

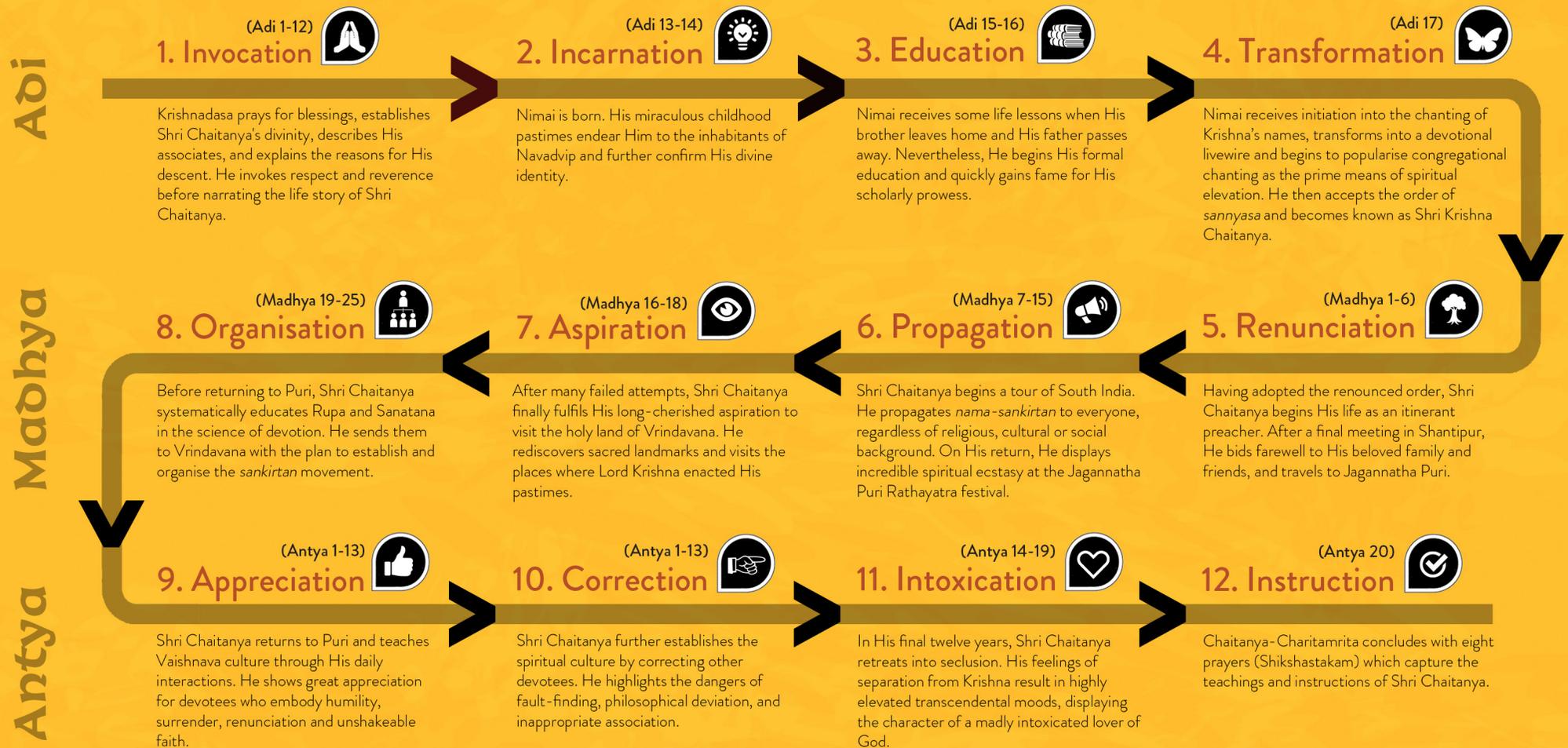
CAITANYA CARITĀMṚTA

COMPACT

A summary study of
Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's
life story

The Flow of Nectar

The extraordinary pastimes of Shri Chaitanya flow like nectar. This road map takes you on the life journey of Shri Chaitanya as described in Chaitanya-Charitamrita, passing through twelve major junctures.



Chaitanya-Charitamrita Compact

A summary study of
Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's life story

By Sutapa das

Based on Shri Chaitanya-Charitamrita translated by
His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada
Founder Acharya: International Society for Krishna Consciousness

O devotees, relish daily the nectar of Shri Chaitanya-Charitamrita and the pastimes of Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, for by doing so one can merge in transcendental bliss and attain full knowledge of devotional service.

(Antya-Lila 5.89)

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Text: Sutapa Das

Design & Graphics: Prasannatma Das

Layout: Yogendra Sahu

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www.krishna.com.

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Dedicated to:

Shrila Krishnadasa Kaviraja Goswami,

who, being requested by the Vaishnava community, was divinely empowered to compose this spotless biography.

A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada,

who carried the message of Shri Chaitanya to the Western world, established the ISKCON movement, and kindly translated this priceless literature into English.

Kadamba Kanana Swami,

who nurtured my interest in Chaitanya-Charitamrita, and provides ongoing inspiration and guidance in my spiritual journey.

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Introduction

The God who Dances

Nowadays you have to use the word ‘God’ with great caution – it can conjure up all kinds of images. Some think of God as a strict and unforgiving judge; the old man who sits on a grand throne and hurls down thunderbolts every time someone deviates. Others consider Him a crutch for the weak; an imaginary being who brings peace, hope and comfort, but has little to do with objective reality. Some think of God as a mythological tool of the power-hungry elite, used to keep the masses in line and maintain the status quo. For many, God is simply the cosmic order-supplier; a convenient port of call in times of need and want.

The Vedic canon paints a slightly different picture. The extraordinary revelation is not only that God exists, but that He is bursting with colour, character and bliss. God is “*raso vai sah*”¹ – the very embodiment of affectionate relationships, loving relish, and transcendental sweetness.

“I would only believe in a God that knows how to dance.”

Fredrick Nietzsche (German philosopher)

Lord Shri Krishna, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, eternally resides in the spiritual world. That realm is known as Vaikuntha: the place of no anxiety, the place where every step is a dance, every word a song, and where all relationships are infused with selfless love. In that abode the spontaneous and natural relationships with Krishna transcend ritual, formality and reverence; fully satisfying the heart’s yearning. Maybe Nietzsche was searching for Krishna – the enchanting flute player who dances with the cowherd maidens in the moonlight. Maybe we all are.

Throughout cosmic history, Krishna periodically descends to Earth and reveals knowledge of the eternal reality. He re-establishes genuine spirituality and teaches the practical means to develop God consciousness. In 1486, Krishna appeared as Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. While a renaissance of philosophical and theological thought was going on in the

world, Shri Chaitanya ushered in a spiritual revolution through the process of *nama-sankirtan*, or congregational chanting of the holy names of Krishna:

*Hare Krishna Hare Krishna Krishna Krishna Hare Hare
Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Rama Hare Hare*

Through His personal interactions, philosophical discourses and most importantly His joyous public chanting and dancing, He established a process of God consciousness that was open to everyone regardless of caste, colour or creed. He went beyond ritualistic worship, dry philosophising, and materialistic piety, instead emphasising the very essence of religion – unmotivated and unconditional love of God.

Postgraduate Spirituality

The various religions of the world all stem from one divine source and aim to progress the practitioner to this perfect stage of pure love. Though they vary in culture, ritual and expression, their core spiritual principles are universal. Since the same message was imparted in different historical periods, the externals were adapted while the essence was preserved. You could call it “old wine in new bottles”.

At the same time, religions are not completely identical. Each tradition emphasises different aspects of the Absolute Truth and approaches God with varying degrees of intimacy and closeness. This is where the Vedic scriptures offer something unique. They are replete with fascinating narratives which describe the sacred intricacies of God’s existence: His personality, associates, relationships and daily activities. The sheer volume of detailed information is unfathomable.

Within the Vedic canon, Shrila Prabhupada stressed the study of three particular scriptures:

- Bhagavad-Gita is considered a foundational study in spiritual conclusions. It is **the word of God**, and firmly establishes essential philosophical truths.



Lord Krishna (above) appeared as Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu (below) to teach the most effective and joyous process for spiritual perfection.

- Shrimad-Bhagavatam is considered a graduate study; **the narrations of God** that describe the enchanting character of Krishna and His saintly devotees.
- Chaitanya-Charitamrita is considered the postgraduate study in spirituality. It reveals **the mind of God** – the inner life of Krishna, and the appreciation and attraction He feels when He is conquered by the love of His devotees.² Krishnadasa’s biography is indeed an anthology of pure devotion, lucidly describing the selfless disposition of great Vaishnavas.

Chaitanya-Charitamrita also reveals the deep compassion and munificence of God when He appears as Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. In our age of spiritual apathy and material allure, His propagation of *nama-sankirtan* offers living entities a lifeline to experience the profound happiness that comes from a relationship with God. Studying this most accurate, authentic, and philosophical biography of Shri Chaitanya will surely inspire one to take full advantage of this priceless gift.

A Humble Offering

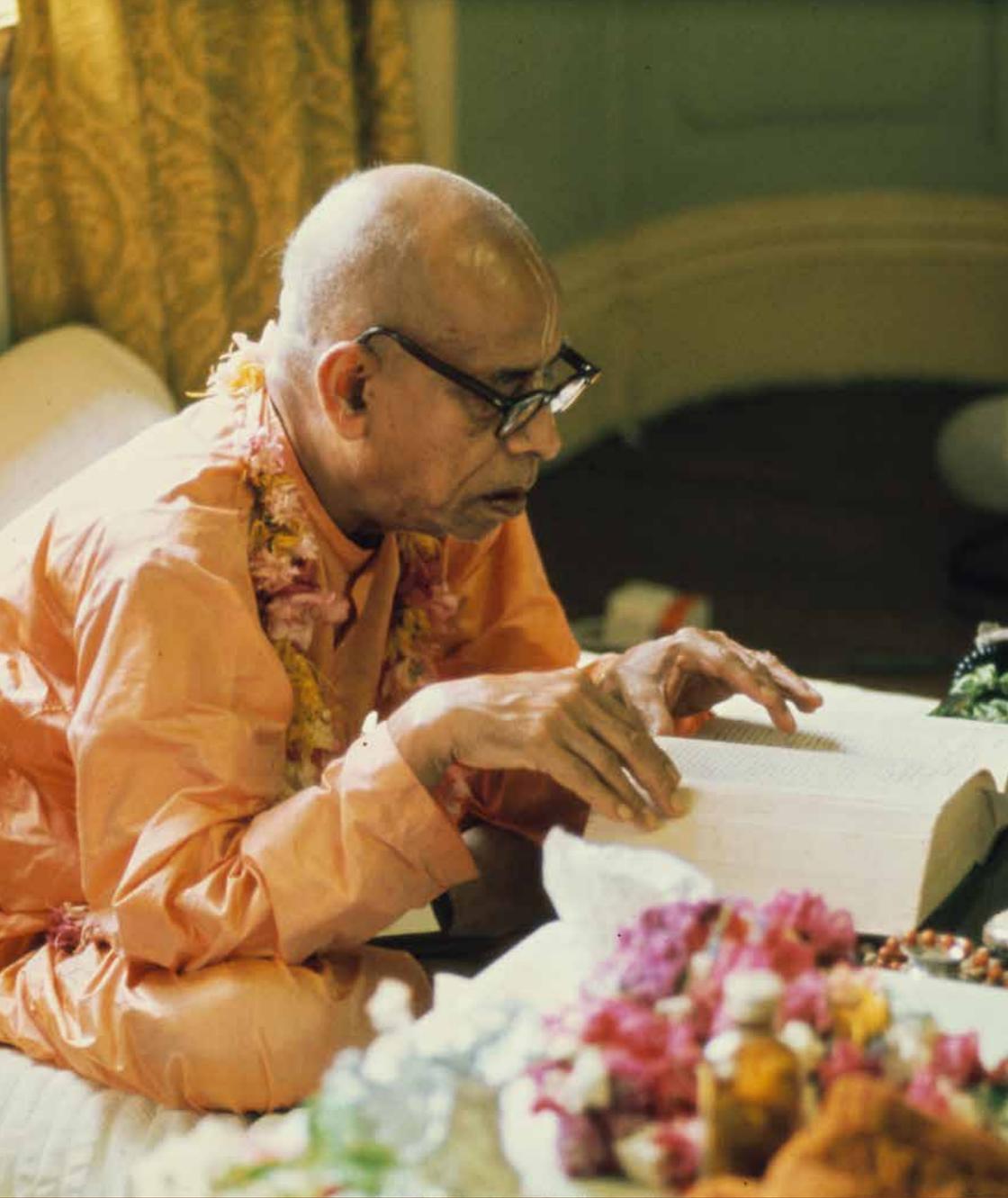
In 1965, when Shrila Prabhupada suffered sea sickness and multiple heart attacks on his voyage to America, his reading of Chaitanya-Charitamrita brought him great solace. He said it was the “nectarine of life” and his “source of vitality”. Shrila Prabhupada also recollects how Chaitanya-Charitamrita was his spiritual master’s favourite book. Shrila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur had predicted that a time would come when people would learn the Bengali language simply to relish this classic composition by Krishnadasa Kaviraja Goswami. At present, however, Chaitanya-Charitamrita remains a relatively unexplored literature. Since the studies of Bhagavad-Gita and Shrimad-Bhagavatam are vast in and of themselves, many neglect the opportunity to bathe in the delightful narrations of Shri Chaitanya’s life.

This small contribution does not fully describe each episode of the Chaitanya-Charitamrita, since Shrila Prabhupada’s translation does that perfectly. The key objectives are as follows:

- To present an easy-to-follow overview of Shri Chaitanya's life.
- To provide a road-map and framework for anyone who desires to explore the Chaitanya-Charitamrita in greater detail.

Above all, this book has been compiled in a spirit of self-improvement, with the ardent desire to increase my meditation on Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. I am far from qualified to write about this elevated subject matter, but my attempt is simply to encourage the reader to approach the original source of knowledge: Krishnadasa's devotion-filled words translated by Shrila Prabhupada. Please forgive any mistakes I may make, which are likely due to my limited knowledge and lack of spiritual depth.

Sutapa das



His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada
Founder Acharya: International Society for Krishna Consciousness

Chaitanya-Charitamrita

The Postgraduate Study of Vaishnavism

Bhagavad-Gita



Foundational Study

Shrimad-Bhagavatam



Graduate Study

Chaitanya-Charitamrita



Postgraduate Study

Words of Krishna

Content:

Philosophy of Krishna
Consciousness

Begins:

“You are not the
body, you are an
eternal spirit soul”
(BG 2.13)



Ends:

“Abandon all
varieties of religion,
and surrender
unto Me”
(BG 18.66)

Activities of Krishna

Content:

Character and Pastimes
of Krishna and His devotees

Begins:

“Reject all cheating
religion, and get to the
essence (bhakti)”
(SB 1.1.2)



Ends:

“Chanting the holy
names is the means to
destroy all sinful reaction”
(SB 12.13.23)

Mind of Krishna

Content:

Process and Practice
of Devotional Service

Begins:

“I will come to teach
the process of chanting
by practicing Myself”
(CC Adi 3.20)



Ends:

“Shri Chaitanya forgot
Himself throughout the
entire day and night,
being merged in an
ocean of ecstatic love
for Krishna.”
(CC Antya 15.4)



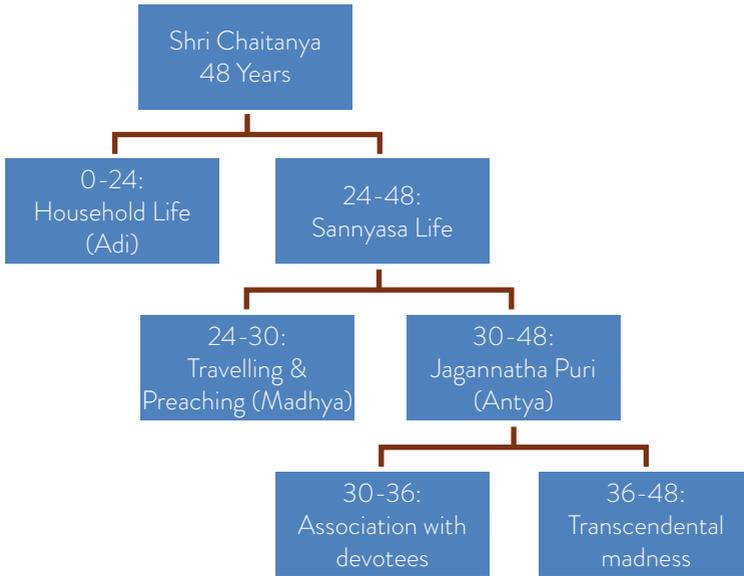
“Be sure and read my books very carefully, Bhagavad-gita, then Shrimad-Bhagavatam, and then Chaitanya-Charitamrita. You should read every day without fail and become fixed in our philosophy.”

(Srila Prabhupada Letter, 25th July 1975)

Overview

Breakdown of Shri Chaitanya's Life

Shri Chaitanya enacted His earthly pastimes for 48 years (1486-1534). His youth was dedicated to scholastic excellence, His middle age to mass preaching, and His final years to deep communion with Krishna. It was a remarkable life.



In Chaitanya-Bhagavata (the first major biography of Shri Chaitanya), Vrindavana das Thakur's primary focus was to describe the Lord's first 24 years in Navadvip, West Bengal. Krishnadasa Kaviraja Goswami summarises these accounts in the Adi-Lila of Chaitanya-Charitamrita. His focus, however, was to narrate the later pastimes of Shri Chaitanya, which form the entire Madhya-Lila and Antya-Lila of his work.

Chaitanya-Charitamrita contains approximately 11,000 verses spread over 62 chapters. The chief historical sources used by Krishnadasa are as follows:

- Birth to 24 years – Murari Gupta, a physician and close associate of Shri Chaitanya, scribed extensive notes on the Navadvip years, culminating in the Lord’s acceptance of the renounced order (*sannyasa*).
- 24-48 years – The second half of Shri Chaitanya’s life was recorded in the diary of Svarupa Damodara Goswami, who acted as His personal secretary in Jagannatha Puri.

Layout of Book

The format for this summary study is as follows:

- Bracketed red text indicates the chapter and verse numbers from Chaitanya-Charitamrita (the narration follows Shrila Prabhupada’s translation).
- Normal red text indicates lessons and reflections on the narration.
- There are also specific references which are end-noted in the appendix.

Note: This small book is not a commentary on the Chaitanya-Charitamrita. The primary objective is simply to provide a succinct overview of the text. For authentic and in-depth commentaries one can refer to the *Anubhasya* commentary by Shrila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur or the *Amrita-pravaha-bhasya* commentary by Shrila Bhaktivinoda Thakur.

1. Invocation

2. Incarnation

3. Education

4. Transformation

5. Renunciation

6. Propagation

7. Aspiration

8. Organisation

9. Appreciation

10. Correction

11. Intoxication

12. Instruction



Adi-Lila I Chapters 1-12

Krishnadasa prays for blessings, establishes Shri Chaitanya's divinity, describes His associates, and explains the reasons for His descent. He invokes respect and reverence before narrating the life story of Shri Chaitanya.

Auspicious Prayers

[Adi 1]

[1.1-1.29]

The first fourteen verses of Chapter One form the *mangalacarana* (auspicious invocation prayers) for the entire work. These verses are expanded upon in the first seven chapters of the Adi-Lila, covering key philosophical topics:

- Evidence indicating the divinity of Shri Chaitanya
- Reasons for Shri Chaitanya's descent
- Shri Chaitanya's primary associates (the Pancha Tattva)

(See Appendix: Mangalacharana Breakdown)

Having this philosophical background helps one approach the pastimes of the Chaitanya-Charitamrita from a spiritually-mature perspective. Before one can understand and appreciate the character, activities and relationships of the Supreme Person (*rasa*), one must develop a respect and reverence for His ontological position and identity (*tattva*). Those who neglect this philosophical aspect may misunderstand the activities of Shri Chaitanya to be mundane or mythological. Krishnadasa therefore states that one should not be lazy or indifferent in such scriptural analysis, for this actually fortifies one's devotion.³

[1.30-1.110]

Krishnadasa Kaviraja Goswami describes the different ways in which God manifests His spiritual influence. Vaishnava theology encourages one to approach God through six divine mediums: spiritual masters (*gurun*), devotees (*isa bhaktan*), incarnations (*isavatarakan*), expansions (*tat prakasams*), energies (*tat chaktih*) and finally through the Supreme Lord Himself (*krsna chaitanya*). Each manifestation, which offers one the opportunity to perceive and contact the Supreme Person, is fully explored in the pages of Chaitanya-Charitamrita.⁴

Humbled by the greatness of Shri Krishna, Krishnadasa fervently prays for the divine empowerment to suitably glorify Him in this writing endeavour.

