

OUR ORIGINAL POSITION
CHAPTER TWELVE
The Deviation of Kālā Kṛṣṇadāsa;
"Factual Evidence" of Falldown from the Lord's Association
by Suhotra Swamī

Suhotra Swami shows in the following article scriptural evidence that one can fall down from the direct association of the Lord.

...we could not unearth a single clear śāstric reference for the fall position, but had ample evidence for the no fall version.

If the GBC could show me just one pramāṇa that supports the fall position, I would be relieved of my anxiety that ISKCON is deviating from the sampradāya.

These two statements were recently made in defense of a book banned by the GBC, entitled *In Vaikuṅṭha Not Even the Leaves Fall*, by one of its authors. In both his statements, he suggests that there is no evidence (pramāṇa) from śāstra that clearly indicates that a living entity falls from a position within the Lord's transcendental pastimes. His challenge to the GBC is to produce at least one such scriptural evidence.

There is one. It is the clear account of the falldown of Kālā Kṛṣṇadāsa, presented in Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā, Chapters Nine and Ten.

For the purposes of this essay, eleven key points from Leaves are summarized next, in items A to K. Passages from which this summary is drawn are quoted in the Notes. The authors hold that:

A. A proof that no one can fall from Vaikuṅṭha is that even devotees rendering service to the Lord in the material world do not fall down. (Notes 5, 8, 9, 14)

B. Those persons who associate with the Lord when He descends to the material world, who render personal service to Him, are liberated. Indeed, they are His eternal associates and are residents of Vaikuṅṭha. (Notes 4, 16, 17)

C. Contamination cannot enter such transcendental association. These liberated devotees never fall down because they are protected by the internal potency. (Notes 1, 3, 15)

D. Perfection in devotional service means directly serving the Supreme Personality of Godhead in His transcendental pastimes. (Notes 4, 7, 11, 13, 15, 16, 17)

E. There is no difference between those who attain that perfection through sādhana and those who are eternally perfect. (Notes 2, 5, 8, 9, 14, 17)

F. Those who are perfect never fall, and thus they are residents of Vaikuṅṭha. (Notes 2, 4, 6)

G. Those who have attained the personal service of the Lord never misuse their free will. (Notes 16, 17)

H. Those who are faced with the choice of māyā vs. Kṛṣṇa are not engaged in the Lord's personal service. They are sleeping souls. Conditioned souls always turn away from the service of the Lord. (Notes 3, 7, 12)

I. Only those who are not engaged in the service of the Lord, like the Māyāvādīs, fall down from liberation. No one falls down from a personal relationship with Kṛṣṇa. If a jīva falls, it is from his own spiritual identity. (Notes 8, 10, 11)

J. If it would be true that one can fall down from Kṛṣṇa's association, that would mean Kṛṣṇa tricks us by not keeping His promise to protect us. (Note 18)

K. Lord Caitanya invites us to participate in the topmost līlā of all. (Note 19)

According to the authors, the above points are siddhānta, essential conclusions of the śāstra, and they are uniformly verified by Śrīla Prabhupāda's books. And certainly, even devotees who hold the view that the conditioned souls originate in Vaikuṅṭha would agree that certain individual points are unarguable. But the authors of *Leaves* would reply that accepting just some of these points is accepting only half a hen (*ardha-kukkuṭi-nyāya*). Only when they are taken together do we get the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth: anyone who associates with the Lord in direct personal service is perfect, and perfect devotees can never fall down, even when they come to the material world to be with the Lord in His pastimes here. They can never fall down because they have surrendered their free will to Kṛṣṇa, and once that is done, it is impossible to take the free will back. Any view that contradicts this must be apa-siddhānta. Sometimes in his letters and conversations, Śrīla Prabhupāda appeared to support apa-siddhānta, but that was just a strategy. We have outgrown the need for that strategy, which finds support only in secondary sources. Now we should understand siddhānta as it is taught by the primary sources, Prabhupāda's books.

Siddhānta means "the essential conclusion" of śāstra. If the siddhānta is that no one falls into māyā from direct association with the Supreme Lord, then we may reasonably expect all śāstra to attest to that conclusion. But the śāstric evidence (pramāṇa) of the falldown of Kālā Kṛṣṇadāsa does not conform to this supposed siddhānta. How can we be so sure that it does not? Because in his purport to Madhya 10.65, Śrīla Prabhupāda explicitly draws the opposite conclusion from that of the authors:

"This is factual evidence showing that it is possible at any time to fall down from the Lord's association. One need only misuse his little independence. Once fallen and separated from the Supreme Personality of Godhead's association, one becomes a candidate for suffering in the material world."

