as master and servant, Kṛṣṇa plays the part of the perfect master. For one who wants Kṛṣṇa as a son in the parental relationship, Kṛṣṇa plays the part of a perfect son. Similarly, if a devotee wants to worship Kṛṣṇa in conjugal love, Kṛṣṇa plays the part of a husband or paramour perfectly. However, Kṛṣṇa Himself has admitted that His loving relationship with the damsels of Vraja in conjugal love is the highest perfectional stage. In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (10.32.22) Kṛṣṇa told the *gopīs*:

*na pāraye ’haṁ niravadya-samyujām
sva-sādhu-kṛtyām vibudhāyuṣāpi vaḥ
yā mābhajan durjaya-geha-śṛṅkhalāḥ
saṁvṛścya tad vaḥ pratiyātu sādhunā*

“Your relationship with Me is completely transcendental, and it is not possible for Me to offer anything in exchange for your love, even after many births. You have been able to give up all attachment for material enjoyment, and you have searched after Me. Since I am unable to repay your love, you have to be pleased with your own activities.”

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Mahārāja has remarked that there is a class of common men who claim that anyone and everyone can worship the Supreme Lord according to his own invented mode of worship and still attain the Supreme Personality of Godhead. They claim that one can approach the Supreme Lord either through fruitive

activities, speculative knowledge, meditation or austerity and that any one of the methods will succeed. They claim that one can accept many different paths and still reach the same place, and they maintain that the Supreme Absolute Truth may be worshiped either as the Goddess Kālī, or Goddess Durgā, or Lord Śiva, Gaṇeśa, Rāma, Hari, or Brahmā. In short, they maintain that it does not matter how the Absolute Truth is addressed, for all names are one and the same. They give the example of a man with many names; if he is called by any of those names, he will answer.

Such views may be very pleasing to an ordinary person, but they are full of misconceptions. One who worships the demigods, motivated by material lust, cannot attain the Supreme Personality of Godhead. If one worships the demigods, the external energy of the Lord can award some results, but this is not to say that one can attain the Supreme Lord by such worship. Indeed, their worship is discouraged in *Bhagavad-gītā*:

*antavat tu phalaṁ teṣāṁ
tad bhavaty alpa-medhasām
devān deva-yajo yānti
mad-bhaktā yānti mām api*

“Men of small intelligence worship the demigods, and their fruits are limited and temporary. Those who worship the demigods go to the planets of the demigods, but My devotees ultimately reach My supreme planet.” (Bg. 7.23) Thus the Supreme Lord awards the benediction of His association only to those who worship Him, and not to those who worship the demigods. It is not a fact that everyone and anyone can reach the Supreme Personality of Godhead by worshiping material demigods. It is therefore surprising that a man can imagine that he will become perfect by worshiping the demigods. The results of devotional service rendered in full Kṛṣṇa consciousness cannot be compared to the results of demigod worship, fruitive activity or mental speculation. By the results of fruitive activities, one can either go to the heavenly planets or the hellish ones.

Chapter Thirty

The Transcendental Pastimes of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa

The difference between executing ordinary religious activities and devotional service is very great. By executing religious rituals one can achieve economic development, sense gratification or liberation (merging into the existence of the Supreme), but the results of transcendental devotional service are completely different from such temporary benefits. Devotional service of the Lord is ever green, and it is increasingly transcendently pleasing. Thus there is a gulf of difference between the results derived from devotional service and those derived from religious rituals. The great spiritual energy known as *jaḍādhiṣṭhātrī*, or *mahāmāyā*, the superintendent of the material world, and the material departmental directors, the demigods, as well as the products of the external energy of the Supreme Lord, are but perverted reflections of the opulence of the Supreme Lord. The demigods are actually order carriers of the Supreme Lord, and they help manage the material creation. In *Brahma-saṁhitā* it is stated that the workings of the supremely powerful superintendent, Durgā, are but shadowy indications of the workings of the Supreme Lord. The sun works just like the eye of the Supreme Lord, and Brahmā works just as the reflected light of the Supreme Lord. Thus all the demigods as well as the external energy herself, Durgādevī, and all the different departmental directors are but servants of the Supreme Lord in the material world.

In the spiritual world, there is another energy, the superior spiritual energy, or internal energy, which acts under the direction of *yogamāyā*. *Yogamāyā* is the internal potency of the Supreme Lord; she also works under the Lord's direction, but she works in the spiritual world. When the living entity puts himself under the direction of *yogamāyā* instead of *mahāmāyā*, he gradually becomes a devotee of Kṛṣṇa. Yet those who are after material opulence and material happiness place themselves under the care of the material energy, *mahāmāyā*, or under the care of material demigods like Lord Śiva and others. In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* it is found

that when the *gopīs* of Vṛndāvana desired Kṛṣṇa as their husband, they prayed to the spiritual energy, *yogamāyā*, for the fulfillment of their desire. In the *Sapta-śatī* it is found that King Suratha and a merchant named Samādhī worshiped *mahāmāyā* for material opulence. Thus one should not mistakenly equalize *yogamāyā* and *mahāmāyā*.

Because the Lord is on the absolute platform, there is no difference between the holy name of the Lord and the Supreme Lord Himself. There are different names for the Supreme Lord, and these names have different purposes and meanings. For instance, He is known as Paramātmā, the Supersoul, Brahman the Supreme Absolute, Sṛṣṭikartā the creator, Nārāyaṇa the transcendental Lord, Rukmiṇīramaṇa the husband of Rukmiṇī, Gopīnātha the enjoyer of the *gopīs*, and Kṛṣṇa. In this way the Lord has different names, and these names indicate different functions. The aspect of the Supreme Lord as the creator is different from the aspect of the Lord as Nārāyaṇa. Some of the names of the Lord as the creator are conceived by materialistic men. One cannot fully realize the essence of the Supreme Personality of Godhead by understanding the name of the creator because this material creation is a function of the external energy of the Supreme Lord. Thus the conception of God as the creator includes only the external feature. Similarly, when we call the Supreme Lord Brahman, we cannot have any understanding of the six opulences of the Supreme Lord. In Brahman realization, the six opulences are not realized in full; therefore Brahman realization is not complete understanding of the Supreme Lord. Neither is Paramātmā realization, realization of the Supersoul, full realization of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, for the all-pervading nature of the Supreme Lord is but a partial representation of His opulence.

Even the transcendental relationship experienced by a devotee of Nārāyaṇa in Vaikuṅṭha is incomplete in that it is not realization of a relationship with Kṛṣṇa in Goloka Vṛndāvana. The devotees of Kṛṣṇa do not relish devotional service to Nārāyaṇa because devotional service to Kṛṣṇa is so attractive that Kṛṣṇa's devotees do not desire to worship any other form. Thus the *gopīs* of Vṛndāvana do not like to see Kṛṣṇa as the husband of Rukmiṇī, nor do they address Him as Rukmiṇīramaṇa. In Vṛndāvana Kṛṣṇa is addressed as Rādhākṛṣṇa, or Kṛṣṇa, the property of Rādhārāṇī. Although the husband of Rukmiṇī and Rādhā's Kṛṣṇa are on

the same level in the ordinary sense, still, in the spiritual world, the names indicate different understandings of various aspects of Kṛṣṇa's transcendental personality. If one equalizes Rukmiṇīramaṇa, Rādhāramaṇa, Nārāyaṇa or any other name of the Supreme Lord, he commits the fault of overlapping tastes, which is technically called *rasābhāsa*. Those who are expert devotees do not accept such amalgamations which are against the conclusions of pure devotional service.

Although Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, embodies all superexcellence and beauty, when He is amongst the damsels of Vraja, He is known as Gopījanavallabha. The devotees cannot relish the beauty of the Supreme Lord more than the damsels of Vraja. In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (10.33.7) it is confirmed that although Kṛṣṇa, the son of Devakī, is the last word in superexcellence and beauty, when He is amongst the *gopīs* it appears that He is a sublime jewel set amongst divine golden craftsmanship. Although Lord Caitanya accepted this as the highest realization of the Supreme Lord as conjugal lover, He nonetheless requested Rāmānanda Rāya to proceed further.

Upon hearing this request, Rāmānanda Rāya remarked that this was the first time that he had been asked to go further than the *gopīs* in an attempt to understand Kṛṣṇa. There is certainly transcendental intimacy between the damsels of Vraja and Kṛṣṇa, Rāmānanda pointed out, but out of all the relationships, the relationship between Rādhārāṇī and Kṛṣṇa in conjugal love is the most perfect. No common man can understand the ecstasy of transcendental love between Rādhārāṇī and Kṛṣṇa, nor can he understand the transcendental flavor of the transcendental love between Kṛṣṇa and the *gopīs*. Yet if one tries to follow in the footsteps of the *gopīs*, he may become situated in the highest stage of transcendental love. Thus one who wants to be elevated to the transcendental stage of perfection should follow in the footsteps of the damsels of Vraja as an assistant maidservant of the *gopīs*.