A Safe God

[Adi 2]

Historical and academic accounts of Shri Chaitanya paint the picture of a God-conscious saint who appeared in India during the sixteenth century. The Encyclopaedia Britannica, for example, documents Shri Chaitanya as a charismatic Hindu preacher who popularised the practice of congregational chanting. There is, however, no mention of His supreme identity. Even many within the Vedic tradition are often unaware that Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu is actually Lord Krishna Himself.

Vaishnava theologians explain the reason for this lack of widespread acknowledgement. Since Shri Chaitanya inaugurated Himself as a *channa-avatar* (secret incarnation) who specifically appeared in the guise of a devotee, His divine status is more difficult to ascertain. He never brought attention to Himself, but rather promoted the process of *nama-sankirtan*. Even when He was glorified as the Supreme Person, Shri Chaitanya would vehemently deny such claims, not wanting anything to compromise His purpose in coming as a devotee of Krishna. Nevertheless, when one carefully explores devotional Vedic literature, the full spiritual significance of Shri Chaitanya and the *bhakti* movement that He inaugurated comes to light. Millions worshiped Him as the Supreme Lord in His lifetime, and among them were astute individuals of the highest learning and intelligence. On some rare occasions, Shri Chaitanya actually revealed His divine form and identity to these great devotees.

[2.1-2.121]

Through logical, systematic and scientific argument, Vedic scriptures emphatically establish the rationale for a spiritual source behind the physical world we see. Some understand God as energy (*brahman*), while others recognise Him as the divine presence within every living being (*paramatma*). The source of these manifestations, however, is the Supreme Person who has a human-like form (*bhagavan*). Krishnadasa meticulously establishes this fact, describing how *bhagavan* is the cherished object of love for all living beings.

This Supreme Personality of Godhead is known as Shri Krishna, the source of even Vishnu and Narayana. The goal of life, and the very essence of

our existence, is to love and be loved. When that innate desire is reposed in Krishna, everything makes perfect sense, we reconnect with our true purpose, and life becomes full of joy and happiness. This understanding of Krishna's supremacy is not simply a sectarian perspective, but is founded upon vast scriptural evidence across the board. He is the original candle from which all other candles are lit, and in *kali-yuga* He personally appears as Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu.

How can we confirm Shri Chaitanya's divinity? In recent years, it has become common practice to sentimentally and whimsically accept anyone as an incarnation of God. Separating the *avatars* from the avaricious is often difficult. Thankfully, the Vedic scriptures set up clear parameters which help us identify a SAFE incarnation.⁵

S – Scripture – Every incarnation of God is predicted in scripture. This is the most important and easily identifiable reference point. Krishnadasa quotes from numerous scriptures to establish Shri Chaitanya's divinity, and Shrila Prabhupada adds to the evidence by citing further references in his purports.⁶

A – Astrology & Attributes – Specific planetary movements also indicate the appearance of divine personalities. Respected astrologers noted the unique constellations during the advent of Shri Chaitanya and thus detected His divinity.⁷ Whenever the Lord appears, He also displays certain bodily attributes which further confirm His identity.⁸

F – Follow Authorities – Scriptural statements and astrological predictions are confirmed by the *acaryas* (great spiritual preceptors). By dint of their philosophical depth and spiritual purity, they are able to identify the various incarnations of the Supreme Lord.⁹

E – Extraordinary activities – Incarnations of the Lord perform extraordinary activities while on this planet. One of the most wondrous acts is the upliftment and spiritual reform that they instigate. They transform the lives of those who they meet, leave behind invaluable instructions, and establish a religious process for generations to come.



The six-armed form (*sadbujā*) manifested by Shri Chaitanya indicates that Shri Krishna (with flute), Shri Rama (with bow and arrow), and Shri Chaitanya (with staff and water pot) are the same Supreme Person.

The Golden Opportunity

[Adi 3 & 4]

[3.1-3.12]

The word *avatar* literally means “to come down”. Shri Chaitanya only descends to the material world once in a “day of Brahma”, a period of universal time which corresponds to 4.32 billion Earth years. His rare appearance is centred on a specific purpose and mission, as well as a very special gift for the lost souls of the age.

[3.13-3.114]

External reasons – Seeing the degradation of society, the great devotee Advaita Acharya worshipped Shri Krishna, praying for a solution. His simple but devotional offerings of *tulasi* buds in Ganges water attracted the Lord’s attention. In reciprocation, Krishna descended as Shri Chaitanya to uplift the world through the process of *nama-sankirtan*, congregational chanting of God’s holy names. He emphatically established that no other process of spiritual elevation could be as effective in this dark age of *kali-yuga*. Assuming the role of a devotee and teaching by example, Shri Chaitanya liberally offered everyone the opportunity to develop pure unalloyed love for Shri Krishna. Thus, His external purpose was to teach the *yuga-dharma* (religious process for the age): “*He wove a wreath of the holy name and pure love, with which He garlanded the entire material world.*”¹⁰

[4.1-4.277]

Internal Reasons – Krishna is known as *rasaraja*, the king of all relationships. As Lord Ramachandra, He experienced the brotherly love of Lakshman and marital joy with Sita. As Lord Krishna, He savoured intimate friendship with the cowherd boys, and unwedded paramour love with the cowherd girls. Although Krishna relished these relationships, a curiosity still remained. Krishna had not yet experienced the spiritual emotion that His devotees feel in their relationship with Him. It is said that Shrimati Radharani, the most celebrated devotee, feels pleasure which is ten million times greater than the Lord’s! Thus, Shri Chaitanya descended to:¹¹

- delight in the position of Shrimati Radharani
- understand the sweetness of Krishna’s qualities
- experience the happiness of a pure devotee

Shri Chaitanya ingeniously fulfilled both purposes simultaneously. Internally, He savoured the confidential interactions of Radha and Krishna in Vrindavana, where the purest standard of love is found. Simultaneously, He widely propagated the process of *nama-sankirtan* which can elevate anyone to that holy abode. To enter Goloka Vrindavana, one's devotion must be natural and spontaneous; free from all conceptions of awe and reverence. Such purity of devotion is achieved through the sincere chanting of Krishna's names. Thus, Shri Chaitanya offered everyone the opportunity to develop divine love in the mood of *dasya* (servitude), *sakhya* (friendship), *vatsalya* (parental) and *madhurya* (conjugal), and eventually associate with Krishna in the spiritual world, Goloka Vrindavana.

Five Stars

[Adi 5-7]

Having described Shri Chaitanya in the first four chapters, the next three focus on His four prominent associates. Together, they are known as the Pancha Tattva:¹²

- Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu – *Bhakta rupa* (original form of a devotee)
- Shri Nityananda Prabhu – *Bhakta svarupakam* (expansion of a devotee)
- Advaita Acharya – *Bhaktavataram* (incarnation of a devotee)
- Shrivasa Thakur – *Bhaktakhyam* (pure devotee)
- Shri Gadadhara Pandita – *Bhakta saktikam* (devotional energy)

[5.1-5.235]

Lord Nityananda – *Bhakta svarupakam* (expansion of a devotee) – When Krishna appeared as Shri Chaitanya, His brother (Balaram) descended as Shri Nityananda Prabhu. Balaram is the first expansion of Krishna; all subsequent divine expansions come from Him, and Their main function is to create and maintain the material universes. Just as Balaram lovingly serves Krishna in Vrindavana, Nityananda's identity is also one of *sevak-bhagavan*: although He is non-different to Shri Chaitanya, He comes in the mood of service. Sometimes He serves Lord Chaitanya as a *guru* figure, sometimes as His friend and sometimes as His servant.¹³ To gain the favour of Shri Chaitanya one must serve Nityananda. To stress this point,

Krishnadasa narrates the story of Mineketana Ramadas, a great devotee of Nityananda who was mistreated and offended in Krishnadasa's home. After this unsavoury incident, Nityananda appeared to Krishnadasa and ordered him to leave home and take up residence in the holy village of Vrindavana.

[6.1-6.120]

Advaita Acharya – *Bhaktavataram* (incarnation of a devotee) – Advaita Acharya is an incarnation of both Maha Vishnu and Sadashiva. His identity is *visnu-tattva*; the self-same Supreme Personality of Godhead. Taking birth in the Navadvip area fifty-two years prior to Shri Chaitanya, Advaita was a well-established leader of the Vaishnava community. Heartbroken by the godlessness of the world he lived in, he fervently beseeched Shri Krishna to incarnate, performing simple but dedicated worship which attracted the Lord's attention. Shri Chaitanya deeply respected Advaita Acharya, since the Acharya was the godbrother of Ishvara Puri (Shri Chaitanya's spiritual master). Advaita, however, naturally subordinated himself before Shri Chaitanya, being fully aware of His divine identity.

[7.15-7.19]

Gadadhara Pandita – *Bhakta saktikam* (devotional energy) – Gadadhara Pandita is the manifestation of Shrimati Radharani in Shri Chaitanya's pastimes. When Krishna assumes the position of Radharani, She comes to watch how He does it! Thus, Gadadhara Pandita is identified as *sakti-tattva*, the internal pleasure potency of the Lord. The strikingly beautiful Gadadhara was a close childhood companion of Shri Chaitanya, and lived very close to the house of Jagannatha Mishra.

[7.15-7.19]

Shrivats Thakur – *Bhaktakhyam* (pure devotee) – Shrivats is the only member of the Pancha Tattva who is *jiva-tattva* (a living entity). He assisted Shri Chaitanya in organising the daily *sankirtan* in Navadvip, and was well-known for his exceptional singing. Shrivats Thakur is an incarnation of Narada Muni, the pure and saintly preacher who constantly traverses the universe to reawaken spirituality in people's lives.

[7.1-7.38 / 7.163-7.171]

When these five personalities joined forces in Navadvip, their influence was incredible. The Pancha Tattva instigated an unprecedented spiritual



Shri Chaitanya and His prominent associates together form the 'Pancha Tattva'.

revolution by breaking open the treasure house of divine love. They experienced and relished that love themselves, and liberally distributed it without discrimination. With hands uplifted and eyes upturned, they chanted, danced, laughed and exhibited unbounded spiritual happiness. They were able to touch the hearts of even unwilling and averse people as if by divine spell, causing miraculous transformation in everyone they met. This transcendental epidemic of divine love became highly contagious and effortlessly spread in all directions through the empowered representatives of Shri Chaitanya.

[7.39-7.162]

Many were sceptical. The impersonalist renunciants of Varanasi, headed by Prakashananda Saraswati, were probably the most stubborn of all. For them, the path of spirituality was one of discipline, austerity, strictness and study. They openly criticised Shri Chaitanya and His followers as fanatical, emotional and sentimental. Though Shri Chaitanya was indifferent to their comments, He responded to the plea of His devotees and went to meet the camp of impersonalist *sannyasis*.

Upon seeing Him, the staunch renunciants were awestruck by his effulgent appearance and saintly disposition. Shri Chaitanya humbly narrated how He received the Hare Krishna *mantra* from His guru and had subsequently become spiritually intoxicated. Shri Chaitanya refuted the misleading interpretations of Shankaracharya and his followers, and instead established the real conclusion of Vedanta philosophy: *to have a loving relationship with the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Shri Krishna*.

Prakashananda Saraswati and his followers were amazed at the explanations and their hearts were conquered. They wholeheartedly joined the *sankirtan* movement – a huge breakthrough and momentous preaching achievement for Shri Chaitanya. As a result, His fame grew, and thousands of people became His followers.

Once, when asked to elucidate the goal of life, Shрила Prabhupada emphatically replied: “To enjoy.” The reporter was taken aback until Prabhupada further clarified: “But you have to know how!” The Pancha Tattva exhibited this blissful life of spiritual immersion on the streets of Navadvip. While strictness, regulation and austerity are surely necessary,

the emphasis of *bhakti-yoga* is on achieving the “higher taste”. Spiritual life is natural and joyful.

The singing, dancing and blissful emotion does not render a *bhakti-yogi* incapable of serious philosophical thinking. On the contrary, it is the devotee’s deep understanding and apprehension of reality that spontaneously moves his heart and mind towards Krishna. Song and dance, two of the most powerful forms of emotional expression, are an integral part of that spiritual experience. We use these mediums to express our deepest feelings in the relationships of this world, so why not in the ultimate relationship with God? Although *bhakti-yoga* may externally appear simple and sentimental, when practiced with sincerity and purity it actually combines and synthesises all other disciplines, bringing one to the summit of spiritual perfection.

The first seven chapters of Chaitanya-Charitamrita summarise the identity of Shri Chaitanya and His principal associates. Krishnadasa now offers some general background information to complete the invocation to his biographical work.

Writing Chaitanya-Charitamrita

[Adi 5 & 8]

[5.158-5.235]

In Chapter Five, Krishnadasa relates the events which triggered his relocation to Vrindavana. When Krishnadasa invited Mineketana Ramadasa, a great devotee of Nityananda Prabhu, to his home, the household priest neglected to receive Mineketana appropriately. Detecting that this was due to the priest’s lack of reverence for Nityananda, Mineketana angrily left that place, and Krishnadasa was left lamenting the grievous offence. That very night, Nityananda appeared to Krishnadasa in a dream and ordered him to immediately leave for Vrindavana, assuring him that he would meet all success there. Krishnadasa unhesitatingly left home the very next day.

[8.33-8.85]

In Vrindavana, the local Vaishnavas would eagerly gather to hear the captivating pastimes of Shri Chaitanya being narrated by Haridas Pandita.

Vrindavana das Thakur, who was considered the primary authority on Shri Chaitanya's life, had compiled a comprehensive biography known as Chaitanya-Bhagavata (also known as Chaitanya-Mangala). Fearing that it would become too voluminous, however, he avoided describing many of Shri Chaitanya's later pastimes. Eager to hear those narrations in detail, the devotees in Vrindavana requested the saintly Krishnadasa to compose a second book detailing the Lord's later pastimes.

Feeling himself unqualified, but moved by the desire to please the Vaishnavas, Krishnadasa humbly approached the deity of Madana-Mohan for blessings and empowerment. As Krishnadasa prayed, the garland from Madana-Mohan slipped down and all the Vaishnavas cheered, recognising that Krishnadasa had been given the divine go-ahead. Accepting himself as a puppet in Krishna's hands, he commenced the mammoth task of compiling Chaitanya-Charitamrita. Although suffering from old age, ailing health and severe invalidity, Krishnadasa faithfully continued on to compose a poetic masterpiece, chronicling each pastime with extraordinary devotion and depth.

Previously, Jiva Goswami offered Krishnadasa the title "Kaviraja" (poet), after reading his literary gem, *Govinda Lilamrita*. He glorified Krishnadasa as the connoisseur among devotees, whose writings had the power to move stones to tears. Although a learned and austere practitioner of spotless character, Krishnadasa writes about himself, *"I am deaf, dumb, wholly illiterate, worldly-minded, and lower than a worm in stool."* His profound humility is the crest jewel of a Vaishnava.

Chaitanya-Charitamrita is considered his magnum opus, a literature which is universally recognised as the most authentic and authoritative biography of Shri Chaitanya. Why?

- Sources: Krishnadasa received detailed information for Chaitanya-Charitamrita from Raghunath das Goswami. Since Raghunath had spent sixteen years with Shri Chaitanya in Jagannatha Puri, and had close friendship with Svarupa Damodara, the Lord's personal secretary, he had gained a full comprehension of Shri Chaitanya's life. Rupa and Santana Goswamis convinced Raghunath to share this information, knowing that these extraordinary accounts would inspire



Krishnadasa received blessings from the Madana-Mohan deity to compile the biography on Shri Chaitanya.

many generations to come.¹⁴

- **Scriptures:** Generously quoting from a range of Sanskrit and Bengali texts, Krishnadasa provides an elaborate and comprehensive explanation of the Vaishnava theology that Shri Chaitanya came to teach.
- **Style:** Krishnadasa perfectly combines biographical narration and philosophical exposition to make for an entertaining and educational book. His writing makes the weighty philosophical precepts of Gaudiya Vaishnavism intelligible for readers from all walks of life.

The Desire Tree

[Adi 9-12]

We are all pleasure-seeking beings (*anandamaya-bhyasat*). Every desire, every plan and every action is performed with this in mind. Shri Chaitanya came to show that this universal quest for happiness must be founded upon our eternal spiritual nature. He distinguished fleeting material pleasures from true fulfilment of the soul, and established *bhakti-yoga* as the means to dive into that ocean of happiness. Over time, a desire tree of devotion (*bhakti-kalpataru*) took root to proliferate this understanding far and wide. This figurative tree consists of those devotees who were transformed and empowered by Shri Chaitanya's spiritual potency, and who subsequently became messengers of this divine love.

[9.1-9.25]

After travelling to Gaya and receiving initiation from Ishvara Puri, Shri Chaitanya became infused with divine love. Through His public chanting and personal interactions, He planted the seed of the *bhakti-kalpataru* in Navadvip, and it later spread to Jagannatha Puri and Vrindavana. Shri Chaitanya is described as the creator, maintainer and the life source of this transcendental tree that gives spiritual shelter and nourishment to the entire planet. The two main branches of the tree are Advaita Acharya and Nityananda Prabhu, and Chapters Ten, Eleven and Twelve comprehensively describe these exalted Vaishnavas and their lineages.

[9.26-9.55]

Shri Chaitanya urged everyone to become a part of the desire tree and share its fruits with the entire world: *"I am the only gardener. How many places can I go? How many fruits can I pick and distribute? Therefore I*

*order every man within this universe to accept this Krishna Consciousness movement and distribute it everywhere.*¹⁵

This compassionate desire to uplift the world is at the heart of genuine spirituality; we find ourselves by thinking of others. By accessing genuine spiritual wisdom, people can flourish on all levels: physically, emotionally, socially and, most importantly, spiritually. Thus, sharing Krishna Consciousness is considered the highest welfare work for humanity at large.

Shrila Prabhupada was especially empowered in this regard. In 1965, just a few days before his sixty-ninth birthday, Shrila Prabhupada set out for America with the mission to spread Krishna Consciousness all over the world. Begging passage from a local steamship company, he travelled as the only passenger on-board a small weathered cargo ship named the Jaladuta. In his possession was a suitcase, an umbrella, a supply of dry cereal, Indian rupees worth about seven dollars, and several boxes of books. When the Jaladuta arrived in New York Harbour 37 days later, Shrila Prabhupada disembarked as a lone renunciant in an urban jungle. He had come to America knowing no one, with absolutely no visible means of support, and with only a meagre handful of possessions. His task seemed impossible.

Yet his unshakeable faith in Krishna carried him through. Between the years 1965 and 1977, Shrila Prabhupada miraculously managed to spread the teachings of Krishna Consciousness to every major city in the world and officially formed ISKCON, the newest branch of the *bhakti-kalpataru*.¹⁶ He demonstrated the eternal relevance of spiritual wisdom in our modern times, and singlehandedly implanted an ancient tradition into the Western world. Today, the movement continues to grow, gradually fulfilling the remarkable prophecy of Shri Chaitanya: *“In every town and village of the world, the chanting of My name will be heard.”*¹⁷

[10.1-12.96]

Krishnadasa lists the followers of Shri Chaitanya who form different branches of this desire tree of devotion.

(See Appendix: Gaudiya Vaishnava Family Tree)

1. Invocation

2. Incarnation

3. Education

4. Transformation

5. Renunciation

6. Propagation

7. Aspiration

8. Organisation

9. Appreciation

10. Correction

11. Intoxication

12. Instruction



Adī-Līlā I Chapters 13-14

Nimai is born. His miraculous childhood pastimes endear Him to the inhabitants of Navadvīp and further confirm His divine identity.