The first and second sentence clearly refute the authors' points A, C, F, G, H and I. The third sentence is also very significant. It indicates that Kālā Kṛṣṇadāsa was not a suffering conditioned soul until he separated himself from the Lord's association. On the one side, this supports the authors' contention that a personal associate of the Lord must be a resident of the spiritual world (B). On the other, it refutes the contention that a resident of the spiritual world cannot fall down (A, C, F).

The authors affirm (K) that Lord Caitanya invites everyone to participate in the topmost līlā of Kṛṣṇa. Is it not logical to assume, then, that Kālā Kṛṣṇadāsa, His personal servant, was blessed by the greatest mercy? His relationship to the Lord was undoubtedly replete with transcendental opportunities. And how did he come by such great fortune? He was recommended to the service of Lord Caitanya by none other than Lord Nityānanda Prabhu (Madhya 7.39). This in itself is perfection.

"Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura explains, *āra kabe nitāi-cāñdera karuṇā karibe*. Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura is aspiring for the day when Nityānanda Prabhu will be pleased upon him. Just like Jagāi-Mādhāi was delivered by the mercy of Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu, so we have to pray Nityānanda Prabhu. He's very merciful. He's so kind, Baladeva, He gives spiritual strength. Then we can approach the Supreme Lord... Nityānanda Prabhu is the spiritual master. Or spiritual master is the replica, representation, of Nityānanda Prabhu. So when Nityānanda Prabhu is pleased, then we become detached from this material attraction." (Śrīla Prabhupāda, Cc. lecture, March 4, 1974)

Lord Nityānanda recognized Kālā Kṛṣṇadāsa's brahminical qualifications. He described him as sarala, "simple." (Madhya 7.39) This does not mean simple in the sense of foolish. In Madhya 9.227, the same word is used to describe Kālā Kṛṣṇadāsa. Here he is also described as ārya, "gentle." Elsewhere, the word sarala is translated as "sincere." "Simple," then, is to be taken as straightforward and not devious. Despite

all this-having direct personal association of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, the most munificent avatāra of Kṛṣṇa, and having Lord Nityānanda's mercy, which gives detachment, and having the good brahminical qualifications of simplicity, gentleness and sincerity-still Kālā Kṛṣṇadāsa was allured by māyā.

But did he really leave the Lord's company? After all, the Lord forcibly brought him back. Doesn't this prove the authors' point C?

Lord Caitanya's own opinion, spoken in Madhya 10.64, is this: "He left My company to associate with the Bhaṭṭathāris, but I rescued him from their company and brought him here."

Due to being allured by the Bhaṭṭathāris and their women, declared Lord Caitanya, Kālā Kṛṣṇadāsa left His company. The reason for his behavior does not require much analysis. *Kṛṣṇa-bahirmukha haiyā bhoga-vāñchā kare nikaṭa-stha māyā tāre jāpaṭiyā dhare*: "Material life means that one forgets Kṛṣṇa and that one increases in one's desires for sense gratification." (Bhāg. 10.10.17, purport) On page 49 of *Leaves*, the authors give examples of devotees whose apparent falldown was really a promotion-King Citraketu, Bharata Mahārāja and King Indradyumna. But the case of Kālā Kṛṣṇadāsa, who was actually deviated by māyā, cannot be compared to these. None of these three turned away from Kṛṣṇa consciousness to take up company with profligates. When His personal servant made his choice between māyā and Kṛṣṇa (contrary to point H), the Lord, though all-powerful, did not forcibly check Kālā Kṛṣṇadāsa's departure. The independent Lord let him exercise his free will (contrary to point G). Thereafter Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, by His causeless mercy, descended into the camp of the nomad Bhaṭṭathāris to rescue His lost servant, just as Kṛṣṇa descends into the material world to deliver the souls who fell down after misusing their free will.

But granting he fell from the association of the Lord, is it logical to compare the fall of Kālā Kṛṣṇadāsa to a fall from Vaikuṅṭha? Kālā Kṛṣṇadāsa was in the material world at the time he was deviated.

As summarized in point A, the authors believe that since even devotees who serve the Lord in the material world do not fall down, there can be no scope for devotees falling down from the Lord's personal abode, Vaikuṅṭha. They themselves compare the pastimes of the Lord and His devotees in the material world to the nitya-līlā of Vaikuṅṭha. But Śrīla Prabhupāda writes in his books that Kālā Kṛṣṇadāsa fell down. Lord Caitanya Himself confirms it: "He left My company." Who can argue against this verdict? Since it cannot be denied that Kālā Kṛṣṇadāsa was Lord Caitanya's servant, and he did fall down, the authors' argument is flawed by a logical non sequitur: "It does not follow" that no one falls from Vaikuṅṭha. As declared in the

purport to Madhya 10.65, "Once fallen and separated from the Supreme Personality of Godhead's association, one becomes a candidate for suffering in the material world." This statement can logically be applied equally well to both cases, personal service to the Lord in the material world, and personal service to the Lord in Vaikuṅṭha. Śrīla Prabhupāda himself used this logic in the following remark from September 19, 1973.