Lord Caitanya exhibited the mode of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī when She was contacted from Dvārakā by Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Such transcendental love is not possible for any common man; therefore one should not imitate the highest perfectional stage exhibited by Caitanya Mahāprabhu. If, however, one desires to be in that association, he may follow in the

footsteps of the *gopīs*. In the *Padma Purāṇa* it is stated that just as Rādhārāṇī is dear to Kṛṣṇa, similarly the *kuṇḍa* known as Rādhākuṇḍa is also very dear to Him. Rādhārāṇī is the only *gopī* who is dearer to Kṛṣṇa than all the other *gopīs*. In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (10.30.28) it is also stated that Rādhārāṇī and the *gopīs* render the highest perfectional loving service to the Lord and that the Lord is so pleased with them that He does not wish to leave the company of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī.

When Lord Caitanya heard Rāmānanda Rāya speak of the loving affairs between Kṛṣṇa and Rādhārāṇī, He said, “Please go further. Go on and on.” The Lord also said that He was enjoying with great relish the descriptions of the loving affairs between Kṛṣṇa and the *gopīs*. “It is as if a river of nectar is flowing from your lips,” He said. Rāmānanda Rāya continued to point out that when Kṛṣṇa danced amongst the *gopīs* He thought, “I am not giving any special attention to Rādhārāṇī.” Because amongst the other *gopīs* Rādhārāṇī was not so much an object of special love, Kṛṣṇa stole Her away from the area of the *rāsa* dance and showed Her special favor. After explaining this to Lord Caitanya, Rāmānanda Rāya said, “Now let us relish the transcendental loving affairs between Kṛṣṇa and Rādhā. These have no comparison in this material world.” Rāmānanda Rāya thus continued his descriptions. During one performance of the *rāsa* dance, Rādhārāṇī suddenly left the area, as if She were angry that no special attention was being shown Her. Kṛṣṇa was desirous of seeing Rādhārāṇī in order to fulfill the purpose of the *rāsa* dance, but not seeing Rādhārāṇī there, He became very sorrowful and went to search Her out. In *Gīta-govinda* there is a verse which states that the enemy of Kāṁsa, Kṛṣṇa, also wanted to be entangled in love affairs with women and thus simply took Rādhārāṇī away and left the company of the other damsels of Vraja. Kṛṣṇa was very much afflicted by Rādhārāṇī’s absence and, being thus mentally distressed, began to search Her out along the banks of the Yamunā. Failing to find Her, He entered the bushes of Vṛndāvana and began to lament. Rāmānanda Rāya pointed out that when one discusses the purport of these two special verses of *Gīta-govinda* (3.1–2), he can relish the highest nectar of Kṛṣṇa’s and Rādhā’s loving affairs. Although there were many *gopīs* to dance with Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa especially wanted to dance with Rādhārāṇī. In the *rāsa* dance Kṛṣṇa expanded Himself and placed Himself between every

two *gopīs*, but He was especially present with Rādhārāṇī. However, Rādhārāṇī was not pleased with Kṛṣṇa’s behavior. As described in *Ujjvala-nīlamaṇi*: “The path of loving affairs is just like the movement of a snake. Amongst young lovers, there are two kinds of mentality—causeless and causal.” Thus when Rādhārāṇī left the area of the *rāsa* dance out of anger at not receiving special treatment, Kṛṣṇa became very sorrowful to see Her absent. The perfection of the *rāsa* dance was considered to be complete due to Rādhārāṇī’s presence, and in Her absence Kṛṣṇa considered the dance to be disrupted. Therefore He left the arena to search Her out. When He could not find Rādhārāṇī after wandering in several places, He became very distressed. Thus it is understood that Kṛṣṇa could not enjoy His pleasure potency even in the midst of all the *gopīs*. But in the presence of Rādhārāṇī He was satisfied. When this transcendental love between Rādhārāṇī and Kṛṣṇa was described by Rāmānanda Rāya, Lord Caitanya admitted, “I came to you to understand the transcendental loving affairs between Kṛṣṇa and Rādhā, and now I am very satisfied that you have described them so nicely. I can understand from your version that this is the highest loving state between Kṛṣṇa and Rādhā.” Yet Lord Caitanya still requested Rāmānanda Rāya to explain something more: “What are the transcendental features of Kṛṣṇa and Rādhārāṇī, and what are the transcendental features of the reciprocation of Their feelings, and what is the love between Them? If you kindly describe all this to Me, I will be very much obliged. But for you, no one can describe such things.” “I do not know anything,” Rāmānanda Rāya replied in all humility. “I am simply saying what You are causing me to say. I know that You are Kṛṣṇa Himself, yet You are relishing hearing about Kṛṣṇa from me. Therefore please excuse me for my faulty expression. I am just trying to express whatever You are causing me to express.” “I am a Māyāvādī *sannyāsī*,” Lord Caitanya protested. “I have no knowledge of the transcendental features of devotional service. By the greatness of Sārvabhauma Bhaṭṭācārya My mind has become clear, and I am now trying to understand the nature of devotional service to Lord Kṛṣṇa. Bhaṭṭācārya recommended that I see you in order to understand Kṛṣṇa. Indeed, he said that Rāmānanda Rāya is the only person who knows something about love of Kṛṣṇa. Therefore I have come to you

upon the recommendation of Sārvabhauma Bhaṭṭācārya. Please, then, do not hesitate to relate to Me all the confidential affairs between Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa.”

In this way Lord Caitanya actually took the subordinate position before Rāmānanda Rāya. This has very great significance. If one is serious about understanding the transcendental nature of Kṛṣṇa, he should approach a person who is actually enriched with Kṛṣṇa consciousness. One should not be proud of his material birth, material opulence, material education and beauty and with these things try to conquer the mind of an advanced student of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. One who thus goes to a Kṛṣṇa conscious person, thinking that he would be favorably induced, is deluded about this science. One should approach a Kṛṣṇa conscious person with all humility and put relevant questions to him. If one goes to challenge him, such a highly elevated Kṛṣṇa conscious person would not be available for any service. A challenging puffed-up person cannot gain anything from a Kṛṣṇa conscious man; he would simply remain in material consciousness. Although Lord Caitanya was born in a high *brāhmaṇa* family and was situated in the highest perfectional stage of *sannyāsa*, He nonetheless showed by His behavior that even an elevated person would not hesitate to take lessons from Rāmānanda Rāya, although Rāmānanda appeared as a householder situated in a social status beneath that of a *brāhmaṇa*.

Thus Lord Caitanya clearly showed that a sincere student never cares whether his spiritual master is born in a high *brāhmaṇa* family or *kṣatriya* family, or whether he is a *sannyāsī*, *brahmacārī* or whatever. Whoever can teach one about the science of Kṛṣṇa is to be accepted as *guru*

Chapter Thirty-one

The Supreme Perfection

Whatever position one may have, if he is fully conversant with the science of Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa consciousness, he can become a bona fide spiritual master, initiator or teacher of the science. In other words, one can become a bona fide spiritual master if he has sufficient knowledge of the science of Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa consciousness. The position does not depend on a particular position in society or on birth. This is the conclusion of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu, and it is in accordance with the Vedic injunctions. On the strength of this conclusion, Lord Caitanya, previously known as Viśvambhara, accepted a spiritual master, Īśvara Purī, who was a *sannyāsī*. Similarly, Lord Nityānanda Prabhu and Śrī Advaita Ācārya also accepted another *sannyāsī* as their spiritual master, Mādhavendra Purī. This Mādhavendra Purī is also known as Lakṣmīpati Tīrtha. Similarly, another great *ācārya*, Śrī Rasikānanda, accepted Śrī Śyāmānanda as his spiritual master, although he was not born of a *brāhmaṇa* family. So also Gaṅgānārāyaṇa Cakravartī accepted Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura as spiritual master. In ancient days there was even a hunter named Dharma, who became a spiritual master for many people. There are clear instructions in *Mahābhārata* and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (7.11.32) stating that a person—be he *brāhmaṇa*, *kṣatriya*, *vaiśya* or *śūdra*—should be accepted by his personal qualifications and not by birth.

One's position should be established by personal qualifications and not by birth. For example, if a man is born in a *brāhmaṇa* family but his personal qualifications are those of a *śūdra*, he should be accepted as a *śūdra*. Similarly, if a person is born in a *śūdra* family but has the qualifications of a *brāhmaṇa*, he should be accepted as a *brāhmaṇa*. All śāstric injunctions, as well as the versions of great sages and authorities, establish that a bona fide spiritual master is not necessarily a *brāhmaṇa*. The only qualification is that he be conversant with the science of Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa consciousness. That alone makes one perfectly eligible to become a spiritual master. This is the conclusion of Śrī Caitanya

Mahāprabhu in His discussions with Rāmānanda Rāya.