[13.1-13.50]

Having prefaced the Chaitanya-Charitamrita in the first twelve chapters, Krishnadasa now proceeds to narrate the life story of Shri Chaitanya. He begins by summarising the most noteworthy events. Faced with the uncertainty of old age and ailing health, Krishnadasa wanted to ensure that should he pass away before completing the book, the summaries would still be available for the reader.

[13.51-13.71]

Prior to Krishna's advent, His eternal associates take birth in the world to "prepare the ground". Krishnadasa outlines the most notable of those personalities, each with their own special role to play in the divine drama. Advaita Acharya, who was born fifty-two years prior to Shri Chaitanya, was the one who fervently worshipped the Lord, petitioning Him to personally descend.

[13.72-13.110]

The parents of Shri Chaitanya, Jagannatha Mishra and Sachimata, were formerly Nanda and Yashoda, the parents of Krishna. Both of them grew up in pious families that had migrated to Navadvip, West Bengal. The couple had suffered greatly, having lost eight daughters who had all died at birth. Their fortunes eventually changed when they gave birth to a son who did indeed survive; they named him Vishvarupa, and He became their life and soul.

The Lord was now ready to descend. When Krishna entered the womb of Sachimata, there was a string of good omens and everyone marvelled at her spiritual radiance. She underwent 13 months of pregnancy before the Lord decided to advent Himself. In February 1486, during an auspicious astronomical constellation, Shri Chaitanya finally appeared in this world. The atmosphere was surcharged with devotional fervour and all the locals were chanting the holy name! In the distant village of Shantipur, Advaita Acharya began jubilantly dancing, intuitively sensing that his long cherished desire had finally been fulfilled.



When various villagers came to offer gifts, Sita Thakurani, who detected the divinity of the new-born child, affectionately named Him 'Nimai'.

[13.111-13.124]

Various villagers came to offer gifts, and among them was Sita Thakurani, the wife of Advaita Acharya, who immediately detected the divinity of the child. Out of maternal affection she gave Him the name “Nimai”, which would ward off any unfavourable influences. Nilambhara Chakravarti, a renowned astrologer, predicted the transcendental influence of the child and named Him Vishvambhara: the maintainer of the entire universe. The local villagers affectionately called Him ‘Gauranga’ due to His beautiful golden complexion. The sun of Shri Chaitanya had finally arisen to dissipate the darkness of *kali-yuga*.

As the maintainer of the universe, Vishvambhara taught the world what life’s priority really is. Though maintenance of the body is essential, one should not forget the necessity of the soul: to reawaken pure love of God. The great teacher Vishvanath Chakravarti Thakur thus summarises Shri Chaitanya’s precepts: *“The Supreme Personality of Godhead, the son of Nanda Maharaja, is to be worshiped along with His transcendental abode, Vrindavana. The most pleasing form of worship for the Lord is that which was performed by the gopis of Vrindavana. Shrimad-Bhagavatam is the spotless authority on everything, and pure love of God is the ultimate goal of life for all men. These statements, for which we have the highest regard, are the opinion of Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu.”*¹⁸

To summarise, Shri Chaitanya came to teach four things:

- The goal: pure love of God.
- The object of love: Shri Krishna (who resides in Vrindavana).
- The shining example of love: Gopis of Vrindavana.
- The guidebook for developing love: Shrimad-Bhagavatam.

Greatness and Sweetness

[Adi 14]

The early pastimes of Nimai (from birth till five years) are known as the *balya-lila*. During these years, various astonishing incidents made obvious that He was not an ordinary child.

[14.1-14.20 / 14.76-14.97]

Sometimes Sachimata would witness the denizens of heaven queuing up to see Nimai. Jagannatha Mishra also had dreams in which he was unequivocally told that Nimai was the Supreme Person. In fact, when Nimai's parents had His feet examined (from which they could hear the mystical tinkling of ankle bells) the astrologer Nilambhara Chakravarti immediately confirmed that Nimai was none other than Lord Krishna. Nevertheless, the Lord mystically covered His divine identity, allowing His parents to continue feeling the natural concerns of a mother and father. This pure and spontaneous love is what He had come to relish.

[14.21-14.35]

From the beginning of His life, Nimai brought people closer to God. In His childhood, the village ladies discovered that the only way to stop Nimai crying was to chant the holy names of Krishna. Thus, there was a continual utterance of "haribol" in the village. When, having eaten dirt, He played devil's advocate and justified it through impersonal philosophy, His mother reprimanded Him and explained the correct understanding. Nimai was pleased.

[14.36-14.75]

Nimai's childhood was filled with miracles. As a young boy He repeatedly spoiled the offerings made by a devoted *brahmana*, and later revealed His divine identity as Shri Krishna Himself. When thieves tried to kidnap Him, Nimai mystically disorientated the rogues and led them back to His own home! On another day, Nimai requested *prasadam* from a distant house and exhibited His omniscient and all-knowing nature.

These displays of greatness were accompanied by wonderfully sweet exchanges. He sported with friends, engaged in mock fights, lovingly stole their eatables, threw tantrums, and sometimes cried when being rebuked by His mother. When young girls would engage in their religious duties, He would disturb their offerings and steal all the paraphernalia for Himself. Such mischievous dealings endeared Him to all the village locals.

Later, the young Nimai met with Lakshmipriya, His eternal consort, and Their conjugal love for each other awakened.

The immature observer may consider God's earthly pastimes to be just like their own. God, they think, is nothing more than a historical figure. Others posit that these descriptions of God are a mythological understanding which helps one in their spiritual infancy. They argue that in an advanced and mature stage of spirituality one realises that God is ultimately impersonal – beyond the purview of the mind and senses, and not limited by a form. The great Vaishnava teachers have comprehensively refuted these widespread notions of atheism (*sunyavadā*) and impersonalism (*nirvīśesa*). They establish the sweet pastimes of Shri Krishna as factual and divine, eternally enacted within the material cosmos, the spiritual world, and the hearts of His pure devotees.

1. Invocation

2. Incarnation

3. Education

4. Transformation

5. Renunciation

6. Propagation

7. Aspiration

8. Organisation

9. Appreciation

10. Correction

11. Intoxication

12. Instruction



Adi-Lila I Chapters 15-16

Nimai receives some life lessons when His brother leaves home and His father passes away. Nevertheless, He begins His formal education and quickly gains fame for His scholarly prowess.

Life Lessons

[Adi 15]

When Nimai reached the age of five, Jagannatha Mishra performed a sacred rite known as *hate-khadi* to inaugurate his primary education.¹⁹ In His childhood years, known as *pauganda-lila* (age 5-10), Nimai's chief occupation was to engage Himself in scriptural study and intellectual pursuits.

[15.1-15.34]

Nimai studied at the school of Gangadasa Pandita. Here he learned grammar, philosophy, logic, and scriptural commentaries. During this period, Nimai was also dealt some difficult life lessons. His brother, Vishvarupa, severed all family ties, permanently left home, and adopted the life of a travelling mendicant. Nimai praised His brother's determination, consoled His distraught parents, and solemnly promised to take care of all their needs. Shortly after, Nimai's father, Jagannatha Mishra, tragically passed away. After performing the last rites, Nimai embraced the responsibility of managing the household affairs. He duly approached Lakshmipriya, and their marriage ceremony was performed, much to the delight of Nimai's mother, Sachimata.

The Greatest Scholar

[Adi 16]

After completing His primary education and formally entering household life, Nimai performed further pastimes known as the *kaisora-lila* (age 11-15).

[16.1-16.6]

Nimai had become so accomplished in His studies, that by the age of eleven He had founded His own school! He attracted many students, defeated the most astute philosophers, and became widely renowned as a scholastic prodigy.

[16.7-16.25]

Nimai decided to exercise His intellectual prowess further afield by travelling to East Bengal. His influence spread far and wide as people flocked to hear Him speak. Despite the attention He drew, Nimai didn't

forget His other purpose in visiting East Bengal – to guide and advise Tapan Mishra. Mishra was a scholar who had read many scriptures, but remained confused about the ultimate goal of life. Nimai enlightened him about the devotional conclusions of the Vedas, and thus highlighted the limitations of academic scholarship. Although Nimai revealed the potency of *nama-sankirtan* to Mishra, He refrained from widely propagating it. The time, He considered, was not yet ripe.

Meanwhile in Navadvip, Lakshmi Priya's feelings of separation from Nimai became so unbearable that she passed away. On His return, Nimai comforted His grieving mother, offering spiritual support and promising to care for her. He reassured her by marrying the chaste and gentle Vishnu Priya.

[16.26-16.111]

In this period, Nimai cemented His scholastic status by defeating Keshava Kashmiri, the champion debater widely acclaimed as the *dhig-vijaya pandita* (one who had defeated scholars from everywhere). Hearing of Nimai's reputation as an academic genius, he sensed an opportunity to enhance his reputation further, and arrogantly demanded a debate. Nimai responded humbly and flattered the Pandita, requesting him to instead recite verses in glorification of Mother Ganges. Within an hour, Kashmiri composed one hundred eloquent stanzas and unflinchingly reeled them off like the mighty wind. Nimai was unfazed. He responded by recalling one of the quoted verses and outlining the numerous literary faults that spoil the composition. The *pandita* was dumbfounded! How could Nimai memorise the verses so quickly? Furthermore, how could He instantaneously conduct such a critical analysis? Stunned and speechless, Kashmiri quietly excused himself to regroup. That night, Saraswati, the Goddess of learning, came to him in a dream and revealed Nimai's identity as the Supreme Person. Appreciating that Nimai was compassionately curbing his pride, Kashmiri returned the following morning and happily surrendered to the young boy.

Nimai's scholastic pastimes are particularly significant. Later in life, His immersion in ecstatic chanting and dancing would be viewed by many with a sceptical eye. They would accuse Him of being a sentimental and

emotional devotee, labelling *bhakti-yoga* as a path for the less intelligent. Such comments invariably surfaced, yet Nimai's early reputation as a scholar of unprecedented calibre confirms that the joyful chanting of Hare Krishna is the ultimate conclusion of all Vedic study. God cannot be understood through analytical and intellectual gymnastics, but by purification of the consciousness and heartfelt devotion.



After being defeated, Keshava Kashmiri had a dream in which Goddess Saraswati revealed Nimai's identity as the Supreme person.

1. Invocation

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Adi-Lila I Chapter 17

Nimai receives initiation into the chanting of Krishna's names and transforms into a devotional livewire. He returns to Navadvip and popularises congregational chanting as the prime means of spiritual elevation. In order to expand the *sankirtan* movement, Nimai accepts the renounced order of life, and becomes known as Shri Krishna Chaitanya.

The Turning Point

[Adi 17]

“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.”

– Bhagavad-Gita 7.19

Krishna declares that surrender of mind, body and word to God is the perfection of spirituality. When He comes as Shri Chaitanya, He demonstrates how that surrender is possible through the chanting of Krishna’s names. Having established Himself as the greatest scholar, Nimai was now ready to fulfil His true purpose: propagation of the *sankirtan* movement. But before doing so, He would become transformed by the holy name Himself and personally demonstrate the power of this process. These youthful pastimes of the Lord are known as the *yauvana-lila* (age 16-24). Since the pastimes in this chapter are elaborately described in Chaitanya Bhagavata, Krishnadasa offers only a brief summary.

[17.1-17.9]

In order to perform the customary ceremonies for His deceased father, Nimai travelled to Gaya. Upon arrival He met Ishvara Puri, a saintly devotee who was absorbed in chanting the holy name of Krishna with great love and relish.²⁰ This was a stark contrast to the dry philosophising that Nimai was accustomed to. The saintly teacher lovingly corrected Nimai, explaining in no uncertain terms that His academic prowess would not bring Him to spiritual perfection. He then initiated Nimai into the chanting of Krishna’s names, explaining it to be the essential religious process in the present age. Having received the *mantra*, Nimai proceeded to chant with great enthusiasm and immediately found Himself swooning in transcendental happiness. Perplexed by His sudden feelings of spiritual intoxication, Nimai approached His spiritual master to inquire whether something had gone wrong. Ishvara Puri smiled, explaining how the powerful holy name can quickly awaken love of God within anyone, causing them to dance, laugh and cry in unbounded spiritual happiness!

Birth of Kirtan

[Adi 17]

[17.21-17.34]

Although Nimai felt drawn towards visiting Vrindavana, He returned to Navadvip so He could share the priceless gift of the holy name with His community. The locals were shocked at the transformation; the scholarly and intellectual Nimai Pandita had now become an inspired saint infused with devotional sentiment! He was completely disinterested in philosophy, logic and debate, and instead dedicated Himself to incessant chanting, extolling the glories of *nama-sankirtan* at every opportunity. The locals realised that Nimai had become a Vaishnava, unbelievable as it seemed. It was something they had fervently prayed for, and they thus rejoiced in great happiness.

Nimai had induced people to chant throughout His life. At the time of His birth everyone had gathered to chant in a bid to counteract maleficent astrological influences. In His childhood the ladies would chant to stop Him from crying. In His youth He would induce His schoolmates to chant by teaching Sanskrit grammar through the holy name. Now that mission would manifest on another scale. This period would mark the birth of wide scale *sankirtan*, and Nimai was at the very heart of the spiritual revolution.

We often dream of an audience with God. It can, however, seem extremely distant and way beyond our present perception. As George Harrison sang, “I really want to see you, Lord, but it takes so long.” Thankfully, there is a way to perceive God’s presence here and now. How? Through sound.

Since God is absolute, there is no difference between Him and His name. When one chants the names of God with sincere intention, they actually come in direct contact with Him. This experience enlivens the soul, allowing one to taste the deep happiness that we often search for in the objects and relationships of this world. Nimai became the living example of the efficacy of this process. He inaugurated the *sankirtan* movement by opening a nocturnal school of *kirtan* at the home of Shrivasa Thakur. Behind closed doors, in the company of His closest associates, Nimai chanted and danced to His hearts content, bringing waves of ecstasy that

would often become uncontrollable.

Exhibitions of Divinity

[Adi 17]

Along with His remarkable displays of ecstatic chanting, Nimai proved His divinity through a series of miraculous events. Although His advent was in the guise of a devotee, on numerous occasions His Supreme position became apparent to all.

[All references from Adi 17]

Mahaprakash-lila²¹ – Once, in the home of Shrivasa Thakur, Nimai sat upon the throne of Vishnu and accepted worship for 21 consecutive hours. In return, He offered each devotee a suitable benediction according to their spiritual relationship with Him.

Sad-bhujā darshan²² – After the *mahaprakash-lila*, Nimai revealed his six-armed form (*sadbhujā-rupa*) to Nityananda Prabhu. He manifested two arms of Krishna, two arms of Rama, and His own two, thus confirming that all three incarnations were indeed the same Supreme Person.

Seeing Krishna and Balaram²³ – Sachimata once had a dream that Nimai and Nityananda were none other than Krishna and Balaram. When Nityananda arrived for *prasadam* the following day, she saw Them sitting together, and could immediately grasp Their identity.

Mango party²⁴ – One day, after chanting for many hours with His devotees, Nimai sowed a seed in the ground which immediately fructified into hundreds of juicy mangos. He happily distributed them to the fatigued devotees.

Chaitanya Simha²⁵ – When Shrivasa recited the thousand names of Vishnu and reached the name “Narasimha,” Nimai immediately adopted that ferocious mood and proceeded to run through the city streets, club in hand, ready to attack all the atheists!

Astrological calculations²⁶ – Nimai once requested a learned astrologer to elucidate information of His previous birth. After making the calculation, the astrologer was struck with wonder – he could understand that Nimai

was actually the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

Yamunakarsana-lila²⁷ – Once, Nimai manifested the mood of Balaram, and, acting as though intoxicated, He re-enacted the pastime involving the Yamuna river.

Events at Shrivasa Thakur's house²⁸ – Nimai would hold all-night *kirtans* at Shrivasa Thakur's home. Here, a variety of wondrous events took place: Shrivasa's dead son began instructing the family, his niece Narayani received the *prasadam* remnants of Nimai, his Muslim tailor had a vision of the Supreme Lord, and Shrivasa personally had some profound spiritual discussions with Nimai.

Although these astonishing occurrences caused wonder in Navadvip, the greatest miracle was the unbounded spiritual love that Nimai displayed and induced within others. Everyone from stuffy intellectuals to village simpletons, ministers and officials to housewives and children, temple priests to social outcasts – all were swept up in the devotion that He exuded with such intensity. He was able to penetrate beyond the superficial façade of every individual and infuse their hearts with divine love.

Overcoming the Opposition

[Adi 17]

Nimai's mission was to inaugurate and establish the process of *nama-sankirtan* as the special dispensation for this age. While the private gatherings at Shrivasa Thakur's home were undoubtedly blissful, He couldn't confine the ecstatic chanting to those four walls. He quickly took the *sankirtan* party onto the streets of Navadvip where thousands of people joyously chanted, surcharging the entire town with a unique devotional buzz. As the movement grew in strength, influence and prominence, however, there was growing opposition and dismay from various parties.

Jagai & Madhai²⁹ – after receiving the mandate to share the holy name with everyone, Nityananda Prabhu and Haridas Thakur encountered Jagai and Madhai, the notorious brothers who had abandoned their cultured

family background for a degraded materialistic lifestyle. When requested to chant the holy name, they angrily chased Nityananda and Haridas away. Undeterred, the preachers returned the following day, at which time Madhai struck Nityananda with a piece of earthen pot, causing blood to gush from His head. Upon hearing of the incident, Nimai angrily arrived at the scene, ready to kill the brothers for their grievous offence. On the plea of Nityananda, however, Nimai spared their lives. Shaken by their near-death experience, Jagai and Madhai repented their mistakes, became cleansed of all sinful habits, and received initiation into the chanting of Krishna's names. It was an incredible transformation!

Gopal Chapala³⁰ – Gopal Chapala was a local *brahmana* who disapproved of the *kirtans* at Shrivasa Thakur's house. In an attempted defamation, Gopal placed sacrificial items at the Thakur's doorstep, intimating that Shrivasa was actually a meat-eating drunkard. As the villagers learned of the news, Shrivasa refrained from defending himself, and instead humbly announced to everyone how degraded he was. Everyone clearly understood, however, that this was the devious scheming of Gopal. As a result of his offensive behaviour, Gopal contracted leprosy, and was only relieved from his illness when he approached Shrivasa for forgiveness.

Brahmana's Curse³¹ – another local *brahmana* became agitated when he was refused entry into the all-night *kirtans*. In retaliation, he cursed Nimai to be bereft of all material happiness. Nimai was greatly pleased to receive this benediction-in-disguise and wholeheartedly thanked him!

Chand Kazi³² – complaints against the public *sankirtan* began to flood in from local Muslims, staunch atheists and even the rigid *smarta-brahmana* community. The strict Islamic magistrate (Kazi) responded by sending officers to break the drums at Shrivasa Thakur's house, after which they officially outlawed the public chanting that had become a resounding phenomenon throughout Navadvip. In response, Nimai gathered all the devotees and organised a non-violent demonstration to the Kazi's residence. The sound was tumultuous, and when they arrived at his home, the Kazi was too scared to appear. Nimai eventually met him and they had a fruitful dialogue on the comparative religious principles of the Vedas and Koran. The Kazi was convinced of the Vedic version that Nimai presented,



Nimai had induced people to chant throughout His life, but that now evolved into a wide-scale *sankirtan* movement.

and related how Narasimhadeva (the half-man half-lion incarnation of Krishna) had appeared in his dream to warn him not to oppose the *sankirtan* movement. The Kazi finally declared, *“To as many descendants as take birth in my dynasty in the future, I give this grave admonition: No one should check the sankirtan movement.”*²⁸³

We live in a world which is topsy-turvy. Krishna declares that religion is sometimes mistaken as irreligion, while irreligion regularly passes as religion! These instructive pastimes remind us that genuine devotees of God will undoubtedly face obstacles, opposition and criticism. When homeopathic treatment is applied, the initial sign of success is that the disease gets worse. That is, however, an indication that the treatment is actually working. Similarly, when a genuine spiritual movement takes root, some opposition is to be expected, but as time goes by the powerful message will be truly appreciated and valued. By remaining determined, tolerant and humble, eventual success is guaranteed.