"*Kṣurasya dhārā, kṣurasya dhārā.* Kṣura means sharpened razor. If you are careful, you cleanse very nicely. If you are not careful, immediately blood. Immediately. So the spiritual life is like that. As soon as you become little inattentive, immediately māyā captures, 'Yes, come on.' Then everything failure. We have got the tendency to enjoy sense. So senses are strong. As soon as there is opportunity, the senses will take advantage immediately. Then your whole business finished, Choṭa Haridāsa, and rejected by Mahāprabhu, 'Get out.' Even associate of Caitanya Mahāprabhu failed, personal associate. So there is chance of falling down even from the personal association of God. Jaya-Vijaya, they had to become demons."

Here Śrīla Prabhupāda directly compares a falldown from caitanya-līlā to the falldown of Jaya and Vijaya from Vaikuṅṭha. In this case, Choṭa Haridāsa is mentioned. Lord Caitanya told him, "Get out." Similarly, Jaya and Vijaya were told by the Lord to depart the spiritual world and to enter the wombs of demons, in deference to the curse of the four Kumāras.

Everywhere in his books, Prabhupāda focuses on personal devotional association with the Supreme Lord as the transcendental situation, whether it is association "here" in the material world or "there" in Vaikuṅṭha. Since there is no difference for Kṛṣṇa between here and there, there is likewise no difference for a personal associate of Kṛṣṇa. Kālā Kṛṣṇadāsa's activities as the personal servant of Lord Caitanya took place within the Lord's sva-dhāma (personal abode), or in other words, under the viṣṇu-śakti (Vaikuṅṭha) potency. There can be no doubt about this, because it is confirmed in Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (4.9.7, purport) as follows:

"It is stated in this verse that the material energy acts in varieties of material bodies, just as fire burns differently in different wood according to the size and quality of the wood. In the case of devotees the same energy is transformed into spiritual energy; this is possible because the energy is originally spiritual, not material. As it is said, *viṣṇu-śaktiḥ parā proktā*. The original energy inspires a devotee, and thus he engages all his bodily limbs in the service of the Lord. The same energy, as external potency, engages the ordinary nondevotees in material activities for sense enjoyment. We should mark the difference between māyā and sva-dhāma—for devotees the sva-dhāma acts, whereas in the case of nondevotees the māyā energy acts."

There is simply no way around it. By leaving Lord Caitanya's service and association, Kālā Kṛṣṇadāsa left the Lord's sva-dhāma, His viṣṇu-śakti potency: Vaikuṅṭha. This conclusion is inescapable, for there is sufficient śāstric evidence to support it.

"Ācārya kahe,—tumi yāhāñ, sei vṛndāvana: Advaita Ācārya told Lord Caitanya, "Wherever You are, that is Vṛndāvana." (Cc. Madhya 3.33)

If one is fond of argument, then the evidence of Kālā Kṛṣṇadāsa's deviation may not seem "impressive". But this is most dangerous. Our standard for accepting a thing cannot merely be argument, because tarko 'pratiṣṭha, mere arguments cannot be conclusive. True, this very essay argues for a conclusion, but that conclusion is not formed from my argument. The conclusion is indeniably pramāṇa, because it is found in the śāstra, Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta: (1) there is scriptural evidence that a devotee engaged in direct personal service to the Supreme Lord was allured by māyā away from the Lord; and (2) this evidence is confirmed by Śrīla Prabhupāda in his purport. If we undermine with tarka the axiomatic standard of evidence-guru, śāstra and sādhu-then our arguments will reach no conclusive end. The ultimate conclusion is that we must accept Śrīla Prabhupāda's conclusion, and not put forward arguments that commit the logical fallacy of *petitio principii* (begging the question).

Petitio principii is defined as "the informal fallacy of already assuming in an argument what is to be proved as a conclusion." It is also known as the fallacy of circularity. For example:

(Major term) Śrīla Prabhupāda had to compromise siddhānta in his letters and conversations (although his books contain the siddhānta).

(Minor term) The siddhānta is that fallen souls were never with Kṛṣṇa.

(Syllogism) Therefore Śrīla Prabhupāda compromised by saying the fallen souls were once with Kṛṣṇa.

This argument is the basic theme of *In Vaikuṅṭha Not Even the Leaves Fall*. If the authors actually accept Śrīla Prabhupāda's books as siddhānta, as they repeatedly claim they do, then there is no pramāṇa for their major term, because this claim is not confirmed in Prabhupāda's books. The authors float as a very indirect confirmation for their major term a quote from a conversation (Leaves, p. 126, 137), but according to the major term, that quote is not siddhānta. Neither is their minor term established from Śrīla Prabhupāda's books. Therefore their syllogism is unproved. Their argument is circular.