In the *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa* it is stated that if one bona fide spiritual master is born in a *brāhmaṇa* family and another, who is also qualified, is born in a *śūdra* family, one should accept the one who is born in a *brāhmaṇa* family. This statement serves as a social compromise, but it has nothing to do with spiritual understanding. This injunction is only applicable for those who consider social status more important than spiritual status. It is not for people who are spiritually serious. A serious person would accept Caitanya Mahāprabhu's instruction that anyone—regardless of his position—conversant with Kṛṣṇa science must be accepted as the spiritual master. There are many injunctions in the *Padma Purāṇa* which state that a highly elevated spiritually advanced devotee of the Lord is always a first-class devotee and is therefore a spiritual master, but a highly elevated person born in a *brāhmaṇa* family cannot be a spiritual master unless he is a devotee of the Lord. A person born in a *brāhmaṇa* family may be conversant with all of the rituals of the Vedic scriptures but if he is not a pure devotee, he cannot be a spiritual master. In all *śāstras* the chief qualification of a bona fide spiritual master is that he be conversant in the science of Kṛṣṇa.

Lord Caitanya therefore requested Rāmānanda Rāya to go on teaching Him without hesitation, not considering Lord Caitanya's position as a *sannyāsī*. Thus Lord Caitanya urged him to continue speaking on the pastimes of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa.

“Because You are asking me to speak of the pastimes of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa,” Rāmānanda Rāya humbly submitted, “I will obey Your order. I will speak in whatever way You like.” Thus Rāmānanda Rāya humbly submitted himself as a puppet before Lord Caitanya, the puppet master. He only wanted to dance according to the will of Caitanya Mahāprabhu. He compared his tongue to a stringed instrument, saying, “You are the player of that instrument.” Thus as Lord Caitanya would play, Rāmānanda Rāya would vibrate the sound.

He said that Lord Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the source of all incarnations and the cause of all causes. There are innumerable Vaikuṅṭha planets, innumerable incarnations, expansions of the Supreme Lord, and innumerable universes also, and of all these existences the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa is the only source. His

transcendental body is composed of eternity, bliss and knowledge, and He is known as the son of Mahārāja Nanda and the inhabitant of Goloka Vṛndāvana. He is full with six opulences—all wealth, strength, fame, beauty, knowledge and renunciation. In *Brahma-saṁhitā* (5.1) it is confirmed that Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Lord, the Lord of all lords, and His transcendental body is *sac-cid-ānanda*. No one is the source of Kṛṣṇa, but Kṛṣṇa is the source of everyone. He is the supreme cause of all causes and the resident of Vṛndāvana. He is also very attractive, just like Cupid. One can worship Him by *kāma-gāyatrī mantra*.

In *Brahma-saṁhitā* the transcendental land of Vṛndāvana is described as being always spiritual. That spiritual land is populated by goddesses of fortune, who are known as *gopīs*. These are all beloved of Kṛṣṇa, and Kṛṣṇa is the only lover of all those *gopīs*. The trees of that land are *kalpa-vṛkṣa*, wish fulfilling trees, and one can have anything he wants from them. The land is made of touchstone and the water of nectar. In that land all speech is song, and all walking is dancing, and one's constant companion is the flute. Everything is self-luminous, just like the sun in this material world. The human form of life is meant for understanding this transcendental land of Vṛndāvana, and one who is fortunate should cultivate knowledge of Vṛndāvana and its residents. In that supreme abode are *surabhi* cows that overflow the land with milk. Since not even a moment there is misused, there is no past, present or future. An expansion of this Vṛndāvana, which is the supreme abode of Kṛṣṇa, is also present on this earth, and superior devotees worship it as the supreme abode. However, no one can appreciate Vṛndāvana without being highly elevated in spiritual knowledge, Kṛṣṇa consciousness. According to ordinary experience, Vṛndāvana appears to be just like an ordinary village, but in the eyes of a highly elevated devotee, it is as good as the original Vṛndāvana. A great saintly *ācārya* has sung: “When will my mind be cleared of all contamination so I will be able to see Vṛndāvana as it is? And when will I be able to understand the literatures left by the Gosvāmīs so that I will be able to know of the transcendental pastimes of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa?”

The loving affairs between Kṛṣṇa and the *gopīs* in Vṛndāvana are also transcendental. They appear as ordinary lusty affairs of this material world, but there is a gulf of difference. In the material world there may

be the temporary awakening of lust, but it disappears after so-called satisfaction. In the spiritual world the love between the *gopīs* and Kṛṣṇa is constantly increasing. That is the difference between transcendental love and material lust. The lust, or so-called love, arising out of this body is as temporary as the body itself, but the love arising from the eternal soul in the spiritual world is on the spiritual platform, and that love is also eternal. Therefore Kṛṣṇa is addressed as the ever green Cupid. Lord Kṛṣṇa is worshiped by the *gāyatrī mantra*, and the specific *mantra* by which He is worshiped is called *kāma-gāyatrī*. Vedic literatures explain that that sound vibration which can elevate one from mental concoction is called *gāyatrī*. The *kāma-gāyatrī mantra* is composed of 24 1/2 syllables thus:

*klīm kāma-devāya vidmahe
puṣpa-bāṇāya dhīmahi
tanno 'naṅgaḥ pracodayāt*

This *kāma-gāyatrī* is received from the spiritual master when the disciple is advanced in chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare. In other words, this *kāma-gāyatrī mantra* and *saṁskāra*, or reformation of a perfect *brāhmaṇa*, are offered by the spiritual master when he sees that his disciple is advanced in spiritual knowledge. Even then, the *kāma-gāyatrī* is not uttered under certain circumstances. In any case, the chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa is sufficient to elevate one to the highest spiritual platform. In *Brahma-saṁhitā* a nice description of the flute of Kṛṣṇa is given: “When Kṛṣṇa began to play on His flute, the sound vibration entered into the ear of Brahmā as the Vedic *mantra om*” This *om* is composed of three letters—A, U, and M—and it describes our relationship with the Supreme Lord, our activities by which we can achieve the highest perfection of love and the actual position of love on the spiritual platform. When the sound vibration of Kṛṣṇa’s flute is expressed through the mouth of Brahmā, it becomes *gāyatrī*. Thus by being influenced by the sound vibration of Kṛṣṇa’s flute, Brahmā, the supreme creature and first living entity of this material world, was initiated as a *brāhmaṇa*. That Brahmā was initiated as a *brāhmaṇa* by the flute of Kṛṣṇa is confirmed by Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī. When Brahmā was

enlightened by the *gāyatrī mantra* through Kṛṣṇa's flute, he attained all Vedic knowledge. Acknowledging the benediction offered to him by Kṛṣṇa, he became the original spiritual master of all living entities. The word *klīm* added to the *gāyatrī mantra* is explained in *Brahma-saṁhitā* as the transcendental seed of love of Godhead, or the seed of the *kāma-gāyatrī*. The object is Kṛṣṇa, who is the ever green Cupid, and by utterance of *klīm mantra* Kṛṣṇa is worshiped. It is also stated in the *Gopāla-tāpanī Upaniṣad* that when Kṛṣṇa is spoken of as Cupid, one should not think of Him as the Cupid of this material world. As already explained, Vṛndāvana is the spiritual abode of Kṛṣṇa, and the word Cupid is also spiritual and transcendental. One should not take the material Cupid and Kṛṣṇa to be on the same level. The material Cupid represents the attraction of the external flesh and body, but the spiritual Cupid is the attraction by which the Supersoul attracts the individual soul. Actually lust and sex are there in spiritual life, but when the spirit soul is embodied in material elements, that spiritual urge is expressed through the material body and is therefore pervertedly reflected. When one actually becomes conversant in the science of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, he can understand that his material desire for sex is abominable, whereas spiritual sex is desirable.

Spiritual sex is of two kinds: one in accordance with the constitutional position of the self and the other in accordance with the object. When one understands the truth about this life but is not completely cleansed of material contamination, he is not factually situated in the transcendental abode, Vṛndāvana, although he may understand spiritual life. When, however, one becomes free from the sex urges of the material body, he can actually attain the supreme abode of Vṛndāvana. When one is so situated, he can utter the *kāma-gāyatrī* and *kāma-bīja mantra*. Rāmānanda Rāya then explained that Kṛṣṇa is attractive both for men and women, for the movable and the immovable—indeed, for all living entities. For this reason He is called the transcendental Cupid.

Rāmānanda Rāya then quoted a verse from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (10.32.2) stating that when the Lord appeared before the damsels of Vraja smiling and playing on His flute, He appeared just like Cupid.

There are different kinds of devotees who have different aptitudes and relationships with the Supreme Lord. Any one relationship with the

Lord is as good as any other because the central point is Kṛṣṇa. As stated in *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*: “Kṛṣṇa is the reservoir of all pleasures, and He is always attracting the *gopīs* by the spiritual luster of His body. He especially attracts Tārakā, Pāli, Śyāmā, and Lalitā. Kṛṣṇa is very dear to Rādhārāṇī, the foremost *gopī*.” Like Kṛṣṇa, the *gopīs* are glorified by Kṛṣṇa’s pastimes. There are different kinds of relationships with Kṛṣṇa, and anyone who is attracted to Kṛṣṇa by a particular relationship is glorified.