The World is My Family

[Adi 17]

[17.247-17.274]

One day, absorbed in the sentiments of Krishna’s greatest devotees, Nimai began chanting *“Gopi! Gopi!”* When a young student overheard this he rebuked Nimai, instructing Him to chant Krishna’s names instead. Nimai was taken aback by the boy’s impudence and angrily chased him away, but this only aggravated the situation further. The boy told all his friends who then launched a barrage of criticism against Nimai. Troubled by their immature disregard, Nimai considered that He may have to adjust his social position to command more respect.

Accepting the order of *sannyasa* (renunciation) would offer Him greater authority, and people would be more inclined to submissively hear from Him. Life as an itinerant preacher would open up many more opportunities to inundate the world with the chanting of Krishna’s name. It was a painful choice, but one that Nimai deemed necessary.

Aged twenty-four, Nimai travelled to Katwa to meet the great saint Keshava Bharati. In the company of a few intimate followers and friends,



Nimai met the Chand Kazi and had a fruitful dialogue on the comparative religious principles of the Vedas and Koran.

He shaved His head, donned saffron robes, severed Himself from all social ties, and entered the order of *sannyasa*. He would now be known as Shri Krishna Chaitanya.³⁴

Although Nimai had made considerable missionary progress in Navadvip, His vision for the *sankirtan* movement was much bigger. To facilitate this expansion and increase His circle of influence, Nimai decided to formally accept the *sannyasa* order of life. His mother and wife wept bitterly when they heard of His plans – Vishnupriya was only 16 years old, and Sachimata over 70. Though soft in heart, Nimai was also a strong person in principle. He was determined to give up the small world of family life, and instead embrace the entire world as His family.

Although scriptural injunctions forbid the acceptance of *sannyasa* in *kali-yuga*,³⁵ Shri Chaitanya nevertheless proceeded. His higher purpose was to uplift humanity through spiritual welfare work, and thus He was not subject to this restriction. Interestingly, Shri Chaitanya deliberately accepted the *sannyasa* initiation in an impersonal tradition, although He was vehemently opposed to impersonal philosophy. This affiliation was strategically planned, since it would afford Him greater opportunities and authority to preach. Above and beyond everything, Shri Chaitanya wanted to inundate the world with love of Krishna.

This concludes the Adi-Lila of Chaitanya-Charitamrita, which closes with the two most transformative junctures in Shri Chaitanya's life: His *mantra*-initiation from Ishvara Puri, which infused Him with the nectar of the holy name, and His *sannyasa*-initiation from Keshava Bharati, which marked the beginning of His extensive travelling and preaching. These historic events set the scene for the Madhya-Lila.

1. Invocation

2. Incarnation

3. Education

4. Transformation

5. Renunciation

6. Propagation

7. Aspiration

8. Organisation

9. Appreciation

10. Correction

11. Intoxication

12. Instruction



Maḍhya-Līla I Chapters 1-6

Having adopted the renounced order, Shri Chaitanya begins His life as an itinerant preacher. After a final meeting in Shantipur, He bids farewell to His beloved family and friends, and travels to Jagannatha Puri.

Snapshot

[Madhya 1 & 2]

[1.1-1.88]

Krishnadasa begins by whetting the reader's appetite with some highlights of the coming sections from the Madhya-Lila and Antya-Lila.

[1.89-1.247]

Before giving details, Krishnadasa summarises the Madhya-Lila, which documents the pastimes of Shri Chaitanya from age 24 to age 30. During these six years Shri Chaitanya preached across India, visited the holy *dhama* of Shri Vrindavana, and expanded the Rathayatra festivals at Jagannatha Puri.

[1.248-1.287]

The Antya-Lila details the final eighteen years (age 30 to age 48) of Shri Chaitanya's life, which were spent exclusively in Jagannatha Puri. In the first six of these years, Shri Chaitanya openly associated with His devotees, showing great love by sometimes glorifying them, and at other times correcting them.

[2.1-2.95]

The final twelve years of Shri Chaitanya's life were spent in seclusion. Living in the Gambhira, He manifested the extraordinary symptoms of ecstatic love.

An Emotional Meeting

[Madhya 3]

[3.1-3.8]

Having completed his introductory summaries, Krishnadasa proceeds to the main narration. After His *sannyasa* ceremony, Shri Chaitanya recited the famous verse which describes the spirit of renunciation; *to fully engage one's body, mind and words in the service of Krishna, and thereby cross the ocean of material existence.*³⁶ Thus, although He accepted the *sannyasa* order in a tradition that advocated impersonalism, Shri Chaitanya established unmotivated and uninterrupted devotional service as the supreme perfection of life.

[3.9-3.107]

As a Vaishnava renunciant, Shri Chaitanya's natural inclination was to travel towards Vrindavana. Nityananda Prabhu, however, misdirected Him to Shantipur so His friends and family could see Him once again. Absorbed in spiritual stupor, Shri Chaitanya arrived at the Ganges under the impression that it was the Yamuna. Upon seeing Advaita Acharya waiting in a boat, Shri Chaitanya was puzzled and inquired how he had come to Vrindavana. The Acharya famously replied, "*Wherever You are, that is Vrindavana!*" Shri Chaitanya understood He had been tricked, and Advaita Acharya immediately took the Lord to his home, where a variety of delicious foods had been prepared. While the new renunciant was hesitant to accept the opulent feast due to His strict *sannyasa* vows, Nityananda Prabhu angrily demanded more! The loving quarrels between Advaita and Nityananda demonstrate how spiritual life is full of individuality, humour and joyful exchange.

[3.108-3.136]

When the locals heard of Shri Chaitanya's arrival, they flocked to Advaita Acharya's home. There was a spontaneous festival of chanting, dancing and feasting, causing an eruption of emotion that was never seen before. When Shri Chaitanya would collapse in ecstasy, Mukunda would recite devotional stanzas which further enraptured the Lord. To everyone's delight, the spontaneous festival continued for ten days.

[3.137-3.187]

Thereafter, Chandrashekhar seated Sachimata on a palanquin and brought her to Advaita's house. Ordinarily, a *sannyasi* would strictly refuse to see family members, but Shri Chaitanya made an exception in this case. Feeling the natural affection of a mother, Sachimata cried to see her son in the garb of a renunciant. Shri Chaitanya lovingly pacified her, humbly submitting that He was ready to fulfil her wishes. She first requested the exclusive privilege of cooking for Him while He remained in Shantipur. Understanding He would eventually leave, she then requested Shri Chaitanya to make Jagannatha Puri His headquarters. Since devotees from Navadvip would frequently visit Jagannatha Puri, this arrangement would ensure she regularly received news of her son. Shri Chaitanya gladly fulfilled both desires.

[3.188-3.219]

After pacifying His Navadvip associates and respectfully circumambulating His mother, Shri Chaitanya began His journey to Jagannatha Puri. As the reality of His renunciation dawned, there was tumultuous crying in the home of Advaita Acharya. Their lives would never be the same again. Shri Chaitanya was unmoved, and, accompanied by Nityananda Prabhu, Jagadananda Pandita, Damodara Pandita and Mukunda Datta, He resolutely travelled toward Jagannatha Puri.

This world is likened to a river of names; floating strands of straw join for some time, but downstream they all separate and go their own ways. On the soul's journey through different bodies, we form relationships with others, yet the passage of time invariably changes everything. Even if people stay together for decades, the inevitability of death will separate them.

That said, we should be careful not to neglect relationships, thinking them to be temporary, mundane and inconsequential. The spiritual world is not impersonal – it's a place of spiritual emotions, deep friendships and loving interactions. How can we enter that realm if we haven't learnt the art of relationships here? Genuine spiritualists transcend the world and simultaneously remain completely 'down to earth.' They lovingly engage with others, seeing them as spirit souls in relation to God. This helps them to be detached without being irresponsible, to embody spiritual gravity without being cold and impersonal, and to maintain a philosophical outlook without losing sight of human emotion. Shri Chaitanya's interactions with Nityananda Prabhu, Advaita Acharya and Sachimata demonstrate the beauty of spiritual relationships.

Lessons on the Road to Puri

[Madhya 4 & 5]

[4.1-4.104]

Enroute to Puri, Shri Chaitanya halted at the famous village of Remuna and narrated the story of Madhavendra Puri. Once, the great devotee was chanting at Govinda Kund when a beautiful boy appeared and offered him some milk. Completely captivated by the boy's beauty, Madhavendra Puri wondered who He was. Later that night, the same boy appeared in his

dream and introduced Himself as Gopal, instructing Madhavendra Puri to unearth Him from a nearby bush and erect a temple for His residence. Realising that Krishna had personally appeared before him, Madhavendra Puri was overcome with transcendental emotion. Without hesitation, He immediately excavated the Gopal deity, installed Him in a wonderful temple, and inspired the local villagers to begin elaborate worship.

[4.105-4.140]

Two years later, Gopal again appeared to Madhavendra Puri in a dream and requested him to acquire some fresh sandalwood from Jagannatha Puri. Madhavendra Puri immediately accepted the difficult task and set off on foot. On his gruelling journey he halted at Remuna where he witnessed the deity of Gopinath being offered the famous *amrita-keli* sweet rice. Madhavendra Puri desired to taste the sweet rice so he could make a similar preparation for Gopal in Vrindavana. As that thought entered, he immediately scolded himself for mentally tasting the unoffered food. Gopinath, however, was extremely pleased by his sentiments, and appeared to the temple priest that night, instructing him that a special pot of sweet rice had been hidden away for Madhavendra Puri, and it should now be delivered to him. The priest eagerly retrieved that pot and handed it to the fortunate recipient. Madhavendra Puri was overwhelmed by the activities of Gopinath, who thus became known as Kshira-Chora Gopinath, “*Krishna who stole the sweet rice*”.

[4.141-4.213]

Madhavendra Puri, not wanting to attract any attention, quickly left for Jagannatha Puri. There he collected the sandalwood and then began his homeward journey, halting again at Remuna. It was here that Madhavendra Puri had a third dream, in which Gopal instructed him to offer the sandalwood to Kshira-Chora Gopinath instead. Thus, the fortunate Madhavendra Puri was blessed to receive several dreams and interactions with the Lord. Having related the sweet pastimes of Gopal, Gopinath and Madhavendra Puri, Shri Chaitanya continued on His travels.

[5.1-5.112]

When Shri Chaitanya arrived in Kataka, Nityananda Prabhu narrated the story of Sakshi Gopal. Once, two *brahmanas* (one young and the other

old) were travelling together on pilgrimage. Feeling deep gratitude for the assistance he received, the older *brahmana* offered his daughter in marriage to his young counterpart. Although the younger *brahmana* politely refused, feeling unqualified due to his humble family background, the older *brahmana* insisted he accept. The young *brahmana* then asked him to repeat his pledge in front of the deity. After doing so, they returned to their homes and eventually the younger *brahmana* requested the promise be fulfilled. The family of the older *brahmana* were outraged at the proposal and denied the validity of the agreement. To settle the controversy, the younger *brahmana* called upon the deity who had witnessed the promise. At the young *brahmana*'s request the deity walked all the way from Kataka to Vidyanagara, and, in the presence of all the townspeople, bore witness that the elderly *brahmana* had indeed offered his daughter in marriage to the young *brahmana*. The wedding ceremony then took place and everyone was satisfied.

[5.113-5.139]

The two *brahmanas* requested the deity to stay in Vidyanangara so they could daily serve Him. Thereafter, thousands flocked to see the deity that now became known as Sakshi Gopal, “*The one who bore witness*”. Later, Sakshi Gopal moved to Kataka at the request of King Purusottamadeva.

Once, when the queen eagerly desired to offer a pearl to Sakshi Gopal, the Lord came to her in a dream and indicated a hole in His nose where she could set it. Having fulfilled the cherished desire of the queen, she became extremely joyful and held a beautiful festival. Sakshi Gopal thus demonstrated the loving reciprocation He enjoys with His confidential devotees.

While many see the material world as completely separate from the supreme spirit, the Vedas define God as the source of everything material and spiritual (*janmadya asya yatah*). Even physical elements have an intimate relationship with God; the cause is present in the effect. Thus, God's immanence in the material world can be experienced when 'material' objects, such as marble, metal or wood, are directly engaged as means of worship according to authorised prescriptions. God, after all, is the complete whole, and can simultaneously manifest Himself in



Madhavendra Puri excavated the Gopal deity, installed Him in a wonderful temple, and inspired the local villagers to begin elaborate worship.

everything within and beyond our perception. To say He cannot appear in a certain way would be to place a limitation on Him.

The pastimes narrated herein highlight the loving exchanges between the devotee and the deity, which will again be witnessed when Shri Chaitanya arrives at the Jagannatha Temple. Worship of the deity creates opportunities for personal service and a deepening of our devotional connection with Krishna.

One should, however, worship these forms with care and caution. Indeed, Shri Prabhupada warned one disciple, *“Never think of the deity as made of stone or wood. Every worshiper must remember that Krishna is personally present. He is simply kindly presenting Himself before us in a way so that we can handle Him. That is His mercy; otherwise, He is unapproachable.”*

[5.140-5.161]

As Shri Chaitanya continued on His journey, an interesting event occurred at the River Bharginadi, causing it to later be known as *danda-bhanga nadi*. Here, Nityananda Prabhu took Shri Chaitanya’s *sannyasa* staff, broke it into three pieces, and threw it into the river! Some explain that Nityananda wanted to transform the impersonal *ekadanda* staff (one rod) into a Vaishnava *tridanda* staff (three rods). The *tridanda* represents one who has dedicated mind, body and words in the service of Krishna, whereas the *ekadanda* represents the oneness of merging with God. Others posit that Shri Chaitanya is the Supreme Lord who is beyond all worldly designations, including the order of *sannyasa*, and Nityananda highlighted this by rejecting the staff. Either way, although internally relishing Nityananda’s love, Shri Chaitanya chastised Him, since He wanted to set a pristine example by strictly following all aspects of etiquette and culture.

Sarvabhauma’s Salvation

[Madhya 6]

[6.1-6.47]

Displeased by Nityananda’s antics, Shri Chaitanya decided to proceed to Jagannatha Puri alone. Upon entering the Jagannatha Temple, Shri Chaitanya became overwhelmed with loving emotion and spontaneously

ran to embrace the deity, but fainted in the process. Sarvabhauma Bhattacharya, who witnessed the entire incident, sensed that there was something extra special about the *sannyasi*, and decided to take Him home. After frantically searching for their Lord, the other devotees arrived at Sarvabhauma's house, where they saw Shri Chaitanya lying unconscious. They loudly chanted the holy name, at which point Shri Chaitanya regained His sense of awareness.

[6.48-6.109]

The aged Sarvabhauma was a well-respected scholar of impersonal philosophy who had relocated to Jagannatha Puri. Concerned about Shri Chaitanya's spiritual welfare, Sarvabhauma insisted on philosophically educating the young renunciant in the teachings of Vedanta. Gopinath Acharya tried to impress upon Sarvabhauma that Shri Chaitanya was actually Krishna Himself, but the impersonal teacher remained unconvinced. Gopinath explained that realisation of God required more than philosophical astuteness – devotion and mercy were key factors in the equation, and since Sarvabhauma lacked these vital elements, he could not detect the divine identity of Shri Chaitanya. Gopinath then cited numerous scriptural quotations to support his claims.

[6.110-6.204]

Undeterred, Sarvabhauma invited Shri Chaitanya to his home and begun a complex philosophical discourse on Vedanta philosophy. After speaking for seven days without interruption, Sarvabhauma was perplexed by Shri Chaitanya's stone silence and questioned whether He had understood the teachings. Shri Chaitanya told him that the authentic explanations were simple and clear, but that Sarvabhauma had skewed the real meaning with his fallacious interpretations. Shri Chaitanya then unequivocally established the essence of Vedanta: *a loving relationship with the Personality of Godhead*. Citing the famous *atmarama* verse from the Shrimad-Bhagavatam, He explained that even self-realised devotees take pleasure in varieties of devotional service to Krishna. Hearing these words, Sarvabhauma began to appreciate the extraordinary character of Shri Chaitanya, and thus surrendered himself, begging forgiveness for his previous impudence. Shri Chaitanya accepted the scholarly teacher's humble sentiments and rewarded him with a divine vision of His

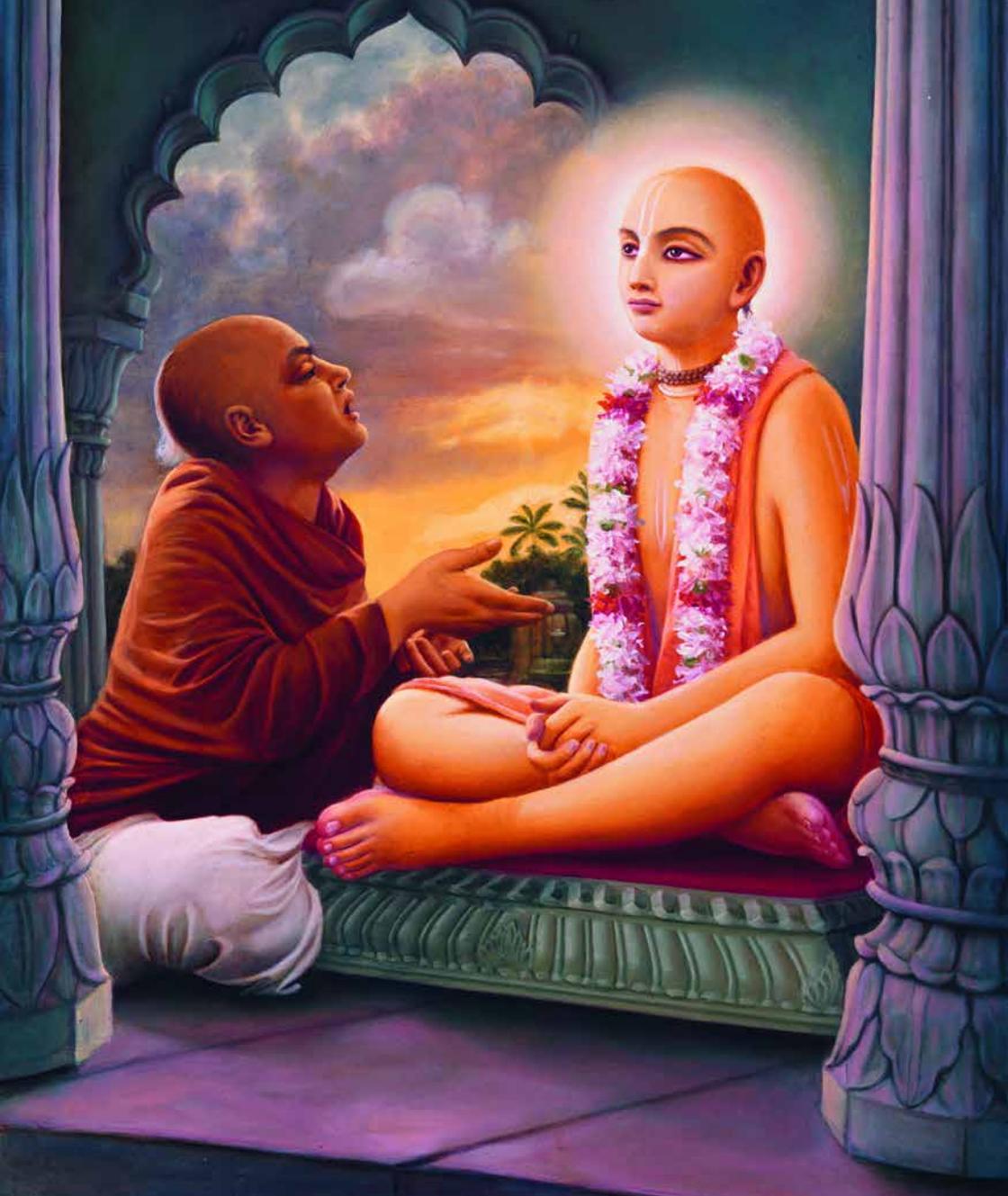
transcendental form.