Notes:

Relevant quotations from the book *In Vaikuṅṭha Not Even the Leaves Fall*.

1. If the mahātmās are under the shelter and protection of His daivī-prakṛti..., how can the liberated devotees be taken out of the internal energy's protection? (p. 29)

2. In all these quotes from Śrīla Prabhupāda the point to note is that in none of these places does he make a distinction between the nitya-siddhas (eternally perfect jīvas) and sādhana-siddhas (the jīvas who have attained perfection by sādhana). (p. 33)

3. These verses explain our philosophy in a nutshell. The main point to be noted is the beginningless nature of karma, and that the souls are in a state of sleep, or ignorance. In the words of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta they are indolent. Śrīla Prabhupāda used the Sanskrit term suṣupti, which is comparable to a state of deep sleep or, in other words, ignorance. (p. 40)

4. Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī then gives a long analysis to prove that the Lord's associates are all eternal associates... These verses refer to those associates of the Lord who descend to this world to participate in the Lord's pastimes. In case one has a doubt that such devotees may become implicated by their karma performed while appearing in the material world, the verse explicitly denies that possibility. The word Vaiṣṇava is specifically used to show that the Lord's eternal associates never become bound by karma. Naturally it is applicable to any pure Vaiṣṇava. (p. 47)

5. Commenting on this verse, Śrīdhara Svāmī writes, *tvadīyāstu na kadācid api paṭanti ity āhuḥ*, "But Your devotees never fall. In order to point this out, the demigods speak this verse to Lord Kṛṣṇa." Here he unequivocally makes a statement for all devotees, including the nitya-muktas. (p. 49)

6. "Infallible abode" does not mean that the abode never falls but that its residents never fall. Just as if one says that America is an unconquerable nation, one means that the people cannot be conquered. Indeed in Bhagavat-sandarbhā (Text 75-78), Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī shows that the Lord's associates are within His own svarūpa. (p. 50)

7. Verse 11 says that "eternally liberated jīvas are always awake to Kṛṣṇa consciousness." And verse 12 clearly says that conditioned souls are those who "always turn away from the service of the Lord." Always turn away means they were never engaged in the service of the Lord. (p. 57)

8. Therefore, this verse does not refer to devotees falling from Vaikuṅṭha or even while executing devotional service in the material world, but to liberated

impersonalists, jīvan-muktas, falling into materialistic activities owing to offenses. (p. 178)

9. But devotees never fall even if they have not attained parā-mukti [ultimate liberation]. (pp. 178-179)

10. So it is not true that the jīvas knew Kṛṣṇa personally and forgot Him. (p. 184)

11. About forgetfulness, Prabhupāda writes in many places that it pertains to one's spiritual identity and not to one's relationship in the eternal divya-līlā of the Lord. (p. 190)

12. When Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura says that souls make a choice either to come to māyā or go to Vaikuṅṭha, at that time they are not devotees; otherwise they would never be allured by māyā's glare. (p. 218)

13. The significance is that once one attains bhakti, it becomes part of the devotee's essential nature. Then it can neither be destroyed or reduced. The material energy can only cover the marginal energy but not bhakti, which is the internal potency and which is infallible like the Lord Himself. There are no scriptural statements which say that bhakti of a pure devotee becomes covered by the material energy. Even in cases such as King Citraketu being cursed, his bhakti was not covered as is clear from his prayers as Vṛtrāsura. (pp. 218-219)

14. If one does not fall while executing devotional service in this material world, which is full of unfavorable circumstances, how could one fall in Vaikuṅṭha where everything is conducive to devotional service and there are absolutely no obstacles? (p. 228)

15. Just as it is impossible for any kind of flammable object to contact the sun without bursting into flames long before it gets close, similarly it is inconceivable that any contamination can enter the potent association of nitya-siddha devotees or even the spiritual sky itself without becoming purified. (p. 270)

16. Fall-vādīs cannot comprehend this simple fact: once you surrender your free will in favor of service, you cannot misuse it anymore. But this does not mean he loses his free will. It means he uses it properly for the service of the Lord. But he is not forced to do so, rather he never desires to give up the association of the Lord, as much as no sane man desires to jump from a plane in midflight after boarding it willingly. (p. 274)

17. Similarly, surrender means choosing to use one's free will in the service of the Lord. One who attains perfection in this aspect becomes a nitya-siddha devotee and once that is done he cannot choose to misuse it, because of his intense love for the Lord. (p. 274)

18. If He could not protect us when we were with Him, rendering service in love, why should we believe Him now? Maybe He is just tricking us to serve Him but really He is not as big a hero as He boasts. So, why should we put our faith in Him? (p. 287)

19. Actually we should know that the topmost pastime of Lord Kṛṣṇa, the mood of separation from the gopīs, is displayed in the material world. And as Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu, He invites us all to participate in this most wonderful līlā. (p. 290)