Kṛṣṇa is so beautiful, transcendental and attractive that He sometimes attracts even Himself. The following verse appears in *Gīta-govinda* (1.11):

*viśveṣām anurañjanena janayann ānandam indīvara-
śreṇī-śyāmala-komalair upanayann aṅgair anaṅgotsavam
svacchandam vraja-sundarībhir abhitaḥ pratyāṅgam āliṅgitaḥ
śṛṅgāraḥ sakhi mūrtimān iva madhau mugdho hariḥ krīdati*

“My dear friend, just see how Kṛṣṇa is enjoying His transcendental pastimes in the spring by expanding the beauty of His personal body. His soft legs and hands, just like the most beautiful moon, are used on the bodies of the *gopīs*. When He embraces different parts of their bodies, He is so beautiful. Kṛṣṇa is so beautiful that He attracts even Nārāyaṇa, as well as the goddess of fortune who associates with Nārāyaṇa.”

In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (10.89.58) the Bhūmā-puruṣa (Mahā-Viṣṇu) told Kṛṣṇa, “My dear Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna, I have taken the *brāhmaṇa*’s sons just to see You.” Arjuna attempted to save some youths who had died untimely at Dvārakā, and when he failed to save them, Kṛṣṇa took him to the Bhūmā-puruṣa, and when the Bhūmā-puruṣa brought forth those dead bodies as living entities, He said, “Both of you appear to preserve religious principles in the world and to annihilate the demons.” In other words, the Bhūmā-puruṣa was also attracted by the beauty of Kṛṣṇa, and He concocted this pastime just as a pretext to see Kṛṣṇa. It is recorded in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (10.16.36) that after the serpent Kāliya was punished by Kṛṣṇa, one of Kāliya’s wives told Kṛṣṇa, “Dear Lord, we cannot understand how this fallen serpent got the opportunity of being kicked by Your lotus feet when even the goddess of fortune underwent austerities for several years just to see You.”

How Kṛṣṇa is attracted by His own beauty is described in *Lalita-mādhava*

(8.34). Upon seeing His own picture, Kṛṣṇa lamented, “How glorious this picture is! It is attracting Me just as it attracts Rādhārāṇī.”

After giving a summary of the beauty of Kṛṣṇa, Rāmānanda Rāya began to speak of the spiritual energy of Kṛṣṇa, which is headed by Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī. Kṛṣṇa has immense energetic expansions. Three energies are predominant: the internal energy, external energy and marginal energy. This is confirmed in the Sixth Chapter of *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* where it is said that Viṣṇu has one energy, which is called spiritual energy, and it is manifested in three ways. When spiritual energy is overwhelmed by ignorance, it is called marginal energy. As far as spiritual energy itself is concerned, it is exhibited in three forms because Kṛṣṇa is a combination of eternity, bliss and knowledge. As far as His bliss is concerned, His spiritual energy is manifested as the pleasure giving potency. His eternity is manifested as energy, and His knowledge is manifested as spiritual perfection. As confirmed in *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* (1.12.69): “The pleasure potency of Kṛṣṇa gives Kṛṣṇa transcendental pleasure and bliss.” Thus when Kṛṣṇa wants to enjoy pleasure, He exhibits His own spiritual potency known as *hlādinī*.

In His spiritual form, Kṛṣṇa enjoys His spiritual energy, and that is the sum and substance of the Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa pastimes. These pastimes can only be understood by elevated devotees. One should not try to understand the Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa potencies and pastimes from the mundane platform. Generally people misunderstand these as being material. When the pleasure potency is further condensed, it is called *mahābhāva*. Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, the eternal consort of Kṛṣṇa, is the personification of that *mahābhāva*. In this regard, in *Ujvala-nīlamaṇi* (4.3) Rūpa Gosvāmī states that there are two competitors in love with Kṛṣṇa, Rādhārāṇī and Candrāvalī. When they are compared, it appears that Rādhārāṇī is superior, for She possesses *mahābhāva-svarūpa*. *Mahābhāva-svarūpa*, the personification of *mahābhāva*, is applicable to Rādhārāṇī only. *Mahābhāva* is full of the pleasure potency, and it is an exhibition of the highest love for Kṛṣṇa. Rādhārāṇī is therefore known throughout the world as the most beloved of Kṛṣṇa, and Her name is always associated with Kṛṣṇa as Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa.

Brahma-saṁhitā (5.37) also confirms that Kṛṣṇa expands Himself by His pleasure potency in the spiritual world and that these potencies are all

nondifferent from Kṛṣṇa. Although Kṛṣṇa is always enjoying the company of His pleasure potency expansions, He is all-pervading. Thus Brahmā offers his respectful obeisances to Govinda, the cause of all causes.

As Kṛṣṇa is the highest emblem of spiritual perfection, so Rādhārāṇī is the highest emblem of that spiritual pleasure potency by which Kṛṣṇa is satisfied. Since Kṛṣṇa is unlimited, in order to satisfy Him Rādhārāṇī is also unlimited. Kṛṣṇa is satisfied just by seeing Rādhārāṇī, but Rādhārāṇī expands Herself in such a way that Kṛṣṇa desires to enjoy Her more. Because Kṛṣṇa was unable to estimate the pleasure potency of Rādhārāṇī, He decided to accept the role of Rādhārāṇī, and that combination is Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

Rāmānanda Rāya then began to explain Rādhārāṇī as the supreme emblem of Kṛṣṇa's pleasure potency. Rādhārāṇī expands Herself in different forms, known as Lalitā, Viśākhā and Her other confidential associates. In his book *Ujjvala-nīlamaṇi*, Rūpa Gosvāmī explains the characteristics of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī. He points out that the body of Rādhārāṇī is in itself an actual evolution of transcendental pleasure. That body is decorated with flowers and fragrant aromas and is complete with transcendental love for Kṛṣṇa. That is the personification of His pleasure potency. That transcendental body takes bath three times: first in the water of mercy, second in the water of youthful beauty, and third in the water of youthful luster. After taking bath three times in that way, Her body is covered with shining garments and decorated with Kṛṣṇa's personal beauty, which is compared to cosmetics. Thus Her beauty constitutes the highest artistry. Her body is also decorated with the ornaments of spiritual ecstasy—trembling tears, petrification, perspiration, choking, cessation of all bodily functions due to transcendental pleasure, stumbling, high blood pressure and madness. The decorative transcendental pleasure potency manifests nine symptoms. Five of these are manifested by the expansion of Her personal beauty, which is adorned with garlands of flowers. Her patient calmness is compared with a covering of cloths which have been cleansed by camphor. Her confidential agony for Kṛṣṇa is the knot in Her hair, and the mark of *tilaka* on Her forehead is Her fortune. Rādhārāṇī's sense of hearing is eternally fixed on Kṛṣṇa's name and fame. One's lips become

red from chewing betel nuts. Similarly, the borders of Rādhārāṇī's eyes are blackened due to Her complete attachment to Kṛṣṇa. This darkness might be compared to ointment used by nature when nature jokes with Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. Rādhārāṇī's smile is just like the taste of camphor. The garland of separation moves on Her body when She lies down on the bed of pride within the room of aroma. Out of ecstatic affection for Kṛṣṇa, Her breast is covered by the blouse of anger. Reputed as the best of all Kṛṣṇa's girl friends, She plays a stringed instrument. When Kṛṣṇa stands in His youthful posture, She puts Her hand on His shoulder. Although She possesses so many transcendental qualities, She is always engaged in the service of Kṛṣṇa.

Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī is decorated with *sūddīpta-sāttvika* emotions, which sometimes include tribulation and sometimes pacification. All the transcendental ecstasies are manifested in the body of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī. *Sūddīpta-sāttvika* emotions are manifest when a lover is overwhelmed with certain feelings which he or she cannot check. Rādhārāṇī has another emotion called *kilakiñcita*, which is manifest in twenty different ways. These emotions are manifested partly due to body, mind and habit. As far as the bodily emotions are concerned, they are manifested in posture and movement. As far as the emotions of the mind are concerned, they are manifested as beauty, luster, complexion, flavor, talking, magnanimity and patience. As far as habitual emotions are concerned, they are manifested as pastimes, enjoyment, preparation and forgetfulness.

The *tilaka* of fortune is on the forehead of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, and She also has a locket of *prema-vaicittya*. *prema-vaicittya* is manifest when a lover and beloved meet and fear separation.

Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī is fifteen days younger than Kṛṣṇa. She always keeps Her hand on the shoulders of Her friends, and She always talks and thinks of pastimes with Kṛṣṇa. She always offers Kṛṣṇa a kind of intoxication by Her sweet talks, and She is always prepared to fulfill His desires. In other words, She supplies all the demands of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and She possesses unique and uncommon qualities for Kṛṣṇa's satisfaction. In *Govinda-līlāmṛta* there is a verse which states: "Who is the breeding ground for Kṛṣṇa's affection? The answer is that it is only Śrīmatī Rādhikā. Who is Kṛṣṇa's most lovable object? The answer is that it is

only Śrīmatī Rādhikā and no one else.” Sheen in the hair, moisture in the eyes and firmness in the breasts are all qualities present in Śrīmatī Rādhikā. Only Śrīmatī Rādhikā is able to fulfill all the desires of Kṛṣṇa. No one else can do so.

Satyabhāmā is another competitor of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, but she always desires to come to the standard of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī. Rādhārāṇī is so expert in all affairs that all the damsels of Vraja come to learn arts from Her. She is so extraordinarily beautiful that even the goddess of fortune and Pārvatī, the wife of Lord Śiva, desire elevation to Her standard of beauty. Arundhatī, who is known as the most chaste lady in the universe, desires to learn the standard of chastity from Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī. Since even Lord Kṛṣṇa cannot estimate Rādhārāṇī’s highly transcendental qualities, it is not possible for an ordinary man to estimate them.

After hearing Rāmānanda Rāya speak of the qualities of Rādhā Kṛṣṇa, Lord Caitanya desired to hear from him about the reciprocation of love between Them. Rāmānanda Rāya described Kṛṣṇa as *dhīra-lalita*, a word which describes a person who is very cunning and youthful, who is always expert in joking, who is without anxiety and who is always subservient to his girl friend. Kṛṣṇa is always engaged in love affairs with Rādhārāṇī, and He takes to the bushes of Vṛndāvana to enjoy His lusty activities with Her. Thus He successfully carries out His lusty instincts. In *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* it is stated: “By His impudent and daring talks about sex indulgence, Kṛṣṇa obliged Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī to close Her eyes, and taking advantage of this, Kṛṣṇa painted many pictures on Her breasts. These pictures served as subject matter for Rādhārāṇī’s friends to joke about. Thus Kṛṣṇa was always engaged in lusty activities, and thus He made His youthful life successful.”

Upon hearing of these transcendental activities, Lord Caitanya said, “My dear Rāmānanda, what you have explained regarding the transcendental pastimes of Śrī Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa is perfectly correct, yet there is something more I would like to hear from you.”

“It is very difficult for me to express anything beyond this,” Rāmānanda Rāya replied. “I can only say that there is an emotional activity called *prema-vilāsa-vivarta*, which I may try to explain but I do not know whether You will be happy to hear it.” In *prema-vilāsa* there are two

kinds of emotional activities—separation and meeting. That transcendental separation is so acute that it is actually more ecstatic than meeting. Rāmānanda Rāya was expert in understanding these highly elevated dealings between Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, and he composed a nice song which he narrated to the Lord. The purport of the song is that the lover and the beloved, before meeting, generate a kind of emotion by the exchange of their transcendental activities. That emotion is called *rāga*, or attraction. Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī expressed Her willingness that “this attraction and affection between Us rise to the highest extent,” but the cause of this attraction is Rādhārāṇī Herself. “Whatever the cause may be,” Rādhārāṇī said, “that affection between You and Me has mixed Us in oneness. Now that it is the time of separation, I cannot see the history of the evolution of this love. There was no cause or mediator in Our love save Our meeting itself and the visionary exchange of feelings.”

This exchange of feelings between Kṛṣṇa and Rādhārāṇī is very difficult to understand unless one is elevated to the platform of pure goodness. Such transcendental reciprocation is not even possible to understand from the platform of material goodness. One has to actually transcend material goodness in order to understand. This is because the exchange of feelings between Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa is not a subject matter of this material world. Even the greatest mental speculator cannot understand this, directly or indirectly. Material activities are manifested either for the gross body or the subtle mind, but this exchange of feelings between Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa is beyond such manifestations and beyond intellectual mental speculation. It can only be understood by purified senses freed from all the designations of the material world. Those who have purified senses can understand these transcendental features and exchanges, but those who are impersonalists and who have no knowledge of spiritual senses can only discriminate within the scope of the material senses and thus cannot understand spiritual exchanges or spiritual-sensual activities. Those who are elevated by virtue of experimental knowledge can only satisfy their blunt material senses either by gross bodily activities or by mental speculation. Everything generated from the body or the mind is always imperfect and perishable, but transcendental spiritual activities are always bright and wonderful. Pure love on the

transcendental platform is the paragon of purity devoid of material affection and completely spiritual. Affection for matter is perishable, as indicated by the inebriety of sex in the material world, but there is no such inebriety in the spiritual world. Hindrances on the path of sense satisfaction cause material distress, but one cannot compare that with spiritual separation. In spiritual separation there is neither inebriety nor ineffectiveness, as one finds with material separation.

Lord Caitanya admitted that this is the highest position of transcendental loving reciprocation, and He told Rāmānanda Rāya, “By your grace only have I been able to understand such a high transcendental position. Such a position cannot be attained without the performance of transcendental activities. So will you kindly explain to Me how I can raise Myself to this platform?”

“It is similarly difficult for me to make You understand,” Rāmānanda replied. “As far as I am concerned, I can only speak what You wish me to. No one can escape Your supreme will. Indeed, there is no one in the world who can surpass Your supreme will, and although I appear to be speaking, I am actually not the speaker. You are speaking. Therefore You are both the speaker and the audience. Thus let me speak only as You will me to speak about the performance required to attain this highest transcendental position.”

Rāmānanda Rāya then began to relate the confidential and transcendental activities of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. These activities cannot be understood in the emotional relationship with the Supreme Lord as master and servant, friend and friend or parent and son. This confidential subject matter can be understood only in the association of the damsels of Vraja, for the confidential activities have arisen from the feelings and emotions of those damsels. Without the association of the damsels of Vraja, one cannot nourish or cherish such transcendental understanding. In other words, these confidential pastimes of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa have expanded through the mercy of the damsels. Without their mercy, they cannot be understood. One has to follow in the footsteps of the damsels of Vraja in order to understand.

When one is actually situated in that understanding, he becomes eligible to enter into the confidential pastimes of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. There is no alternative to understand Their confidential pastimes. This is confirmed

in *Govinda-līlāmṛta* (10.17): “Although manifest, happy, expanded and unlimited, the emotional exchanges between Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa can only be understood by the damsels of Vraja or by their followers.” Just as no one can understand the expansion of the spiritual energy of the Supreme Lord without His causeless mercy, no one can understand the transcendental sex life between Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa without following in the footsteps of the damsels of Vraja. The personal associates of Rādhārāṇī are called *sakhīs*, and Her near assistants are called *mañjarīs*. It is very difficult to express their dealings with Kṛṣṇa because they have no desire to mix with Kṛṣṇa or to enjoy Him personally. Rather, they are always ready to help Rādhārāṇī associate with Kṛṣṇa. Their affection for Kṛṣṇa and Rādhārāṇī is so pure that they are simply satisfied when Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa are together. Indeed, their transcendental pleasure is in seeing Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa united. The actual form of Rādhārāṇī is just like a creeper embracing the tree of Kṛṣṇa, and the damsels of Vraja, the associates of Rādhārāṇī, are just like the leaves and flowers of that creeper. When a creeper embraces a tree, the leaves and flowers as well as the creeper automatically embrace it. *Govinda-līlāmṛta* (10.16) confirms that Rādhārāṇī is the expansion of the pleasure potency of Kṛṣṇa and is compared with a creeper, and Her associates, the damsels of Vraja, are compared to the flowers and leaves of that creeper. When Rādhārāṇī and Kṛṣṇa enjoy Themselves, the damsels of Vraja relish the pleasure more than Rādhārāṇī Herself.