[6.205-6.286]

Sarvabhauma's transformation was remarkable. He spontaneously composed one hundred verses in glorification of Shri Chaitanya, began to exhibit symptoms of divine love, and grew more and more averse to anything which had even a hint of impersonal philosophy. He developed full faith in *bhakti-yoga* and composed two exquisite verses which encapsulated the identity and mission of Shri Chaitanya. Sarvabhauma began to explain all scriptures from the devotional perspective, and upon rising everyday he would immediately chant "*Krishna Krishna!*"

In this pastime we find yet another discussion on impersonalism. It's clearly a recurring theme in the text, and one may question why. Shri Chaitanya explains that a personal approach to God through *bhakti-yoga* is not only more tangible and practical, but also more fulfilling and satisfying.

The very essence of our being is to be happy (*anandamaya bhyasat*) and the source of such happiness lies in relationships. For a relationship to exist there must be a subject, object and reciprocity, but impersonal notions of 'oneness' kill all three and therefore cheat the individual of this sublime experience. While those who tread the impersonal path of spirituality undoubtedly receive spiritual merit, their progress is extremely slow and a great deal more troublesome. Even advanced impersonalists eventually encounter a vacuum within their heart, due to the lack of transcendental reciprocation and happiness that is the yearning of every spirit soul.



After listening to Sarvabhauma for seven days without interruption, Shri Chaitanya told him that the original explanations were simple and clear, but that impersonal teachers had skewed the real meaning with indirect interpretations.

1. Invocation

2. Incarnation

3. Education

4. Transformation

5. Renunciation

6. Propagation

7. Aspiration

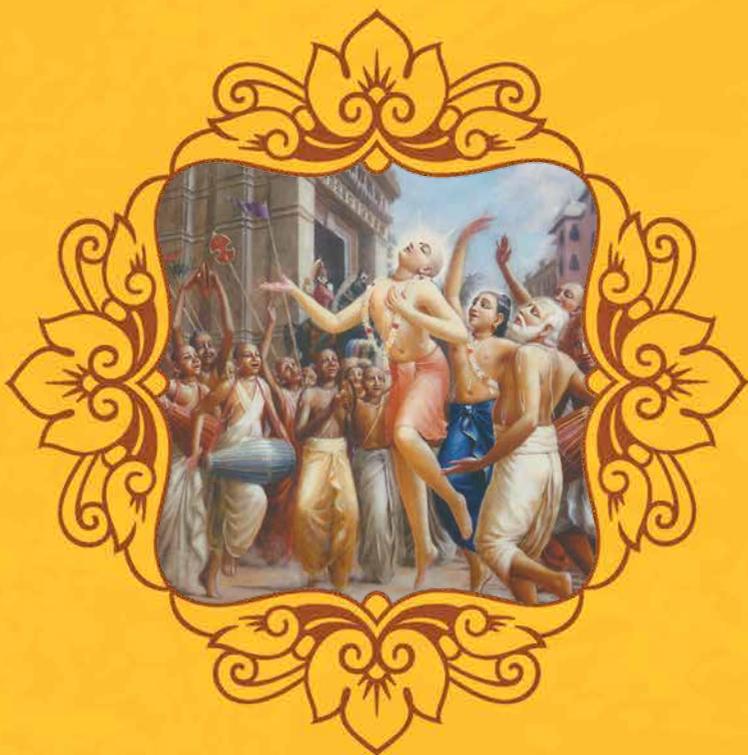
8. Organisation

9. Appreciation

10. Correction

11. Intoxication

12. Instruction



Maḍhya-Līla I Chapters 7-15

Shri Chaitanya begins a tour of South India. He mass-propagates *nama-sankirtan* to everyone, regardless of religious, cultural or social background. On His return, He displays incredible spiritual ecstasy at the Jagannatha Puri Rathayatra festival.

The South Indian Tour

[Madhya 7-9]

[7.1-7.90]

Sannyasa offers one the unique opportunity to travel and preach without restriction. Taking full advantage, Shri Chaitanya decided to embark upon a tour of South India which would last for two years, span 4000 miles, and mark the beginning of His mass propagation of *nama-sankirtan*. Although surrounded by His loving associates, Shri Chaitanya left Jagannatha Puri on the pretext of finding His brother, accompanied only by His servant, Kala Krishnadasa. The distraught devotees followed the young *sannyasi* to nearby Alalanatha, after which Shri Chaitanya swiftly departed, throwing them into pangs of separation.

[7.91-7.112]

As He travelled, Shri Chaitanya jubilantly chanted Krishna's names and greeted everyone with genuine love. His influence was extraordinary! Anyone who encountered Shri Chaitanya would immediately become infused with spiritual happiness, and everyone that they subsequently contacted would develop the same ecstatic emotion. Shri Chaitanya thus ignited the revolution of *nama-sankirtan*. Entire villages and provinces adopted the process of congregational chanting, and Vaishnavism spread like wildfire across South India. The extent of Shri Chaitanya's tremendous devotional potency was becoming more and more apparent.

Some highlights from Shri Chaitanya's South India tour are as follows:

[7.113-7.135]

Kurma Brahmana - In Kurma-sthana, Shri Chaitanya was warmly greeted with respect and devotion by a local *brahmana*. Feeling his worldly duties to be a weighty burden, the Kurma *brahmana* proposed to renounce his family life in order to become fully immersed in devotional service. Shri Chaitanya unequivocally told the *brahmana* to remain steadfast in his obligations, and instead place Krishna in the centre of his household life: *"Instruct everyone to follow the orders of Lord Shri Krishna as they are given in the Bhagavad-Gita and Shrimad-Bhagavatam. In this way become a spiritual master and try to liberate everyone in this land. If you follow this instruction, your materialistic life at home will not obstruct your spiritual advancement."*³⁷

[7.136-7.155]

Vasudeva the Leper – Vasudeva was a gentle and saintly devotee who suffered from leprosy. Hearing that Shri Chaitanya had left the locality, Vasudeva fell unconscious, lamenting the missed opportunity to see his beloved Lord. Just then, Shri Chaitanya unexpectedly arrived and embraced Vasudeva, causing all of his bodily illnesses to miraculously disappear! Vasudeva became spiritually ecstatic, and Shri Chaitanya advised him to constantly chant the holy name and share it with others.

[8.1-8.313]

Ramananda Raya – Prior to leaving Jagannatha Puri, Sarvabhauma Bhattacharya had insisted that the Lord meet Ramananda Raya on His travels. Shri Chaitanya had noted this, and upon reaching the banks of the river Godavari, He saw Ramananda Raya arrive with a large royal entourage. Although an influential and powerful Governor, Ramananda was also a great devotee. Seeing the effulgent *sannyasi*, he eagerly stepped forward and received a loving embrace from Shri Chaitanya. It resembled the emotional meeting of two old friends. They conversed with great eagerness, and resolved to meet that very evening for further discussion. Shri Chaitanya posed various questions to Ramananda, extracting the essence of Vaishnava theology and urging the royal devotee to go deeper and explain further. Through that encouragement, Ramananda was able to present the most profound and esoteric conclusions of spiritual love between Radha and Krishna in Vrindavana. A river of unprecedented nectar flowed from Ramananda's mouth, which Shri Chaitanya relished for ten consecutive nights. Shri Chaitanya then requested Ramananda to relocate to Jagannatha Puri, where they could continue discussing topics of Krishna. Before departing, the Lord offered a final blessing to Ramananda by revealing His combined form of Radha and Krishna.

(See appendix: Ramananda-Samvada)

[9.1-9.81 / 9.166-9.365]

Holy places, temples, devotees & non-devotees – South India was filled with stalwart impersonalists, ritualistic *brahmanas* and mundane scholars; all of whom were uninterested in *bhakti*. However, by the influence of Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, all these individuals abandoned their own

opinions and became Vaishnavas, devotees of Krishna.³⁸ Shri Chaitanya met people from various disciplic lines and guided them to a more intimate understanding of God. He conversed with Buddhists, Jains and *tattvavadis*, concretely establishing the Vaishnava perspectives through logic and argument. On His travels, He paid His obeisances at the Shiva temples, exhibiting the Vaishnava culture of respect towards demigods. Later, Shri Chaitanya discovered two books which were of great importance to the Vaishnava tradition – the Brahma-Samhita and Krishna-Karanamrita.³⁹

Despite these spiritually inspiring events, Shri Chaitanya's servant, Kala Krishnadasa, fell victim to the romantic allurements of some tribal women, and had to be personally rescued by the Lord.

[9.82-9.107]

Illiterate *Brahmana* - In the temple of Ranganatha, Shri Chaitanya encountered an illiterate *brahmana* who was struggling to recite the Bhagavad-Gita. Although he could hardly read, when he remembered how Krishna had become a humble charioteer in service to His devotee, it brought tears of happiness to his heart. Shri Chaitanya declared that this illiterate *brahmana* had actually grasped the essence of the book, and was indeed the most fortunate and learned Vaishnava. His devotional fervour was the mature fruit of philosophical understanding, and Shri Chaitanya blessed him to continue with the same spirit.

[9.108-9.165]

Vyenkata Bhatta - Being a Vaishnava in the Ramanuja-sampradaya, Vyenkata Bhatta worshiped the Deities of Lakshmi and Narayana. After some friendly talks, Shri Chaitanya began posing serious philosophical questions before Vyenkata. He asked why Lakshmidēvi, the chaste consort of Narayana, desired to enter the *rasa* dance with Krishna. This ignited an in-depth discussion on transcendental mellows, contrasting the personality of Krishna and Vishnu. Vyenkata eventually conceded that since Krishna exhibits a variety of qualities and relationships that cannot be found in any other manifestation of God, He is indeed the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Thus, he concluded that devotional service to Krishna is the ultimate form of worship.



After a series of ecstatic discussions, Shri Chaitanya offered a final blessing to Ramananda by revealing His combined form of Radha and Krishna.

Shri Chaitanya instigated a wave of spiritual ecstasy in South India and thousands became Vaishnavas. However, one may naturally question why that influence has seemingly disappeared. Why don't we find masses of Gaudiya Vaishnavas in South India today?

Although He travelled widely, Shri Chaitanya never started an organised movement in South India. He never established a structured institution, erected temples or scribed books. Thus, as decades passed, the awareness and understanding gradually diminished. Only later, when Shri Chaitanya sent the Six Goswamis to Vrindavana, did He formally establish the *sankirtan* movement which would continue on for generations to come.

Nevertheless, the South India tour was significant in other ways. Firstly, the individual meetings with Ramananda Raya and Gopal Bhatta (son of Vyenkata Bhatta) were of paramount importance. Ramananda became one of Shri Chaitanya's closest associates and Gopal Bhatta became one of the Six Goswamis. Secondly, the philosophical discourses on that tour established cardinal principles of Gaudiya Vaishnava theology, and the discovery of important scriptural writings further enriched Shri Chaitanya's mission. Thirdly, the South India tour demonstrated the unparalleled potency of *nama-sankirtan*, which could transform the hearts of even spiritually-averse individuals. If it could work there, it could work anywhere!

[9.335-9.365]

After two years of continuous travelling, Shri Chaitanya returned to Jagannatha Puri for the next phase of His preaching. Arriving at the Jagannatha Temple, waves of trembling, perspiration, tears and jubilation swept His body. The Vaishnavas overflowed with happiness to see Shri Chaitanya again. It was as though their very life had returned to them.

(See Appendix: Shri Chaitanya's Travels)

Returning to HQ

[Madhya 10]

Note: The beginning sections of Chapters 10-14 narrate the story of King Pratapurudra. This entire episode will be discussed later in this chapter.

[10.24-10.74]

Having extensively toured South India, Shri Chaitanya now focused His energies on cementing the *sankirtan* movement in Jagannatha Puri. Maharaja Prataparudra, the King of Orissa, had arranged residence for Shri Chaitanya at Kasi Mishra's home, where the community of devotees all came to meet Him. After that happy meeting, Shri Chaitanya ordered the errant Kala Krishnadasa, His personal servant who had been allured by tribal women, to discontinue his service. Feeling compassion for Krishnadasa, the devotees proposed he travel to Navadvip and inform the community that Shri Chaitanya had arrived in Puri. In this way, Krishnadasa would remain in the association of devotees.

[10.75-10.190]

Arriving in Navadvip, Kala Krishnadasa excitedly informed everyone of Shri Chaitanya's return to Jagannatha Puri. They immediately made preparations to visit. Two special personalities travelled with them:

- **Svarupa Damodara** – formerly known as Purushottama Acharya, he possessed a profound understanding of Krishna's qualities, activities and relationships. Being expert in the nuances of transcendental mellow, Svarupa eventually became the personal secretary of Shri Chaitanya, assisting the Lord in times of devotional ecstasy.
- **Govinda das** – was a humble disciple of Ishvara Puri, who was instructed to become Shri Chaitanya's personal servant. Shri Chaitanya reluctantly accepted this service from His godbrother, and Govinda became a shining emblem of selflessness and unwavering dedication.

Preparations for Rathayatra

[Madhya 11 & 12]

Jagannatha Puri is world-famous for the Rathayatra festival – the annual occasion when Lord Jagannatha mounts His magnificent chariots, leaves the temple compound, and indiscriminately gives His audience to one and all. Shri Chaitanya encouraged the Bengali Vaishnavas to participate in this unique festival and assist Him in experiencing the depths of transcendental ecstasy.

[11.61-11.123]

Prema-Kirtan arrives – After the Snanayatra festival, which takes place two weeks prior to Rathayatra, Shri Chaitanya travelled to Alalanatha. When He heard that the Bengali Vaishnavas were scheduled to arrive, He immediately returned to Jagannatha Puri. As the procession of devotees appeared, Gopinath Acharya praised the glorious character and qualities of each devotee. Although Maharaja Prataparudra had witnessed innumerable *kirtan* parties, he sensed something unique about their chanting. Sarvabhauma explained: “*This sweet transcendental sound is a special creation of the Lord known as prema-sankirtan, congregational chanting in love of Godhead.*”⁴⁰ Due to their spontaneous love, the Bengali devotees instinctively ran to meet Shri Chaitanya, even before taking *darshan* of Jagannatha. The golden renunciant was their life and soul! Deeply inspired by their natural devotion, the King arranged all facilities for their stay.

[11.124-11.212]

Meeting Shri Chaitanya – Gopinath Acharya and Sarvabhauma witnessed the meeting of Shri Chaitanya and the Bengali Vaishnavas at Kasi Mishra’s house. Shri Chaitanya lovingly received each one of them, expressing His appreciation with heartfelt words. Feeling great love for Haridas Thakur, whose life was completely dedicated to chanting of the holy names, Shri Chaitanya personally arranged his place of residence in Jagannatha Puri. Thereafter, all the devotees happily took *prasadam* together.

[11.213-11.243]

Beda-Kirtan begins – Shri Chaitanya then inaugurated the *beda-kirtan* by systematically organising the singing parties and sending them in four different directions. Krishnadasa describes how the tumultuous vibration of *nama-sankirtan* reverberated throughout the fourteen planetary systems.⁴¹ Inspired by their enthusiastic chanting, Shri Chaitanya expanded Himself and entered all four parties. Tears of love gushed from Shri Chaitanya’s eyes like a syringe as He danced in transcendental abandon, causing everyone to drown in wonder.

[12.71-12.136]

Cleansing of Gundicha – Prior to the annual Rathayatra, the Gundicha



Shri Chaitanya lovingly received the Bengali Vaishnavas at the house of Kasi Mishra, expressing His appreciation with heartfelt words.

temple (where the procession ends) is thoroughly cleansed in preparation to receive Lord Jagannatha. Shri Chaitanya equipped everyone with the necessary instruments and personally guided the temple cleaning. He systematically organised the devotees, each of whom served cooperatively to achieve the task, maintaining a joyous and devotional spirit throughout. This important pastime is synonymous to the cleansing of our own hearts, in which we attempt to free ourselves of undesirable qualities (*anartha-nivrtti*), so we can truly welcome the Lord into our lives.⁴²

[12.137-12.222]

In the company of His close associates, Shri Chaitanya relished the sublime process of chanting, dancing and feasting. Through loving and humorous exchanges, the Lord exhibited the sweetness of spiritual relationships. Thus, the scene was set for the historic Rathayatra festival.

Before the ecstasy of Rathayatra could manifest, certain things had to be in place. First the devotees arrived, later there was congregational chanting in the *beda-kirtan*, and finally the cleansing of the Gundicha temple. In the same way, before we can experience the ecstasy of spiritual life, Vishvanath Chakravarti Thakur outlines some crucial stages in our spiritual development:⁴³

- 1) *Sadhu-sanga* – association of devotees.
- 2) *Bhajana-kriya* – determined chanting of the holy name.
- 3) *Anartha-nivrtti* – cleansing of the heart.

According to this great Vaishnava, completion of these stages brings one to the platform of *nistha* (mature spiritual conviction). This is the platform from which one can experience the profound happiness of spiritual love, known as *ruci* (attraction), *asakti* (attachment), *bhava* (ecstasy) and *prema* (pure unalloyed love).

The Ecstatic Festival of Chariots [Madhya 13 & 14]

Thousands of pilgrims visit Jagannatha Puri every year for the annual Rathayatra festival. Lasting ten days, it consists of the procession, the stay at Gundicha and the return journey to Jagannatha Temple. This historic

occasion was the perfect stage for Shri Chaitanya to fulfil both purposes of His descent.

[13.1-13.110]

The external preaching – In the morning, Shri Chaitanya and His associates witnessed the mounting of the Deities upon the grand chariots. As the festival commenced, the carts began to move, but would unpredictably stop and start regardless of the vigour with which the ropes were pulled. Ultimately, Jagannatha decides where and when to go! Shri Chaitanya organised seven *sankirtan* parties and systematically placed singers, instrument players and dancers in each one. He then expanded Himself and ecstatically danced in each party! As the crowds swelled, the atmosphere reached fever-pitch, and Shri Chaitanya enmeshed everyone in the bliss of *nama-sankirtan* by experiencing it Himself.

[13.111-13.179]

The internal mood – Shri Chaitanya’s internal meditation during the Rathayatra was very special. While dancing, He recited verses which embodied Shrimati Radharani’s deep mood of separation. After Krishna had left Vrindavana, the *vrajabasis* (residents of Vrindavana) met Him again in the holy land of Kuruksheetra. At that time Shrimati Radharani desired to take Krishna back to Vrindavana, where They could again engage in youthful pastimes, free from grandeur and formality. Shri Chaitanya leading Lord Jagannatha toward the Gundicha temple corresponded to Shrimati Radharani’s leading Krishna back to Vrindavana. This is the esoteric meaning behind Rathayatra.⁴⁴

[14.1-14.73]

At the conclusion of the procession, Shri Chaitanya entered a solitary garden to recuperate. Disguised in simple attire, Maharaja Prataparudra humbly approached Shri Chaitanya, began to massage His legs, and recited the auspicious song of the *gopis* from the *Shrimad-Bhagavatam*. Shri Chaitanya spontaneously embraced the king, causing Prataparudra to become overwhelmed with happiness, thrilled at being the fortunate recipient of such incredible mercy. After honouring lunch *prasadam* with the devotees, Shri Chaitanya and His associates moved the Rathayatra cart until it reached the Gundicha temple.

[14.74-14.257]

Absorbed in remembering exchanges of Radha and Krishna in Vrindavana, Shri Chaitanya would re-enact them in the gardens surrounding Gundicha, and even performed water pastimes in the Indradyumna sarovar. They also observed the Hera Panchami festival, where Lakshmi's maidservants arrive at Gundicha to reclaim Lord Jagannatha. At this time, Svarupa Damodara began to poetically describe the intricacies of the Lord's loving relationships. He also explained the supreme glory of Shri Vrindavana dham – *“The damsels of Vrindavana, the gopis, are super goddesses of fortune. The enjoyer in Vrindavana is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Krishna. The trees there are all wish-fulfilling trees, and the land is made of transcendental touchstone. The water is all nectar, the talking is singing, the walking is dancing, and the constant companion of Krishna is His flute. The effulgence of transcendental bliss is experienced everywhere. Therefore Vrindavana-dham is the only relishable abode.”*¹⁴⁵

From the age of five Shрила Prabhupada organised an annual Rathayatra festival in his local neighbourhood. His father bought him a three-foot-high Rathayatra cart and helped him decorate it, following the details of the Jagannatha Puri originals. During Shрила Prabhupada's Rathayatra festival, his friends pulled the cart with a rope while Prabhupada chanted, played a clay drum, and led the singing, dancing, and distribution of *prasadam*.

Much later, in 1967, Shрила Prabhupada inspired the first Rathayatra held outside of India. His disciples rented a flatbed truck in the Haight-Ashbury district of San Francisco, decorated it with flowers, and placed the Deities on the back. Proceeding through the sunny streets towards the beach, they chanted enthusiastically and distributed *prasadam* to the amazed onlookers. Half a century later, Rathayatra is performed in most major cities around the world each year. The inconceivably auspicious effect of Rathayatra is described in the Brahmanda Purana: *“A person who sees the Lord's Rathayatra festival and then stands up to receive the Lord can purge all kinds of sinful results from his body.”*



Ratha Yatra was the perfect stage for Shri Chaitanya to fulfil both purposes of His descent: the external preaching, and the internal meditation.

King Prataparudra's Strong Desire [Madhya 10-14]

Maharaja Prataparudra was the King of Orissa, and though a powerful political figure, was also a meek and humble Vaishnava. Chapters Ten to Fourteen describe his ardent desire to meet Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, and the various means he employed to receive that special audience.

[10.1-10.23]

After hearing about Shri Chaitanya, Prataparudra requested Sarvabhauma to arrange a personal interview with Him. As a renunciant, however, Shri Chaitanya strictly avoided the intimate company of those involved in worldly affairs. Nevertheless, Sarvabhauma agreed to place the request before Shri Chaitanya upon His return from South India. Prataparudra was happy to wait, and arranged the house of Kasi Mishra as a suitable residence for Shri Chaitanya in Jagannatha Puri.

[11.1-11.60]

When Shri Chaitanya arrived back, Sarvabhauma welcomed Him and waited for an opportune moment to present Prataparudra's request. When he did, Shri Chaitanya flatly refused, adamant that it was inappropriate for a renunciant to meet royalty. Sarvabhauma explained that the King was a great devotee, but Shri Chaitanya was not willing to budge. Later, Ramananda Raya arrived in Jagannatha Puri to reside with Shri Chaitanya, having been granted full retirement from government duties by Prataparudra. Ramananda thus began to express his immense gratitude for the king's magnanimity and broadmindedness. Shri Chaitanya appreciated the king's selfless service, and assured Ramananda that it would bring him great fortune. Meanwhile, however, Prataparudra was devastated by Shri Chaitanya's refusal to see him and resolved to end his life. Sarvabhauma requested the king to be patient, advising him to meet Shri Chaitanya at the conclusion of the Rathayatra.

[12.1-12.68]

Prataparudra eagerly requested the devotees to submit another petition to Shri Chaitanya on his behalf. Headed by Sarvabhauma, they went to the residence of Shri Chaitanya and again expressed the intense desire of the king. Although Shri Chaitanya's heart was softened, He was still

hesitant. When Nityananda suggested that the Lord send His garment as a consolation, Shri Chaitanya agreed, and Prataparudra was very happy to receive it. Later, when Ramananda petitioned on behalf of Prataparudra, Shri Chaitanya agreed to meet the king's son, explaining that meeting the son was as good as meeting the father. Although grateful for these gifts of mercy, Prataparudra still yearned for a personal audience with his worshipable Lord.

[13.52-13.62 / 13.180-13.188]

On the day of Rathayatra, Prataparudra spontaneously swept in front of Lord Jagannatha's cart. Shri Chaitanya was pleased with his meek and humble approach and thus awarded Prataparudra a transcendental vision during the procession. As the carts progressed towards Gundicha, Shri Chaitanya fell to the ground in ecstasy and Prataparudra spontaneously caught Him. The Lord feigned anger to instruct His associates, and though the king became fearful, Sarvabhauma reassured him that everything would work out.

[14.1-14.22]

At the conclusion of the procession, Shri Chaitanya went to rest in the Gundicha gardens. Dressed as a common man, Prataparudra arrived there and began massaging Shri Chaitanya's feet. When he recited the exquisite verses from the Tenth Canto of Shrimad-Bhagavatam, Shri Chaitanya went into an ecstatic state and spontaneously embraced him. Prataparudra was overjoyed, knowing that he had finally received the full mercy of the Lord.

The saga of Maharaja Prataparudra is very instructive for all spiritual practitioners. His ultimate success was due to three principle qualities which he perfectly embodied:

- **Desire:** the king developed a burning desire to see Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. Fully convinced that his kingdom, wealth, power and position could not bring him happiness, he instead switched his focus towards the spiritual.
- **Direction:** in his endeavours for spiritual success, the king enlisted the help of saintly persons. Such spiritual company offers guidance,

inspiration and access to God. Their devotional fervour can overflow onto us and their good wishes can attract divine attention.

- **Determination:** Prataparudra possessed unbreakable determination and perseverance, and all setbacks simply fuelled his spiritual desire. Obstacles are what you see when you take your eyes off the goal. Without determination and focus, even small and insignificant issues can seem like insurmountable stumbling blocks in our spiritual journey.

Expanding the Mercy

[Madhya 15]

[15.1-15.36]

The Bengali devotees remained in Jagannatha Puri for four continuous months and celebrated many festivals including Janmashtami, Dusshera, Rasayatra and Diwali. This enlivening pilgrimage became an annual tradition.

[15.37-15.67]

Shri Chaitanya had descended with the mission to inundate the entire world with the holy name. Thus, after inspiring and empowering His close associates with this ecstatic spiritual experience, He requested them to expand the mercy beyond Jagannatha Puri. He instructed Advaita Acharya, who was the head of the Bengali Vaishnavas, to inundate Navadvip and the surrounding areas with the *sankirtan* movement. He ordered Nityananda Prabhu to preach in wider Bengal, assigning some devotees to assist him. He encouraged Shrivats Thakur to continue the congregational chanting at his home. In this way, Shri Chaitanya began to weave a network of preachers who would continue to expand His mission.

[15.68-15.181]

In addition to these leading preachers, other devotees were contributing to the *sankirtan* movement by their gleaming example and unique abilities. Shri Chaitanya glorified Raghava Pandita for his devotional offerings, Shivananda Sena for his selfless service to the devotees, Gunaraja Khan for his writing skills, Raghunandana for being an ideal son, Mukunda for his deep and profound love, Murari Gupta for his devotion to Rama, and Vasudeva Datta for his unparalleled compassion. These interactions



On the day of Rathayatra, Maharaja Prataparudra spontaneously swept in front of Lord Jagannatha's cart. Pleased with his meek and humble attitude, Shri Chaitanya later bestowed His full mercy upon the King.

highlight how personal Shri Chaitanya was with each and every devotee. Though followed by thousands of people, He took the time to understand, appreciate and guide His associates individually.

[15.182-15.302]

Despite Shri Chaitanya's magnanimous personality, a few wayward souls were adamant to find fault in Him. When Sarvabhauma invited Shri Chaitanya for a *prasadam* feast at his home, the Lord humbly accepted the various items. Sarvabhauma's son-in-law, Amogha, however, began to criticise Shri Chaitanya, positing that acceptance of such opulent foods was in violation of His *sannyasa* principles. Sarvabhauma and his wife were aghast at Amogha's comments and immediately disowned their son-in-law, profusely begging the Lord for forgiveness. Shri Chaitanya, however, was unaffected by the incident, and always humbly welcomed the correction of even irrational critics. Later, as a result of the offense, Shri Chaitanya discovered that Sarvabhauma and his wife were fasting for atonement, while Amogha was dying of cholera. When Shri Chaitanya visited Amogha, urging him to give up his envious mentality, the boy's heart was transformed and he began to chant in great ecstasy. After begging forgiveness, Amogha became an unalloyed devotee happily engaged in the Lord's service.

A Vaishnava is like a honeybee, attracted to the positive and pleasing, whereas a materialist is like a fly, searching for the dirty and defective. Shri Chaitanya was ever-enlivened to glorify each Vaishnava. Indeed, when He described their qualities it was as if He had five mouths! Amogha, on the other hand, was always looking for a fault, and even criticised Shri Chaitanya when there was absolutely no grounds for it. Only when his critical mentality was mercifully extricated by the Lord, did his heart become a fertile place for devotion to sprout.

By adopting the mood of encouragement, appreciation, and positivity, we not only grow our own spirituality, but can create miraculous change in others. Shrila Prabhupada is a prime example. Having spent his entire life amidst refined and immaculate spiritual culture, he arrived in New York's skid row and lived side-by-side with bohemians, acidheads, potheads and hippies. He saw beyond their misunderstandings, frustrations and

difficulties, detecting the spark of genuine spiritual enthusiasm and sincerity within them. He fanned that spark, and ignited a fire of devotion that could incinerate all their issues. Convinced that every soul is amazing, he diligently endeavoured to enliven that spirit.

“Treat a man as he is and he will remain as he is. Treat a man as he can and should be and he will become as he can and should be.”

- Goethe (German poet)

1. Invocation

2. Incarnation

3. Education

4. Transformation

5. Renunciation

6. Propagation

7. Aspiration

8. Organisation

9. Appreciation

10. Correction

11. Intoxication

12. Instruction



Maḍhya-Līla I Chapters 16-18

After many failed attempts, Shri Chaitanya finally fulfils His long-cherished aspiration to visit the holy land of Vrindavana. He rediscovers sacred landmarks and visits the places where Lord Krishna enacted His pastimes.

An Unfulfilled Aspiration

[Madhya 16]

The aspiration and eagerness to visit Vrindavana had been brewing within Shri Chaitanya for many years. After being initiated by Ishvara Puri in Gaya, He desired to go straight to Vrindavana. The urgent need, however, was to inaugurate the *sankirtan* movement in Navadvip. After accepting *sannyasa*, Shri Chaitanya set off for Vrindavana, but was misdirected to Shantipur by Nityananda Prabhu. His attempts failed for the second time.

[16.1-16.83]

While residing in Jagannatha Puri, Shri Chaitanya again resolved to visit Vrindavana, but, fearing unbearable separation, the local devotees dissuaded him. As per tradition, the devotees from Bengal came to visit Shri Chaitanya in Puri during the four months of the rainy season, and it therefore became increasingly difficult for Him to leave. After celebrating all the festivals and personally instructing each devotee, Shri Chaitanya encouraged them to return home.

[16.84-16.290] [Madhya 1.155-1.232]

After three years of such meetings, Shri Chaitanya devised a new plan to visit Vrindavana, placing it before Sarvabhauma and Ramananda. After receiving their permission, Shri Chaitanya departed in great anticipation towards Krishna's holy village. Fearing the pain of separation, the devotees of Puri were willing to abandon all their responsibilities to travel with Him, but Shri Chaitanya forbade them to do so. As He journeyed forward, Shri Chaitanya attracted thousands of followers, and changed the hearts of even Muslim villagers. Arriving at Ramakeli, He met the great devotees, Rupa and Sanatana, who were working for the Muslim occupational government of Bengal. Overjoyed, they surrendered to their master, but begged Him to avoid visiting Vrindavana with such crowds due to the criticism and dangerous attention He would attract. Shri Chaitanya acquiesced and went back towards Jagannatha Puri, travelling via Shantipur to advise Raghunath das Goswami in the matter of renunciation.

Upon arrival in Puri, Shri Chaitanya made a firm resolve to visit Vrindavana. This time nothing would stop Him. His desire was becoming stronger and stronger, and the failed attempts simply fuelled His anticipation to an

overwhelming extent.

Holy places have always been focal points for pilgrims, who make long (and often arduous) journeys to reinvigorate their faith. Pilgrimage is not just a physical journey to a special place but also an inner spiritual journey towards transcendence. For Christians and Jews that holy place may be Bethlehem or Jerusalem, for Muslims its Mecca and Medina, and for Buddhists it's Bodh Gaya. For devotees of Krishna, Vrindavana is their cherished destination.

Krishna eternally resides in the spiritual realm of Vrindavana with His loving associates. In that divine abode, the selfless relationships generate an ocean of joy in Krishna and His devotees. That place is our true home. The earthly Vrindavana (Bhauma Vrindavana) is considered identical to Vrindavana in the spiritual world (Goloka Vrindavana) and thus it holds a special place in the heart of all Vaishnavas. Thus, when Krishna appeared as Shri Chaitanya, He exhibited this intense eagerness to visit Vrindavana. Pilgrimage is an essential devotional experience for every devotee, and Shri Chaitanya taught this by His personal example.

The Journey Home

[Madhya 17]

[17.1-17.23]

Although Shri Chaitanya planned to travel alone, Ramananda Raya and Svarupa Damodara strongly insisted that two devotees accompany Him. Balabhadra Bhattacharya would collect alms and cook meals, while an assistant *brahmana* would carry Shri Chaitanya's cloth and water pot. This would allow Shri Chaitanya to freely chant and dance on His way to Vrindavana. Having settled the practicalities, Shri Chaitanya requested permission from His worshipable Lord Jagannatha, and slipped away in the dead of night to fulfil His long-cherished aspiration.

[17.24-81]

He travelled via the Jharikhanda forest, chanting and dancing in unbounded happiness. His ecstasy transformed the fierce tigers, powerful elephants and timid deer, who all symphonically chanted "*Krishna Krishna!*" The forest reminded Shri Chaitanya of Vrindavana, the transcendental

abode where everyone lives together in spiritual harmony. He carried the spirit of Vrindavana with Him, and bestowed that holy influence upon the places and people He visited.

[17.82-17.148]

When Shri Chaitanya arrived in Varanasi, He met Tapan Mishra and his son, Raghunath Bhatta. The young boy, who would later become one of the six Goswamis of Vrindavana, humbly served the Lord with great devotion. Chandrashekhar also came to see the Lord, and out of loving affection, Shri Chaitanya stayed there for ten days. In a town swarming with impersonalists, Chandrashekhar and Tapan Mishra were practically the only Vaishnavas present. The local leader of the Mayavadi *sannyasis* was Prakashananda Saraswati, and when he heard of Shri Chaitanya's *sankirtan* movement he flatly dismissed it as sentimental and emotional. He openly blasphemed Shri Chaitanya as a pretender and charlatan who was hypnotizing people en masse. When Shri Chaitanya heard these criticisms He mildly smiled, contemplating how to free the inhabitants of Varanasi from their dry scholarship and academic approach to spirituality. Nevertheless, He avoided confronting the *mayavadis* on this occasion. For now, the compelling priority was to visit Vrindavana.

[17.149-17.234]

Travelling via Prayag, Shri Chaitanya approached the sacred land of Mathura. Upon arrival, He fell to the ground and offered obeisances in ecstatic love. In this incarnation it would be His first and last visit to the holy *dham*; the appreciation He felt was indescribable. When Shri Chaitanya met the Sanodiya *brahmana*, a disciple of Madhavendra Puri, He immediately felt a deep connection with him. They continued the pilgrimage together, feeling increasing anticipation and excitement as they approached the sacred forest of Vrindavana. When they eventually arrived, Shri Chaitanya became immersed in an ocean of transcendental feeling as He recounted the divine pastimes that Shri Krishna had enacted 5000 years ago. He had finally arrived home!



Travelling via the Jharikhanda forest, chanting and dancing in unbounded happiness, Shri Chaitanya's ecstasy transformed the fierce tigers, powerful elephants and timid deer, who all symphonically chanted "*Krishna Krishna*."

In the Upadeshamrita (Nectar of Instruction), Rupa Goswami declares: *“The holy place known as Mathura is spiritually superior to Vaikuntha, the transcendental world, because the Lord appeared there. Superior to Mathura-Puri is the transcendental forest of Vrindavana because of Krishna’s rasa-lila pastimes. And superior to the forest of Vrindavana is Govardhana Hill, for it was raised by the divine hand of Shri Krishna and was the site of His various loving pastimes. And, above all, the super excellent Shri Radha-kund stands supreme, for it is over flooded with the ambrosial nectarine love of the Lord of Gokula, Shri Krishna.”*⁴⁶

[18.1-18.14]

One major event during Shri Chaitanya’s *parikrama* was the discovery of Radha-kund. Arriving at Arista gram, the omniscient Shri Chaitanya identified it as the area where Aristasura had been killed, and where Radha and Krishna later formed sacred ponds of liquid love. Seeing two bodies of water in two paddy fields, the Lord ascertained that formerly they were called Shri Radha-kund and Shyama-kund. In these waters, Shri Krishna and Shrimati Radharani enact their pastimes of love, and anyone who bathes there inevitably awakens their own pure love of God.

[18.15-18.54]

Shri Chaitanya continued on and visited Kusum Sarovar, Govardhana Village, Brahma Kund and the Harideva temple. Shri Chaitanya had a strong desire to see the Deity of Gopal, but out of respect and reverence He refused to walk on top of Govardhana Hill.⁴⁷ Thus, on the pretext of a Muslim invasion, Gopal arranged to come down from the hill for a few days to facilitate Shri Chaitanya’s desires. Such are the intimate and personal interactions of the Lord. Indeed, Gopal granted a similar audience to Rupa Goswami and other great Vaishnavas.

[18.55-18.91]

The tour of Vraja took Shri Chaitanya to Kamyavan, Khadiravana, Bhandiravana, Bhadravana, Bilvavana, Lohavana and Mahavana. Shri Chaitanya completed His *parikrama* by returning to Mathura. Due to the large crowds of people, Shri Chaitanya relocated to Akrura-tirtha



Shri Chaitanya embraced a rock from Govardhana Hill and immediately became overwhelmed with ecstatic love.

and continued to visit various pastime places from there. He daily went to the sacred places along the Yamuna river, including Kesi Ghat, Imli Tala, Dvadasaditya Hill and Kaliya hrada. Here, a Rajput *ksatriya* named Krishnadasa, who was an advanced Vaishnava, also joined the Lord.

[18.92-18.133]

One day, a crowd of people approached Shri Chaitanya claiming they had witnessed Krishna dancing on the Kaliya serpent at night. It had become a sensation in the town, and even Balabhadra, the Lord's servant, decided to go there and witness the event. Shri Chaitanya rebuked his servant and cautioned the devotees to avoid being misled by speculation and hearsay. The rumour did in fact turn out to be a misunderstanding, and Shri Chaitanya instead taught them that sincere devotional service was the real way to perceive Krishna's eternal pastimes.

[18.134-18.229]

As the Lord's ecstasy and absorption increased, the crowds also swelled, and Shri Chaitanya's followers felt it was time to leave Vrindavana. After expressing gratitude and appreciation for their assistance in bringing Him to Vrindavana, Shri Chaitanya led them on the homeward journey. While passing through Gokula, a cowherd boy played his flute, causing Shri Chaitanya to enter a fit of ecstasy and fall to the ground unconscious. When a group of Muslim soldiers suddenly arrived, they surmised that the Lord's associates were robbers who had attacked the *sannyasi*. Fortunately, Shri Chaitanya eventually regained full consciousness and clarified the entire situation. After a fruitful dialogue with them, in which Shri Chaitanya used the Koran to establish the culture of devotion, they all converted to Vaishnavism and became known as the *Pathan Vaishnavas*.

Holy sites are extraordinary places brimming with spiritual energy and blessings for all. Elaborate worship takes place in temples that bustle with pilgrims, and constant devotional chanting fills the atmosphere at all hours. These are cities that never sleep, where the daily sights and sounds are a constant reminder of God. Pilgrimages afford us the opportunity to associate with saintly people, develop a more personal connection with God, and dive deeper into our spiritual practices. Shri Prabhupada explains that anyone who circumambulates these holy places becomes

free from the cycle of repeated birth and death in this material world. In fact, all benefits derived from spiritual activities multiply manifold in such sacred sites.

But to gain these spiritual advantages and blessings, we must approach these places with a sincere attitude and humble heart. Sacred sites must be viewed with the eyes of devotion. External vision detects heart-wrenching poverty, decrepit infrastructure and widespread pollution, but one must go beyond this material veneer. Thus, it is always recommended that one visit holy places in the company of mature devotees of Krishna. They help us to go beyond superficiality, so we can see the heart and spirit of the holy *dham*.