Although the associates of Rādhārāṇī do not expect any personal attention from Kṛṣṇa, Rādhārāṇī is so pleased with them that She arranges individual meetings between Kṛṣṇa and the damsels of Vraja. Indeed, Rādhārāṇī tries to combine or unite Her associates with Kṛṣṇa by many transcendental maneuvers, and She takes more pleasure in these meetings than in Her own meetings with Him. When Kṛṣṇa sees that both Rādhārāṇī and Her associates are pleased by His association, He becomes more satisfied. Such association and loving reciprocation have nothing to do with material lust, although it resembles the material union between man and woman. It is only because that similarity is there that such reciprocation is sometimes called, in transcendental language, transcendental lust. As explained in *Gautamīya-tantra* (*Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* 1.2.285): “Lust means attachment to one’s

personal sense gratification. But as far as Rādhārāṇī and Her associates are concerned, they did not desire personal sense gratification. They only wanted to satisfy Kṛṣṇa.” This is further confirmed in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (10.31.19) in one of the speeches of the *gopīs*:

*yat te sujāta-caraṇāmburuhaṁ staneṣu
bhītāḥ śanaiḥ priya dadhīmaḥi karkaśeṣu
tenātavīm aṭasi tad vyathate na kiṁ svit
kūrṇpādibhir bhramati dhīr bhavad-āyusām naḥ*

“My dear friend Kṛṣṇa, You are now roaming in the forest with Your bare feet, which You sometimes keep on our breasts. When Your feet are on our breasts, we think that our breasts are too hard for Your soft feet. Now You are wandering in the forest and walking over stones, and we do not know how You are feeling. Since You are our life and soul, the displeasure You undergo in traveling over rough stones is giving us great distress.” Such feelings expressed by the damsels of Vraja constitute the highest Kṛṣṇa conscious emotions. Anyone who actually becomes captivated by Kṛṣṇa consciousness approaches this level of the *gopīs*. There are sixty-four categories of devotional service by performance of which one can rise to the *gopīs*’ stage of unconditional devotion. Affection for Kṛṣṇa on the level of the *gopīs* is called *rāgānuga*, spontaneous love. When one enters into a spontaneous loving affair with Kṛṣṇa, there is no need to follow the Vedic rules and regulations. There are various kinds of personal devotees of Lord Kṛṣṇa in the transcendental abode. For example, there are servants of Kṛṣṇa like Raktaka and Patraka and friends of Kṛṣṇa just like Śrīdāmā and Sudāmā. There are also parents of Kṛṣṇa, just like Nanda and Yaśodā, who are also engaged in the service of Kṛṣṇa according to their respective transcendental emotions. One who desires to enter into the supreme abode of Kṛṣṇa can take shelter of one of such transcendental servitors. Then, through the execution of loving service, one can attain transcendental affection for Kṛṣṇa. In other words, the devotee in this material world who executes loving service in pursuance of the activities of those eternal associates with Kṛṣṇa also attains the same post when he is perfected.

The sages mentioned in the *Upaniṣads* and in *śruti* also desire the post of

the *gopīs*, and they also follow in the footsteps of the *gopīs* in order to attain that highest goal of life. This is confirmed in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (10.87.23) when it is said that the sages practice *prāṇāyāma* (trance) by controlling the breathing process, mind and senses through the mystic *yoga* practice. Thus they try to merge into the Supreme Brahman. This same goal is attained by atheists who deny the existence of God. If such atheists are killed by an incarnation of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, they also merge into the Brahman existence of the Supreme Lord. However, when the damsels of Vṛndāvana worship Śrī Kṛṣṇa, it is as though they have been bitten by a snake, for Kṛṣṇa's body is compared with the body of a snake. A snake's body is never straight; it is always curling. Similarly, Kṛṣṇa often stands in a three curved posture, and He has bitten the *gopīs* with transcendental love. The *gopīs* are certainly better situated than all mystic *yogīs* and others who desire to merge into the Supreme Brahman. The sages of Daṇḍakāraṇya also follow in the footsteps of the damsels of Vraja in order to attain a similar position. One cannot attain that position simply by following the regulative principles. Rather, one must seriously follow the principles of the *gopīs*. This is confirmed in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (10.9.21) wherein it is stated that Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the son of Śrīmatī Yaśodā, is not easily available to those following the principles of mental speculation but is easily available to all kinds of living beings who follow the path of devotional service.

There are many pseudo-devotees, claiming to belong to Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu's sect, who artificially dress themselves as the damsels of Vraja, and this is not approved by advanced spiritualists or advanced students of devotional service. Such people dress the outward material body because they foolishly confuse the body with the soul. They are mistaken when they think that the spiritual bodies of Kṛṣṇa, Rādhārāṇī and Their associates, the damsels of Vraja, are composed of material nature. One should know perfectly well that all such manifestations are expansions of eternal bliss and knowledge in the transcendental world. They have nothing to do with these material bodies; thus the bodies, dresses, decorations and activities of the damsels of Vṛndāvana are not of this material cosmic manifestation. The damsels of Vṛndāvana are not a subject for the attraction of those in the material world; they are

transcendental attractions for the all-attractive Kṛṣṇa. Because the Lord is all-attractive, He is called Kṛṣṇa, but the damsels of Vṛndāvana are attractive even to Kṛṣṇa. Therefore they are not of this material world. If one wrongly thinks that the material body is as perfect as the spiritual body and begins to imitate the damsels of Vṛndāvana, he becomes infested with the Māyāvādī impersonal philosophy. The impersonalists recommend a process of *aham grahopāsanā* by which one worships his own body as the Supreme. Thinking in this way, such pseudo-transcendentalists dress themselves as the damsels of Vraja. Such activities are not acceptable in devotional service. Even Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī, the most authoritative *ācārya* in the Gauḍīya *sampradāya*, has condemned these imitators. The process of transcendental realization is to follow in the footsteps of the associates of the Supreme Lord; therefore if one thinks himself to be a direct associate of the Supreme Lord, he is condemned. According to authorized Vaiṣṇava principles, one should follow a particular devotee, and not think of himself as Kṛṣṇa's associate.

In this way Rāmānanda Rāya explained that one should accept the mood of the damsels of Vraja. In *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* it is clearly said that one should accept the emotional activities and not imitate the dress of the associates of Kṛṣṇa. One should also always meditate upon the affairs between Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa in the transcendental world. One should think of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa twenty-four hours a day and eternally engage in Their service. One need not externally change his dress. By following the mood of the associates and friends of Rādhārāṇī, one can ultimately achieve the perfectional stage and be transferred to Goloka Vṛndāvana, the transcendental abode of Kṛṣṇa.

The mood of the *gopīs'* emotional pursuit is called *siddha-deha*. This word indicates the pure spiritual body which is beyond the senses, mind and intelligence. *Siddha-deha* is the purified soul who is just suitable to serve the Supreme Lord. No one can serve the Supreme Lord as His associate without being situated in his pure spiritual identity. That identity is completely free from all material contamination. As stated in *Bhagavad-gītā*, a materially contaminated person transmigrates to another material body by material consciousness. At the time of death he thinks materially and is therefore transferred into another material body.

Similarly, when one is situated in his pure spiritual identity and thinks of the spiritual loving service rendered to the Supreme Lord, he is transferred to the spiritual kingdom to enter into the association of Kṛṣṇa. In other words, by attaining one's spiritual identity and thinking of Kṛṣṇa's associates, one can become qualified to transfer to the spiritual kingdom. No one can contemplate or think of the activities of the spiritual kingdom without being situated in his pure, spiritual identity (*siddha*). Thus Rāmānanda Rāya said that without attaining *siddha-deha*, one can neither become an associate of the damsels nor render service directly to the Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa, and His eternal consort Rādhārāṇī. In this regard, Rāmānanda quoted *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (10.47.60):

*nāyam śriyo 'nga u nitāntarateḥ prasādaḥ
sva-yoṣitām nalina-gandha-rucām kuto 'nyāḥ
rāsotsave 'sya bhujadaṇḍa-gṛhīta-kaṇṭha-
labdhāśiṣām ya udagād vraja-vallavīnām*

“Neither the goddess of fortune, Lakṣmī, nor even the damsels of the heavenly kingdom can attain the facilities of the damsels of Vrajabhūmī—and what to speak of others.”

Lord Caitanya was very satisfied to hear these statements from Rāmānanda Rāya, and He embraced him. Then both of them began to cry in the ecstasy of transcendental realization. Thus the Lord and Rāmānanda Rāya discussed the transcendental pastimes of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa throughout the night, and in the morning they separated.

Rāmānanda left to go to his place, and the Lord went to take His bath. At the time of separation, Rāmānanda fell at the feet of Lord Caitanya and prayed: “My dear Lord, You have come just to deliver me from this mire of nescience. Therefore I request that You remain here for at least ten days to purify my mind of this material contamination. There is no one else who can deliver such transcendental love of God.”

“I have come to you to purify Myself by hearing from you the transcendental pastimes of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa,” the Lord replied. “I am so fortunate, for you are the only teacher of such transcendental pastimes. I can find no one else in the world who can realize the transcendental loving reciprocation between Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. You are asking Me to

stay here for ten days, but I feel like remaining with you for the rest of My life. Please come to Jagannātha Purī, My headquarters, and we will remain together for the rest of our lives. Thus I can pass My remaining days in understanding Kṛṣṇa and Rādhā by your association.”

Śrīman Rāmānanda Rāya came again to see the Lord the next evening, and there were further discourses on this transcendental subject matter. “What is the highest standard of education?” Lord Caitanya began His inquiry, and Rāmānanda Rāya immediately replied that the highest standard of education is knowledge of the science of Kṛṣṇa. The standard of material education is sense gratification, but the highest standard of spiritual education is knowledge of the science of Kṛṣṇa. In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (4.29.50) it is stated that that work which pleases the Supreme Personality of Godhead is the highest work, and that science or knowledge which places one in full Kṛṣṇa consciousness is the highest knowledge. Similarly, Prahlāda Mahārāja, while instructing his childhood friends at school, also stated that hearing of the Lord, chanting, remembering, worshiping, praying, serving, making friends with Kṛṣṇa, and offering everything to Him constituted the highest spiritual knowledge.

“And what is the greatest reputation one can have?” Lord Caitanya asked Rāmānanda Rāya, and Rāmānanda immediately replied that a person reputed to be Kṛṣṇa conscious should be considered the most famous man in the world.

Chapter Thirty-two

Conclusion

One who is famous as a Kṛṣṇa conscious man enjoys eternal fame. In the material world, everyone is striving for three things: he wants his name to be perpetuated, he wants his fame to be broadcast all over the world, and he wants some profit from his material activities. But no one knows that all this material name, fame and profit belong to the temporary material body and that as soon as the body is finished, all name, fame and profit are finished also. It is only due to ignorance that everyone is striving after the name, fame and profit that are connected with the body. It is deplorable to become famous on the basis of the body or to become known as a man of spiritually developed consciousness without knowing the supreme spirit, Viṣṇu. Real fame can only be had if one attains Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

According to *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, there are twelve authorities, and they are all famous because they were all great devotees of the Lord. These authorities are Brahmā, Nārada, Lord Śiva, Manu, Kapila, Prahāda, Janaka, Bhīṣma, Śukadeva Gosvāmī, Bali, Yamarāja and the Kumāras. These personalities are still remembered because they were all great stalwart devotees of the Lord. In the *Garuḍa Purāṇa* it is said to be more rare to be a famous devotee of the Supreme Lord in the age of Kali than to be a demigod such as Brahmā or Lord Śiva. Concerning talks between Nārada and Puṇḍarīka, Yudhiṣṭhira said, “He is most famous and can deliver all others who, after many, many births, comes to understand that he is the servant of Vāsudeva.” Similarly, in *Bhagavad-gītā* (7.19) Kṛṣṇa tells Arjuna:

*bahūnām janmanām ante
jñānavān mām praṇadyate
vāsudevaḥ sarvam iti
sa mahātmā sudurlabhaḥ*

“After many births and deaths, he who is actually in knowledge surrenders unto Me, knowing Me to be the cause of all causes and all

that is. Such a great soul is very rare.” In the *Ādi Purāṇa* it is said that liberation and transcendental life follow all the devotees of God. In the *Bṛhan-nāradya Purāṇa* it is stated that even personalities like Brahmā and other demigods do not know the value of a devotee of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. The *Garuḍa Purāṇa* points out that out of many thousands of *brāhmaṇas*, one may be expert in performing sacrifices, and out of thousands of such expert *brāhmaṇas*, one *brāhmaṇa* may be expert in the knowledge of the *Vedānta-sūtra*, and out of many, many thousands of such Vedāntists, there may be one person who is famous as a devotee of Lord Viṣṇu. There are many devotees of Viṣṇu, and out of them, he who is unflinching in his devotion is eligible to enter into the kingdom of God. In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (3.13.4) it is also stated that there are many students of the *Vedas*, but one who is always thinking of the Supreme Personality of Godhead within his heart is the best student of all. In the *Nārāyaṇa-vyūha-stava* prayers it is said that if even the great Brahmā is not a devotee of the Lord, he is most insignificant, whereas if a microbe is a devotee of the Lord, he is most famous.

Lord Caitanya next asked Rāmānanda Rāya, “What is the most valuable thing in the world?” Rāmānanda Rāya replied that he who has love for Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa possesses the most valuable jewel and the greatest riches. One who is addicted to material sense gratification or material wealth is not really considered to be wealthy. When one comes to the spiritual platform of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, he can understand that there are no riches more valuable than love of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa. It is recorded in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* that Mahārāja Dhruva sought out the Supreme Lord because he wanted to get some land, but when he finally saw Kṛṣṇa, he said, “I am so pleased, I don’t want anything.” In *Bhagavad-gītā* it is also stated that if one takes shelter of the Supreme Personality of Godhead or is elevated to the supreme state of love of Godhead, he has nothing more to aspire to. Although such devotees can attain whatever they desire from the Lord, they do not ask anything from Him.

When Lord Caitanya asked Rāmānanda Rāya what is considered to be the most painful existence, Rāmānanda Rāya replied that separation from a pure devotee constitutes the most painful existence. In other words, when there is no devotee of the Lord present, there is great suffering in society, and association with other people becomes painful.

In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (3.30.7) it is stated that if one who is bereft of the association of a pure devotee tries to become happy through society, friendship and love devoid of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, he is to be considered in the most distressed condition. In the Fifth Canto of *Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta* (5.44) it is stated that the association of a pure devotee is more desirable than life itself and that in separation from him one cannot even pass a second happily.

Lord Caitanya then asked Rāmānanda Rāya, “Out of many so-called liberated souls, who is actually liberated?” Rāmānanda replied that he who is actually completely saturated with the devotional love for Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa is to be considered to be the best of all liberated persons. It is stated in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (6.14.4) that a devotee of Nārāyaṇa is so rare that one can only find him out of millions and millions of people. “And out of all songs, what song do you think is the best of all?”

Caitanya Mahāprabhu asked. And Rāmānanda replied that any song which describes the pastimes of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa is the best song. In conditional life, the soul is captivated by sex. All fictions—dramas and novels—and material songs describe love between men and women. Since people are so attracted to this kind of literature, Kṛṣṇa appeared in this material world and displayed His transcendental loving affairs with the *gopīs*. There is an immense literature dealing with the transactions between the *gopīs* and Kṛṣṇa, and anyone who takes shelter of this literature or of the stories about Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa can enjoy actual happiness. In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (10.33.36) it is said that the Lord displayed His pastimes in Vṛndāvana in order to reveal His actual life. Any intelligent person who tries to understand the pastimes of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa is most fortunate. The songs that tell of those pastimes are the greatest songs in the world.

Lord Caitanya then inquired: “What is the most profitable thing in the world, the essence of all auspicious events?” Rāmānanda Rāya replied that there is nothing as profitable as the association of pure devotees. “And what do you recommend a person to think of?” Lord Caitanya asked. Rāmānanda replied that one should always think of the pastimes of Kṛṣṇa. This is Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Kṛṣṇa has multiple activities, and they are described in many Vedic scriptures. One should always think of those pastimes; that is the best meditation and the highest ecstasy. In

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (2.2.36) Śukadeva Gosvāmī confirms that one should always think of the Supreme Personality of Godhead—not only think of Him, but one should also hear and chant His name, fame and glories.

“And what is the best type of meditation?” Lord Caitanya inquired.

“He who always meditates on the lotus feet of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa is the best meditator,” Rāmānanda Rāya answered. This is also confirmed in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (1.2.14): “It is the Supreme Personality of Godhead alone who is the master of all devotees, whose name one should always chant and who should always be meditated upon and worshiped regularly.”

“Where should a person live, giving up all other pleasures?” Lord Caitanya next inquired. Rāmānanda replied that one should give up all other pleasures and should live in Vṛndāvana where Lord Kṛṣṇa had so many pastimes. In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (10.47.61) Uddhava says that it is best to live in Vṛndāvana even if one has to live as a plant or creeper. It was in Vṛndāvana that the Supreme Lord lived and it was there that the *gopīs* worshiped the Supreme Lord, the ultimate goal of all Vedic knowledge.

“And what is the best subject to hear of?” Caitanya Mahāprabhu next asked.

“The pastimes of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa,” Rāmānanda replied. Actually when the pastimes of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa are heard from the right source, one at once attains liberation. Unfortunately it sometimes happens that people do not hear of these pastimes from a person who is a realized soul. Thus people are sometimes misguided. It is stated in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (10.33.39) that one who hears of the pastimes of Kṛṣṇa with the *gopīs* will attain the highest platform of devotional service and will be freed from the material lust which overwhelms everyone’s heart in the material world. In other words, by hearing the pastimes of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, one can get rid of all material lust. If one does not become freed from material lust in this way, then he should not indulge in hearing of the pastimes of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. Unless one hears from the right source, he will misinterpret the pastimes of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, considering them to be ordinary affairs between a man and woman. In this way one may be misguided.

“And who is the most worshipable Deity?” Caitanya Mahāprabhu next inquired. Rāmānanda Rāya immediately replied that the transcendental couple, Śrī Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, is the ultimate object of worship. There are many worshipable objects—the impersonalists worship the *brahmajyoti*, for instance—but by worshipping objects other than Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, one becomes bereft of life’s symptoms and becomes just like a tree or other nonmoving entity. Those who worship the so-called void also attain such results. Those who are after material enjoyment (bhukti) worship the demigods and achieve their planets and thus enjoy material happiness. Lord Caitanya next inquired about those who are after material happiness and liberation from material bondage. “Where do they ultimately go?” He asked. Rāmānanda Rāya replied that ultimately some turn into trees and others attain the heavenly planets where they enjoy material happiness.