1. Invocation

2. Incarnation

3. Education

4. Transformation

5. Renunciation

6. Propagation

7. Aspiration

8. Organisation

9. Appreciation

10. Correction

11. Intoxication

12. Instruction



Maḍhya-Līla | Chapters 19-25

Before returning to Puri, Shri Chaitanya systematically educates Rupa and Sanatana in the science of devotion. He sends them to Vrindavana with the plan to establish and organise the *sankirtan* movement.

Systematic Documentation

Due to His extensive travelling, inspirational public chanting and fruitful philosophical dialogues, Shri Chaitanya had generated a widespread appreciation of the *sankirtan* movement. Next, the crucial need was to systematically document and organise His mission. Why?

- To establish uniform standards and consistency among followers in different geographical locations.
- To preserve the purity and authenticity of the process for generations to come.
- To facilitate wider proliferation of the *nama-sankirtan* movement.

Shri Chaitanya gave the Goswamis of Vrindavana specific instructions and guidance in this regard. These ‘Six fathers of Chaitanya’s church’⁴⁸ were headed by Rupa and Sanatana, the direct disciples and confidential associates of Shri Chaitanya. They were well-educated and managerially streetwise, but also spiritually deep and spotless in character. They gave up their lofty positions in society to fully devote their time and energy to missionary work. Shri Chaitanya thus identified them as the ideal candidates to lead the *sankirtan* movement.

The ‘process of organisation’ began on Shri Chaitanya’s return journey from Vrindavana to Puri. As He travelled back, He stopped at Prayag and Varanasi, where He spent quality time instructing Rupa and Sanatana respectively. These historic teachings form the foundation of the entire *bhakti-yoga* process, and delineate the complete science of devotion on the journey towards pure, unbounded, ecstatic love of God.

Rupa and Sanatana’s Escape

[Madhya 19 & 20]

[19.1-19.60]

After their initial meeting with Shri Chaitanya, Rupa and Sanatana began planning their escape from Ramakeli in order to fully dedicate themselves to the *sankirtan* movement. Rupa Goswami made the first move, dividing his accumulated wealth between his relatives and the saintly persons, carefully keeping aside an emergency fund for the future. Freeing

himself from all social ties, Rupa joyfully set out to meet Shri Chaitanya. Travelling with his younger brother Vallabha, they eventually met the Lord in Prayag. Feeling deep gratitude and appreciation, they humbly prostrated themselves before Shri Chaitanya and offered heartfelt prayers of glorification. For the next ten days, Shri Chaitanya instructed Rupa at Dasashvamedha Ghat, freely revealing the most profound spiritual insights to him.

[19.13-19.35 / 20.1-20.93]

Sanatana Goswami, however, could not escape as easily. Losing all interest in governmental affairs, he feigned sickness and stayed home to discuss the Shrimad-Bhagavatam with *brahmana* scholars. One day, when the Nawab unexpectedly appeared, he was shocked and infuriated by the scene, questioning Sanatana as to his intentions. When Sanatana made clear he wanted to leave, the Nawab ruthlessly arrested and imprisoned him. Rupa heard of his brother's plight and secretly informed him of the emergency fund he had kept, suggesting a plan to bribe the jailer. Sanatana Goswami did just that. Using his expert diplomatic skills, he gained release from the prison cell and began a gruelling journey towards Varanasi. In a dishevelled state he arrived at Chandrasekhar's home and humbly submitted himself before his Lord, much to Shri Chaitanya's delight. For the next two months, Shri Chaitanya personally instructed Sanatana Goswami in the science of devotion.

[19.61-19.134]

During this period, Vallabha Bhatta and Raghupati Upadhyaya also came to meet Shri Chaitanya. They witnessed the ecstatic mood of Shri Chaitanya and the endearing character of Rupa Goswami.

A sage was once asked to describe the nature of illusion. He ran out into the courtyard, slung his arms around a tree, and began shouting "Let me go! Let me go." It was a graphic response. We desire freedom from the material world, yet we maintain so many attachments. The escape of Rupa and Sanatana depicts the soul's disentanglement from material affairs and subsequent dedication to spiritual life. For most, the complete abandonment of family and society may neither be possible nor recommended. The principle of renunciation, however, is universal

for all aspiring spiritualists: “Renunciation is the basic principle sustaining the lives of Shri Chaitanya’s devotees. Seeing this renunciation, Shri Chaitanya, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, is extremely satisfied.”⁷⁴⁹

Worldly life entails awkward dealings with money, possessions, people and career to name but a few. One may understandably develop the notion that such a lifestyle is incompatible with spiritual goals. True renunciation, however, does not entail a mere abandonment of such dealings and activities. One must renounce the mentality that one is the ‘controller’ and ‘enjoyer’ of all his deeds. By offering the results of one’s daily work (money, knowledge, influence, and other such benefits) in service to God, knowing God to be the ultimate enjoyer and controller, one achieves the same state of renunciation as those who physically leave everything behind.

Teachings to Rupa Goswami

[Madhya 19]

During the ten-day discourse, Shri Chaitanya taught Rupa Goswami the most confidential truths about *bhakti-yoga*.⁵⁰

[19.135-19.150]

The rarity of devotional service – innumerable living entities are transmigrating between different species of life, and only a rare soul becomes a devotee of Krishna.

[19.151-19.163]

The seed of devotion – a greatly fortunate soul attains the seed of devotion (*bhakti-lata-bija*) through the divine mercy of guru and Krishna (*guru-krishna prasada*). Shri Chaitanya explains how this seed sprouts and fructifies over time, provided it is carefully cultivated and protected.

[19.164-19.182]

Pure devotional service – the definition, practice and characteristics of pure devotion for Krishna are extensively described. This divine love (*prema*) manifests in different stages, and Shri Chaitanya further describes the different components of it.

[19.183-19.236]





Sanatana arrived at Chandrasekhar's home in a dishevelled state and humbly submitted himself before Shri Chaitanya. For the next two months, the Lord personally instructed Sanatana Goswami in the science of devotion.

Relationship with Krishna – Shri Chaitanya discusses the five primary relationships with Krishna, offers examples, and outlines the unique nature of *vraja-bhakti* (the loving devotion of Vrindavana’s residents) which is free from awe and reverence.

[19.237-19.254]

Although he desired to stay longer, Rupa was instructed by Shri Chaitanya to leave for Vrindavana, so he could begin laying foundations for the *sankirtan* movement. Meanwhile, Shri Chaitanya travelled onwards to Varanasi to meet Sanatana Goswami.

Teachings to Sanatana Goswami [Madhya 20-24]

[20.94-20.107]

Sanatana Goswami humbly presented his inquiries before Shri Chaitanya, who patiently spent two months discussing different aspects of Krishna’s enchanting personality.⁵¹ A multitude of topics were discussed in that period:

[20.108-20.151]

Energies of the Lord – Shri Chaitanya describes the material, spiritual and marginal energies of Krishna. With the help of *sadhus* and *sastra*, the living entity can disentangle himself from the material energy and re-establish his eternal relationship with Krishna. Shri Chaitanya cites the story of ‘Sarvajna the astrologer’ to illustrate how this invaluable treasure of a relationship with Krishna can be discovered through *bhakti-yoga*.

[20.152-20.404]

Aspects of the Absolute Truth – Shri Chaitanya discusses the three aspects of the Absolute Truth, namely *brahman*, *paramatma* and *bhagavan*, and also gives a full description of the various Vishnu expansions. He elucidates the six varieties of *avatars* (*purusa*, *lila*, *guna*, *manvantara*, *yuga* and *saktyavesa*) and establishes Krishna as *svayam-bhagavan*, the original source of everything. Krishna performs His eternal pastimes in multiple universes simultaneously, although His most confidential and intimate pastimes are exclusively enacted in Shri Vrindavana dham.

[21.1-21.146]

Spiritual & Material universes – Shri Chaitanya gives a description of Devi dham, Mahesha dham, Hari dham and Goloka dham (Gokula, Mathura, Dvaraka). He extensively describes the qualities and opulence of Krishna which enchants everyone in these universes. The full extent of Krishna's greatness, however, is unfathomable, even to Brahma.

[22.1-22.103]

Process of devotional service – Shri Chaitanya reiterates that devotional service, triggered by the association of devotees, is the means to reconnect with Krishna. By describing the various gradations and qualities of a devotee, Shri Chaitanya teaches how to derive maximum benefit when in spiritual company.

[22.104-23.68]

Regulated & spontaneous devotion – Shri Chaitanya defines the stages of *vaidhi-bhakti* (regulative devotional service) and *raganuga-bhakti* (spontaneous devotional service). Expanding on regulative devotion, Shri Chaitanya delineates the 64 items of devotional service that awaken one's dormant consciousness of Krishna. He then discusses spontaneous devotion, the unique character of Vrindavana's residents, the symptoms of advanced love (*bhava* and *prema*), and the various components of *rasa*.

[23.69-23.93]

Qualities of God – Shri Chaitanya lists the 64 transcendental qualities of Krishna, comparing them with the qualities of Narayana, Siva and ordinary living entities. He also describes the 25 divine qualities possessed by Shrimati Radharani.

[24.1-24.323]

Explanation of Atmarama verse – Being specifically requested by Sanatana, Shri Chaitanya explains this famous verse in 61 different ways. In the process, He also cites the famous story of 'Mrigrari the hunter'.

[24.324-24.345]

Outline for Hari-Bhakti-Vilasa – Shri Chaitanya gives Sanatana the outline for Hari-Bhakti-Vilasa, a book which documents the behaviour, etiquette and standard practices of a Vaishnava.

Essential Instructions to the Goswamis

[Madhya-Lila 23.103-23.105 / Antya-Lila 1.217-1.220 / 4.79-4.83]

After instructing Rupa and Santana Goswamis, Shri Chaitanya sent them both to Vrindavana (although He would later instruct them again in Jagannatha Puri). Their service was to lay secure foundations for the *sankirtan* movement. Rupa Goswami is specifically glorified in this regard: *“When will Shрила Rupa Goswami Prabhupada, who has established within this material world the mission to fulfil the desire of Lord Chaitanya, give me shelter under his lotus feet?”* The Goswamis were given specific instructions to achieve this task:

Holy Places – To rediscover and excavate the sacred locations of Krishna’s pastimes, and to establish Vrindavana as a holy town where pilgrims could meet saintly people and draw spiritual inspiration.

Deity Worship & Temples – To establish temples, install deities, and document appropriate standards of daily worship.

Literature – To write canonical literature which outlines essential Vedic conclusions and promotes the supremacy of pure, spontaneous *bhakti*, free from external formality and ritual.

Vaishnava Culture – To elucidate and exemplify Vaishnava character, culture and etiquette, and to demonstrate the proper behaviour and standards for renunciants.

Thus commissioned by Shri Chaitanya, Rupa and Sanatana took up residence in Vrindavana. They lived as ideal renunciants, sleeping under a different tree every night and adhering strictly to their vows of renunciation. Absorbed in hearing, singing and writing about Krishna, they renounced all forms of material enjoyment and minimised bodily demands to the bare minimum. Their spotless character, devoid of any pride or envy, endeared them to everyone who had the good fortune of their company. All the residents of Vrindavana were conquered by their profound devotion, humility and concern for all.⁵²



The Six Goswamis lived as ideal renunciants, sleeping under a different tree every night, and adhering strictly to their vows of renunciation. Absorbed in hearing, singing and writing about Krishna, they renounced all forms of material enjoyment and minimised bodily demands to the bare minimum.

By the time they left this world, the Goswamis had fulfilled all the instructions given to them. They had restored the holy sites, erected ornate temples which attracted people from all over India, scribed over 200 different scriptural works, and established the standards of culture through their shining personal example.⁵³ When Shрила Prabhupada came to the Western world and founded ISKCON, he followed the same guidelines to structure his missionary movement.

Shri Chaitanya repeatedly outlined indispensable elements which ensure the vibrancy of a spiritual movement. In many ways, a movement can be likened to a car:

- **Spiritual Inspiration (fuel)** – just as cars need juice, the impetus for a movement comes from the vibrancy of its spirituality. Only when members are inspired, nourished and happy, can the movement push forward and impact the world. To give life, one must first be alive.
- **Organisation & Structure (machinery)** – if mechanics are suspect, the car will regularly breakdown; lots of frustration and very little progress. Similarly, a movement can effectively progress forward when proper systems are in place to channel, focus and sustain the momentum. Even spirit needs to be managed.
- **Culture & Ethos (steering)** – cars need navigation through the urban landscape. Inattentive steering will damage the car, injure the passengers and wreak havoc for onlookers. Similarly, only when a movement is grounded in the culture of respect and saintliness, can we pass through inevitable conflicts, issues and obstacles without inflicting permanent damage.

Fuel, machinery and steering: all three are essential to reach top speed.

Prakashananda and the Mayavada Sannyasis

[Madhya 25]

After instructing Sanatana, Shri Chaitanya achieved a major breakthrough in Varanasi. It was here that He met with Prakashananda Saraswati and miraculously transformed the impersonal school of *sannyasis*. Although Krishnadasa comprehensively narrates this pastime in the *Adi-Lila*

(Chapter Seven), he elucidates further details in this chapter.

[25.1-25.17]

Chandrasekhar and Tapan Mishra were disturbed by the constant criticism directed towards Shri Chaitanya from the impersonal camp. Thus, when a *brahmana* invited Shri Chaitanya to a gathering of the *sannyasis*, the Lord utilised the opportunity to rectify the situation. Upon entering the *brahmana's* house, Shri Chaitanya humbly sat on the ground, right by the feet of the saffron stalwarts. Seeing His remarkable effulgence and heart-warming humility, they immediately stood up and encouraged the young *sannyasi* to sit with them. Shri Chaitanya declined, submitting that they were more exalted than Him and thus deserved the respect. A conversation ensued, in which they quizzed Shri Chaitanya about His absorption in chanting and dancing, which they considered uncharacteristic of a *sannyasi*. The duty of a renunciant, they strongly felt, was to be soberly absorbed in the study of Vedanta philosophy. Shri Chaitanya explained that He was simply following the instruction of His spiritual master, who had unequivocally established that chanting the holy names of Krishna was the only means for spiritual perfection in this age. No other process would be effective.

The *sannyasis* accepted Shri Chaitanya's arguments but questioned why He never studied the intricacies of philosophy. Shri Chaitanya then began to explain the authentic tenets of Vedanta Sutra. He emphasised the personal nature of God, explaining how Shankaracharya had given misleading interpretations which covered the real purport of the text. Shri Chaitanya then offered the devotional illuminations, explaining that the ultimate goal of life is *prema* – pure love of God. Greatly impressed by His explanations, the *mayavadi sannyasis* realised they had misjudged the young saint, and thus became repentant. Shri Chaitanya excused all their offences and encouraged them to begin chanting the holy name of Krishna.⁵⁴

[25.18-25.177]

The entire city of Varanasi began to praise Shri Chaitanya, and hordes of people followed His every move. *Mayavadi sannyasis* were extolling His glories, encouraging everyone to give up the impersonal interpretations of

Shankaracharya and instead take to the devotional path. Prakashananda personally met with Shri Chaitanya and accepted His divine identity. He lamented his previous harsh comments, resolving to dedicate himself to the chanting of Krishna's names. Shri Chaitanya then proceeded to glorify Shrimad-Bhagavatam as the natural commentary on Vedanta philosophy. He explained the four seed verses (*catuh-sloki bhagavatam*), and further described the famous *atmarama sloka* in 61 different ways.

The difference between the individual soul and the Supreme Soul is a philosophical topic that has been debated for centuries. Shankaracharya flatly denied that there is any difference. Liberation for the individual soul, he posited, was to attain oneness with the impersonal Brahman. Ramanujacharya, however, detected the difference between the two, and established his philosophy known as *vishista-dvaita* (qualified monism). The next great teacher, Madhvacharya, went on to emphasise this difference by teaching *suddha-dvaita* (pure dualism) – that the soul and God are eternally separate.

Shri Chaitanya's contribution, however, is the final word on this matter. He ingeniously harmonised these different perspectives in His philosophy of *acintya-bhedabheda-tattva*: the individual soul and Supreme Godhead are simultaneously one and different. According to the Vedic literature, God is the ultimate source of diverse forms of energy. In this way He resembles the sun, which gives off energy in the form of heat and light. Just as the sun is inseparable from its rays, God is inseparable from His energies. God and His energies are therefore non-different. Simultaneously, however, God and His energies are distinct. Although the sun and its rays are one, they are different also: while we on earth enjoy the rays of the sun, the fiery sun itself is millions of miles away. Similarly, although God is present everywhere by the manifestations of His energy, He simultaneously maintains His distinct personal identity, with His own name, form, qualities, abode, pastimes, and entourage. Since all living beings are manifestations of God's energy, God and the living beings are simultaneously different (*bheda*) and nondifferent (*abheda*).

[25.178-25.238]

After fulfilling His two main purposes in Varanasi, namely instructing

Sanatana Goswami and converting Prakashananda Saraswati, Shri Chaitanya returned to Jagannatha Puri. Upon arrival, the devotees eagerly greeted Him in great happiness. Having propagated the *sankirtan* movement far and wide, visited the holy land of Vrindavana, and systematically instructed the Goswamis, Shri Chaitanya arrived in Jagannatha Puri and prepared to fulfil the final purposes of His descent. He would now stay here for the rest of His life.

[25.239-25.283]

Krishnadasa ends the Madhya-Lila by giving a summary of all the pastimes. He wonderfully describes the supreme potency of hearing these transcendental narrations.

1. Invocation

2. Incarnation

3. Education

4. Transformation

5. Renunciation

6. Propagation

7. Aspiration

8. Organisation

9. Appreciation

10. Correction

11. Intoxication

12. Instruction



Antya-Lila I Chapters 1-13

Shri Chaitanya returns to Puri and teaches Vaishnava culture through His daily interactions. He shows great appreciation for devotees who embody humility, surrender, renunciation and unshakeable faith.

Note: Chapters Nine (Appreciation) and Ten (Correction) have been written thematically as opposed to chronologically.

Upon arrival in Puri, Shri Chaitanya took up residence at the house of Kasi Mishra. Surrounded by His exalted followers, Shri Chaitanya expressed great appreciation for their qualities of humility, surrender, renunciation and unshakeable faith. Their spotless example establishes the ideals of Vaishnava culture and etiquette.

Humility and Empowerment - Rupa Goswami

[Antya 1]

[1.1-1.46]

When Shri Chaitanya reached Jagannatha Puri, the Bengali Vaishnavas immediately journeyed there to see Him. The party was headed by Shivananda Sena, who compassionately brought along a stray dog on the journey. Rupa Goswami also travelled to Puri, but was delayed due to his brother's death. Upon arrival, the Goswami stayed with Haridas Thakur, readying himself for a second meeting with Shri Chaitanya where he would receive instructions on a drama that he was writing about Krishna's pastimes.

[1.47-1.71]

Shri Chaitanya eagerly visited Haridas on a daily basis, and became overjoyed to see that Rupa Goswami had arrived. The next day, Shri Chaitanya introduced Rupa to all the Vaishnavas, imploring devotees like Advaita Acharya and Nityananda Prabhu to bestow choice blessings upon the young renunciant. Regarding the dramas, Shri Chaitanya instructed Rupa not to mix Krishna's Dwaraka pastimes with the Vrindavana pastimes, and he thus decided to write two separate scripts.

[1.72-1.93]

After witnessing Shri Chaitanya's ecstatic outpouring at the annual Rathayatra, Rupa composed a verse which captured the Lord's innermost feelings. When Shri Chaitanya saw the verse He became overwhelmed and lovingly slapped Rupa Goswami for his literary craftsmanship. Rupa had been especially empowered to capture and convey the esoteric truths

hidden within Shri Chaitanya's heart, and he thus became known as the *rasacarya*, the informed authority on divine mellows.⁵⁵

[1.94-1.223]

Rupa Goswami scribed two separate dramas to narrate the pastimes of Krishna in Vrindavana and Dvaraka, naming them Vidagdha-madhava and Lalita-madhava respectively. One day, while writing Vidagdha-madhava, Shri Chaitanya read one of the verses and became exceedingly happy. When He returned the next day with His associates, Rupa and Haridas lovingly received them and humbly sat at their feet. Shri Chaitanya glorified the writing of Rupa and encouraged him to read his exquisite compositions, but the humble Goswami was hesitant. As they repeatedly insisted, Rupa finally acquiesced and began reciting selected verses, feeling himself to be an insignificant glow-worm in comparison to the exalted and effulgent sun-like Vaishnavas.