Rāmānanda Rāya went on to say that those who have no taste for Kṛṣṇa consciousness or spiritual life are just like crows who take pleasure in eating the bitter *nimba* fruit. It is the poetic cuckoo that eats the seeds of the mango. The unfortunate transcendentalists simply speculate on dry philosophy, whereas the transcendentalists who are in love with Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa enjoy fruit just like the cuckoo. Thus those who are devotees of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa are most fortunate. The bitter *nimba* fruit is not at all eatable; it is simply full of dry speculation and is only fit for crowlike philosophers. Mango seeds, however, are very relishable, and those in the devotional service of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa enjoy them.

Thus Rāmānanda Rāya and Caitanya Mahāprabhu talked for the entire night. Sometimes they danced, sometimes sang and sometimes cried. After passing the night in this way, at dawn Rāmānanda Rāya returned to his place. The next evening he returned to see Caitanya Mahāprabhu. After discussing Kṛṣṇa for some time, Rāmānanda Rāya fell at the feet of the Lord and said, “My dear Lord, You are so kind to me that You have told me about the science of Kṛṣṇa and Rādhārāṇī and Their loving affairs, the affairs of the *rāsa* dance and Their pastimes. I never thought that I should be able to speak on this subject matter. You have taught me as You formerly taught the *Vedas* to Brahmā.”

This is the system of receiving instructions from the Supersoul. Externally He is not to be seen, but internally He speaks to the devotee.

That is confirmed in *Bhagavad-gītā*—the Lord dictates from within one who is sincerely engaged in His service, and the Lord acts in such a way that such a person can ultimately attain the supreme goal of life. When Brahmā was born, there was no one to instruct him; therefore the Supreme Lord Himself instructed Brahmā in Vedic knowledge through Brahmā’s heart. In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (2.4.22) Śukadeva Gosvāmī confirms that the *gāyatrī mantra* was first imparted within the heart of Brahmā by the Supreme. Śukadeva Gosvāmī prayed to the Lord to help him speak *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* before Mahārāja Parīkṣit.

The first verse of the First Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* describes the Supreme Absolute Truth as He who instructed Brahmā through the heart. Vyāsadeva, the author of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, states: “ Let me offer my respectful obeisances to Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who is the cause of the cosmic manifestation and its maintenance and dissolution as well.” If we scrutinizingly try to understand the supreme truth, we can understand that He knows everything directly and indirectly. He is the only Supreme Personality, and it is He only who is fully independent. He alone instructed Brahmā as the Supersoul within. Even the greatest scholar becomes bewildered in trying to understand the supreme truth because the entire perceivable cosmic manifestation is situated within Him. Although this material manifestation is a by-product of fire, water, air and earth, it nonetheless appears to be factual. However, it is in Him only that the spiritual and material manifestations as well as the living entities rest. Therefore He is the supreme truth.

Rāmānanda Rāya continued speaking to Lord Caitanya: “First I saw You as a *sannyāsī*, and then I saw You as a cowherd boy. I see before You a golden doll, and due to its presence Your complexion has become golden. Yet I see that Your complexion is dark, like a cowherd boy’s. Will You please explain why I am seeing You in this way? Please tell me without reservation.”

“It is the nature of highly elevated devotees to see Kṛṣṇa in everything,” Lord Caitanya replied. “Whenever they see anything, they do not see the form of that particular thing. They see Kṛṣṇa.” This is confirmed in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.2.45):

*sarva-bhūteṣu yaḥ paśyed
bhagavad-bhāvam ātmanaḥ
bhūtāni bhagavaty ātmany
eṣa bhāgavatottamaḥ*

“One who is highly elevated in devotional service sees the Supersoul, Kṛṣṇa, who is the Soul of all individual souls.” A similar passage is found in the Tenth Canto (10.35.9) where it is stated that all creepers, plants and trees, laden with flowers and fruits, were bent in the ecstasy of love for Kṛṣṇa, for Kṛṣṇa was the Soul of their soul. After Kṛṣṇa left them, those trees and plants became thorny.

“You have the highest conception of the pastimes of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa,” Lord Caitanya continued. “Therefore you are seeing Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa everywhere.”

Rāmānanda Rāya replied: “I request that You not try to hide Yourself. I understand that You have accepted the complexion and mode of thinking of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī and that You are trying to understand Yourself from the viewpoint of Rādhārāṇī. You have actually advented Yourself to take this point of view. Although You incarnate mainly to understand Your own self, You are at the same time distributing love of Kṛṣṇa to the world. Now You have personally come here to deliver me. Please don’t try to deceive me, I beg You. It is not good for You.”

Being very satisfied, Lord Caitanya smiled and showed Rāmānanda His real form as the combination of Śrī Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. Thus Lord Caitanya was Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself with the external features of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī. His transcendental ability to become two and then to become one again was revealed to Rāmānanda Rāya. Those who are fortunate enough to understand Lord Caitanya as well as the Vṛndāvana pastimes of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa can be able, by the mercy of Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī, to know about the real identity of Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

Upon seeing this unique feature of Lord Caitanya, Rāmānanda Rāya fainted and fell on the floor. Lord Caitanya then touched him, and he came to his senses. Rāmānanda Rāya was then surprised to see Lord Caitanya again in His mendicant dress. Lord Caitanya embraced and pacified him and informed him that he was the only one to have seen

this form. “Because you have understood the purpose of My incarnation, you are privileged to have seen this particular feature of My personality,” the Lord said. “My dear Rāmānanda, I am not a different person with a fair complexion known as Gaurapuruṣa. I am the selfsame Kṛṣṇa the son of Mahārāja Nanda, and due to contact with the body of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī I have now assumed this form. Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī does not touch anyone but Kṛṣṇa; therefore She has influenced Me with Her complexion, mind and words. In this way I am just trying to understand the transcendental flavor of Her relationship with Kṛṣṇa.” The fact is that both Kṛṣṇa and Lord Caitanya are the original Personality of Godhead. No one should try to eliminate Lord Caitanya from Śrī Kṛṣṇa. In His form of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, He is the supreme enjoyer, and in His form of Lord Caitanya, He is the supreme enjoyed. No one can be more superexcellently attractive than Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and but for Śrī Kṛṣṇa, no one can enjoy the supreme form of devotion, Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī. But for Śrī Kṛṣṇa, all Viṣṇu forms are lacking this ability. This is explained in the description of Govinda in *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*. There it is said that Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī is the only personality who can infuse Śrī Kṛṣṇa with transcendental pleasure. Thus Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī is the chief damsel of Vraja in love with Govinda, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

“Please rest assured that I have nothing to hide from you,” Lord Caitanya told Rāmānanda. “Even if I do try to hide from you, you are such an advanced devotee that you can understand all My secrets. I request that you please keep this a secret and do not disclose it to anyone. If it were revealed, everyone would consider Me a madman. The facts which I have disclosed to you cannot be understood by materialistic people. When they hear of this, they will simply laugh at Me. You can understand this yourself and keep it to yourself. From a materialistic point of view, a devotee becomes mad in his ecstasy of love for Kṛṣṇa. Both you and I are just like madmen. So please don’t disclose these facts to ordinary men. If you do, they will surely laugh at Me.”

Lord Caitanya then passed ten nights with Rāmānanda Rāya, enjoyed his company and discussed the pastimes of Kṛṣṇa and Rādhā. The discussions between them were on the highest level of love for Kṛṣṇa. Some of these talks are described, but most of them could not be

described. In *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* this has been compared to metallurgic examination. The metals compared are discussed in the following sequence: first copper, then bronze, then silver, gold and at last touchstone. The preliminary discussions between Lord Caitanya and Rāmānanda Rāya are considered to be like copper, and the higher discussions are considered to be like gold. The fifth dimension of their discussions, however, is considered to be like touchstone. If one is eager to attain the highest understanding, he must begin with an inquiry into the differences between copper and bronze, then silver and gold and so on.

The next day Lord Caitanya asked Rāmānanda Rāya to allow Him to return to Jagannātha Purī. “We can remain together the rest of our lives at Jagannātha Purī and pass our time in discussing Kṛṣṇa.” Lord Caitanya then embraced Rāmānanda Rāya and sent him to his own place. In the morning the Lord started on His journey. He met Rāmānanda Rāya at a temple of Hanumān on the river bank. After visiting the temple of Hanumān, He left. As long as Caitanya Mahāprabhu remained at Karpūra, all kinds of people met Him, and by His grace everyone became a devotee of the Supreme Lord. After Lord Caitanya’s departure, Rāmānanda Rāya became overwhelmed due to his separation from the Lord, and he immediately decided to retire from service and meet the Lord again at Jagannātha Purī. The discussions between Rāmānanda Rāya and Lord Caitanya deal with the most concentrated form of devotional service. By hearing these discussions one can understand the pastimes of Śrī Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa as well as the confidential role played by Lord Caitanya. If one is actually fortunate enough to have faith in these discussions, he can enter into the transcendental association of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa.

The Teachings of Lord Caitanya

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