Rupa Goswami thus remained with Shri Chaitanya for ten months. Fully equipped and empowered, he returned to Vrindavana to spearhead the *sankirtan* movement.

Devotion - Pradyumna Brahmachari [Antya 2]

[2.1-2.35]

Pure devotion attracts the Lord's attention: *"Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu always appeared in four places—in the household temple of mother Sachi, in the places where Shri Nityananda Prabhu danced, in the house of Shrivasa Pandita during congregational chanting, and in the house of Raghava Pandita. He appeared because of His attraction to the love of His devotees. That is His natural characteristic."*⁵⁶ Shri Chaitanya transformed everyone He met by exhibiting this phenomenal devotion and simultaneously implanting it within them. One such example was Nakula Brahmachari, within whose body Shri Chaitanya actually entered.

[2.36-2.83]

Pradyumna Brahmachari, also known as Narasimhananda Brahmachari, was another recipient of Shri Chaitanya's mercy. In Bengal, the devotees were eagerly awaiting Shri Chaitanya's arrival, since He had promised to

visit them that year. Seeing no sign of their Lord, the devotees became increasingly anxious. Pradyumna Brahmachari then boldly declared that he would bring the Lord there within three days! He cooked a grand feast and lovingly prepared three plates – for Lord Jagannatha, Shri Chaitanya and Lord Narasimhadeva respectively. Pradyumna then began intensely meditating in pure devotion, petitioning Shri Chaitanya to come. The Lord’s attention was attracted and He personally descended there to eat all three plates!

Pure Chanting - Haridas Thakur

[Antya 3 & 11]

[3.49-3.164]

When Shri Chaitanya earnestly inquired how the non-devotees would be delivered, Haridas Thakur reassured Him not to worry. He had implicit faith that the holy name would permeate the universal ethers and transform everyone. Once, while Haridas was chanting at Benapole, the envious Ramachandra Khan schemed to defame him by sending an alluring prostitute. Although she tempted Haridas with sweet words and amorous poses, he remained undisturbed, promising to fulfil her desires after he had finished his prescribed quota of chanting. As she heard the transcendental sound vibration from the mouth of Haridas, however, she became cleansed of material desires and realised the folly of her acts. Haridas formally initiated her into the chanting of the holy name, and she later became well-known for her deep devotion and surrender.⁵⁷

[3.165-3.213]

Haridas then travelled to Chandapura where he stayed at the house of Balaram Acharya. Here, He would extol the glories of the holy name, explaining the unparalleled bliss generated from reciting the divine syllables. He confidently posited that even a glimpse of sincere chanting (*namabhasa*) is sufficient to qualify oneself for liberation, which is an insignificant side benefit of spiritual perfection. When Gopal Chakravarti heard these glorifications, he abruptly spoke out and criticised Shri Chaitanya by calling Him an “emotional devotee”. Due to his faithless mentality and harsh words, he was later attacked by leprosy and underwent acute suffering.



After cooking a grand feast and lovingly preparing three plates, Pradyumna Brahmachari intensely meditated on Shri Chaitanya and invited Him there. The Lord's attention was attracted and He personally came and ate all three plates!

[3.214-3.272]

Haridas then moved to Shantipur where Advaita Acharya honoured him as the most exalted Vaishnava. Whilst chanting in his cave, Haridas was again tested by a provocative woman, but remained focused in his devotional practices. After three days of trying she finally revealed herself as Mayadevi personified, who had specifically come to test his spiritual resolve.

[11.1-11.58]

When Haridas Thakur eventually moved to Jagannatha Puri, Govinda would regularly deliver Shri Chaitanya's *prasadam* remnants to him. Once, Govinda witnessed Haridas's ailing health situation and urged him to rest, but Haridas flatly refused, determined to finish his prescribed quota of chanting. When Shri Chaitanya learned of his poorly condition He also requested him to relax his spiritual vows, but Haridas humbly responded by claiming his real disease to be a lack of determination in chanting Krishna's names. He then requested a special favour. Fearing separation from Shri Chaitanya, Haridas requested he be allowed to leave the world in the presence of his worshipable Lord. The next day, Shri Chaitanya came to see Haridas and began chanting the holy names. Fully absorbed in that transcendental vibration, with tears falling from his eyes, Haridas gazed intently at the Lord and peacefully passed away.

[11.59-11.108]

Shri Chaitanya danced with the body of Haridas in His arms, bathed it in the sea, smeared Jagannatha's sandalwood paste on it, entombed it, placed sand over it and then erected a platform over the site. The Lord then circumambulated the tomb and personally went to beg alms for a festival in honour of Haridas's passing away. Shri Chaitanya personally directed everything, deeply lamenting that the "crest jewel" of Vaishnavas was no longer present.

Surrender and Vaishnava Etiquette - Sanatana Goswami

[Antya 4]

[4.1-4.104]

While travelling to Puri, Sanatana Goswami contracted a skin disease.



Whilst chanting in his cave, Haridas was tested by *Mayadevi* but remained focused in his devotional practices.

Considering himself physically infirm, spiritually fallen, and unfit to render devotional service, he resolved to end his life. Upon arrival in Puri, he went to meet Haridas Thakur, at which time Shri Chaitanya suddenly arrived there. Despite Santana's protests, the Lord embraced his diseased body and then regrettably informed him that his brother (Anupama) had passed away. As they spoke, Shri Chaitanya understood Sanatana's plan to commit suicide. Thus, the Lord returned a few days later and instructed him not to commit such an act. As a surrendered devotee, Sanatana's body, the Lord postulated, was now His property, and He had many tasks to achieve through it - there was no question of destroying it. Sanatana happily accepted, offering himself as a wooden doll in the loving hands of his divine master.

[4.105-4.206]

One day, Shri Chaitanya invited Sanatana Goswami to Yameshvara Tota for *prasadam*. Despite the blazing heat, Sanatana came via the beach, causing his feet to severely blister due to the scorching hot sand. He deliberately took this painful route to avoid encountering the servants of Jagannatha, who he felt would be contaminated if they accidentally touched him. Shri Chaitanya commended Sanatana for his impeccable culture and etiquette, explaining that such ideal behaviour is the ornament of a Vaishnava. Later, when Jagadananda Pandita instructed Sanatana in other matters, Sanatana humbly accepted his advice, but Shri Chaitanya severely reprimanded Jagadananda for impudently instructing a superior Vaishnava. Shri Chaitanya then extolled the glories of Sanatana and personally embraced him, causing his skin disease to immediately disappear.

[4.207-4.239]

Sanatana then left for Vrindavana via the Jharikhanda route that Shri Chaitanya had travelled. After arriving in the holy *dham*, he continued his efforts to fulfil the instructions issued to him by Shri Chaitanya. Thus, the Six Goswamis combinedly served to fully execute their God-given mission.

Renunciation - Raghunath das Goswami

[Antya 6]

[6.1-6.41]

Raghunath das Goswami always had a strong inclination toward renunciation. In his youth, he travelled to Shantipur and expressed his desire to Shri Chaitanya, but the Lord told him to be patient and dutifully return home. Thereafter, Raghunath attempted to leave home and meet Shri Chaitanya on His Vrindavana tour, but he had to stay back to resolve a financial conflict with the tax collector. One year later, Raghunath actually ran away from home, but his father caught him and forcibly brought him back. Such incidents became a daily affair. Seeing his unwavering determination, Raghunath's father finally concluded that no amount of opulence and material comfort could bind Raghunath to family life; he was destined to become a renunciant.

[6.42-6.154]

Later, Raghunath met Nityananda Prabhu at Panihati, and was inspired to organise a wonderful 'chipped-rice festival' for the assembled devotees. Shri Chaitanya mystically appeared at the festival and Raghunath honoured His remnants. Raghunath then approached Nityananda Prabhu, humbly begging for His permission and blessings to renounce family life. Nityananda fully supported him and declared that Raghunath would soon be able to fully dedicate himself to Shri Chaitanya.

[6.155-6.210]

Thus, Raghunath went home and began planning how to escape. One day, he managed to leave the house with Yadunandana Acharya, the family priest, and then secretly escaped through a concealed path. His parents tried to locate him but were unsuccessful. Raghunath embarked on a gruelling 12-day journey through the jungle, during which he ate only three times; nothing could check his intense desire to be with Shri Chaitanya. Upon arrival in Puri, Shri Chaitanya warmly embraced him and ordered Svarupa Damodara to take the young renunciant under his wing.

[6.211-6.329]

Taking up residence in Puri, Raghunath keenly inquired about the behaviour and duties of a renunciant.⁵⁸ Taking the instructions to heart and fully absorbing himself in thought of Krishna, he gradually minimised his bodily demands, sleeping for less than 1½ hours each day and eating a few morsels of decomposed rice which even the cows rejected. His daily

sadhana was to offer one thousand obeisances to the Lord, two thousand obeisances to different Vaishnavas, and chant one hundred thousand holy names of Krishna. This regime would take him over 22 hours.⁵⁹ Shri Chaitanya was extremely satisfied to see the natural renunciation and detachment of Raghunath. He gifted him a Govardhana Sila, which Raghunath began worshipping with great attention and devotion.

Remembrance of Krishna - Gopinath & Vaninath

[Antya 9]

[9.1-9.153]

Gopinath Pattanayaka, the brother of Ramananda Raya, was facing the death penalty due to misappropriating government funds. Although everyone appealed to Shri Chaitanya for help, He was unwilling to intervene due to His being a *sannyasi*. Nevertheless, by the will of providence, Gopinath was in fact saved. When Shri Chaitanya received the message, He inquired about the activities of the brothers while Gopinath was on the verge of death. The messenger replied that they were all chanting the holy name and absorbed in remembrance of Krishna. Shri Chaitanya was extremely pleased, and even the brothers concluded that it was this remembrance which actually saved them.⁶⁰ They also understood, however, that the ultimate fortune was to attain detachment from the material world and pure devotion to the Lord, and that material protection was simply a side-benefit. Shri Chaitanya instructed them to conduct their worldly affairs with full integrity and never make such financial mistakes again. He thus reiterated the principles of Bhagavad-Gita – “*do your duty perfectly, and simultaneously remember Krishna at all times*”.

Service Attitude - Govinda

[Antya 10 & 13]

[10.1-10.81]

After meeting the devotees at Narendra Sarovar, Shri Chaitanya engaged everyone in congregational chanting and began to dance in unbounded ecstasy. The *kirtan* continued for a long time, and seeing everyone gradually become fatigued, Shri Chaitanya eventually stopped. He then took *prasadam* and lay down to rest in the doorway of the Gambhira.



Raghunath met Nityananda Prabhu at Panihati, and was inspired to organise a wonderful 'chipped-rice festival.' He thus received the mercy of Nityananda and was able to renounce family life.

[10.82-10.162]

Every day, after Shri Chaitanya had finished honouring *prasadam*, His servant Govinda would come to massage His legs and thereafter accept the Lord's remnants as his meal. On this occasion, however, he couldn't get into the room because Shri Chaitanya was blocking the entrance. He repeatedly requested the Lord to move to one side, but Shri Chaitanya flatly refused. Govinda then reluctantly stepped over Shri Chaitanya's body – an act which is generally considered a serious breach of etiquette. He proceeded to massage the Lord's legs, and patiently waited till the Lord awoke. When He did, Shri Chaitanya questioned why he had not taken *prasadam*. Govinda replied that Shri Chaitanya was blocking the door and that he could not pass through to reach the *prasadam*. Although Govinda stepped over Shri Chaitanya's body for the purpose of service, he refused to step back over the Lord's body for his own ends. Thus, the glory of Govinda's service attitude became known to all. Govinda continued to oversee the arrangements for Shri Chaitanya's daily meals whilst the Lord resided in Puri.

[13.78-13.88]

Once, Shri Chaitanya heard someone beautifully singing the Gita-govinda, and was spontaneously drawn toward the voice. When He began running in the direction of the singer, Govinda quickly intercepted and grabbed Shri Chaitanya, explaining that it was a lady who was singing. Shri Chaitanya was deeply grateful for Govinda's ever-alert service attitude, and requested His godbrother to always remain by His side for protection.

Spontaneous Love - Jagadananda Pandita

[Antya 12 & 13]

[12.1-12.85]

As with previous years, the devotees from Bengal came to see Shri Chaitanya in Jagannatha Puri. Although it was a difficult journey, their intense love spontaneously drew them there. Infused with the same deep affection, Nityananda and Advaita also came to Jagannatha Puri, even though Shri Chaitanya had forbade them to leave their places of preaching. Such single-minded attraction actually conquered the Lord's heart.



Although Govinda stepped over Shri Chaitanya's body for the purpose of service, he refused to step back over the Lord's body for his own interest. In this way, the glory of Govinda's service attitude became known to all.

[12.86-12.155]

When Jagadananda Pandita inappropriately instructed Sanatana Goswami, Shri Chaitanya became angry and sent him away from Puri. Jagadananda returned the following year with a gift of scented oil, but as a strict *sannyasi* Shri Chaitanya refused to personally use it, instead instructing Govinda to utilise it in the worship of Lord Jagannatha. When Govinda again offered the oil on Jagadananda's plea, Shri Chaitanya became agitated, insisting that his *sannyasa* principles not be compromised. Out of transcendental anger, Jagadananda came before the Lord, smashed the pot of oil, and then angrily locked himself in his room. To lovingly pacify the irate Jagadananda, Shri Chaitanya requested him to cook a grand feast. Jagadananda prepared and served the *prasadam* with great enthusiasm, and Shri Chaitanya relished the variety of preparations, eating ten times more than normal!

[13.1-13.77]

Considering it unbecoming for a *sannyasi*, Shri Chaitanya refused to use a quilt and pillow that Jagadananda had made for Him. Later, when Shri Chaitanya accepted a different pillow made by Svarupa Damodara, Jagadananda became incensed and requested permission to leave Puri and visit Vrindavana. Since Shri Chaitanya thoroughly relished these loving interactions with Jagadananda, which were free from reverence and formality, He requested Jagadananda to stay. Later, however, He consented, offering instruction and advice on how Jagadananda should conduct his pilgrimage. Jagadananda thus spent two months with Sanatana Goswami in Vrindavana and later returned to Jagannatha Puri with more gifts.

Following instructions - Raghunath Bhatta Goswami

[Antya 13]

[13.89-13.138]

Raghunath Bhatta, the son of Tapan Mishra, journeyed to meet Shri Chaitanya in the hope of renouncing the world. They stayed together for eight months, during which time Raghunath would cook for the Lord. After assessing the situation, Shri Chaitanya offered the young boy a series of instructions:

- Care for your elderly parents, but remain unmarried.
- Study Shrimad-Bhagavatam from a pure Vaishnava.
- After fulfilling all family duties, return to Jagannatha Puri and become a fully dedicated renunciant.

Raghunath unflinchingly followed these orders. His parents eventually left the world, and Raghunath immediately returned to Jagannatha Puri. Pleased to see him, Shri Chaitanya spent another eight months with him and then instructed further:

- Go to Vrindavana and assist Rupa and Sanatana Goswamis.
- Continuously chant Hare Krishna and recite Shrimad-Bhagavatam.

Raghunath immediately departed for the holy land. In Vrindavana, he became renowned for his devotional recitations of Shrimad-Bhagavatam, during which he would experience spiritual ecstasy due to his deep love and devotion. This was all possible by the mercy of Shri Chaitanya, and reveals the power of following the instructions of spiritual authorities.

In most endeavours we have a goal, process and culture. For example, an athlete may have the goal to win gold in the Olympics. They subsequently commence a rigorous training regime to exercise the body; this is the process. Simultaneously, however, they make strict lifestyle choices in diet, sleep and abstinence from intoxication; this is culture. Regardless of how rigorously the athlete trains, if they neglect the proper lifestyle, their efforts and endeavour will likely be unsuccessful. In the same way, although one may diligently engage in spiritual practices, without strict adherence to such culture, one's spiritual growth is surely stunted.

Shri Chaitanya's interactions in Jagannatha Puri remind us that a Vaishnava is not simply characterised by what he does, but also by who he is. By nurturing proper character, qualities and saintly disposition, the heart becomes a fertile place for the creeper of devotion to grow. Vaishnava qualities are not simply a by-product of pure devotion, but must be consciously developed by a practitioner devotee.

1. Invocation

2. Incarnation

3. Education

4. Transformation

5. Renunciation

6. Propagation

7. Aspiration

8. Organisation

9. Appreciation

10. Correction

11. Intoxication

12. Instruction



Antya-Lila I Chapters 1-13

Shri Chaitanya further establishes the spiritual culture by correcting other devotees. He highlights the dangers of fault-finding, philosophical deviation, and inappropriate association.

Along with His appreciation for many Vaishnavas, Shri Chaitanya also established spiritual culture and principles by correcting others. Through a variety of incidents, He highlights the dangers of fault-finding, philosophical deviation, pride and inappropriate association.

Inappropriate Association - Chota Hariḍas

[Antya 2]

[2.101-2.121]

When Chota Haridas, a renunciant living in Jagannatha Puri, was requested to obtain some rice for Shri Chaitanya, he approached the elderly Madhavidēvi, who was a highly respected devotee. Shri Chaitanya appreciated the rice but immediately questioned where it came from. When He discovered that Chota Haridas had inappropriately obtained it from a lady, He became angry and banished him, considering this a deviation from the principles of *sannyasa*.

[2.122-2.172]

Utterly distraught, Haridas fasted for three days. Various devotees petitioned Shri Chaitanya to reconsider His strong reaction, but the Lord was unrelenting. He opined that since Haridas had violated the proper conduct of a *sannyasi*, this was the appropriate punishment. The devotees lovingly encouraged Haridas, but he eventually committed suicide by drowning himself at Prayaga. Thereafter, unknown to the devotees, Haridas received a spiritual body and had the great fortune of associating with and receiving the mercy of Shri Chaitanya.

Though Shri Chaitanya's reaction may seem harsh, His overarching purpose was to establish the need for purity and integrity in the renounced order. He left no room for hypocrisy or duplicity. To further elucidate the instructions from this incident, Shrila Prabhupada includes a commentary from Shrila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur at the end of the chapter.



Chota Haridas received a spiritual body and had the great fortune of associating with and receiving the mercy of Shri Chaitanya.

Dangers of Mayavada Philosophy - Bhagavan Acharya & Bengali poet

[Antya 2 & 5]

[2.84-2.100]

Bhagavan Acharya was a renounced resident of Jagannatha Puri who would regularly invite the Lord for *prasadam*. His brother, Gopal Bhattacharya, had comprehensively studied Vedanta philosophy according to the impersonal interpretation. When Bhagavan Acharya suggested that Gopal Bhattacharya's commentary was worth studying, Svarupa Damodara immediately corrected him. Shri Chaitanya had repeatedly denounced *mayavada* philosophy: an advanced Vaishnava feels afflicted in heart by hearing such misleading commentaries, while practitioner devotees can easily become philosophically confused by such impersonal word-jugglery.

[5.91-5.164]

On a separate occasion, a *brahmana* residing with Bhagavan Acharya requested Shri Chaitanya to hear his poetic compositions. Svarupa Damodara would inspect such writings before they reached Shri Chaitanya, ensuring that each word was in line with bona fide scriptural conclusions. After hearing the first verse, Svarupa discovered that the poet had made a distinction between the body and soul of the Lord, indicating an element of *mayavada* philosophy. This was a grave offence, and Svarupa strongly advised the *brahmana* to avoid such misunderstandings by learning the Shrimad-Bhagavatam from a Vaishnava. As a consolation, Svarupa gave an alternative meaning to the original poetry which appropriately glorified the Lord. Thus humbled, the Bengali poet took full shelter of Shri Chaitanya.

Criticism and Faultfinding - Damodara Pandita & Ramachandra Puri

[Antya 3 & 8]

[3.1-3.48]

When Shri Chaitanya repeatedly gave audience to a young boy whose father had died, Damodara Pandita became increasingly annoyed. He criticised the Lord, fearing the public may speak disparagingly about a *sannyasi* intermingling with the son of a young, widowed mother. Although

Shri Chaitanya appreciated his simplicity and straightforwardness, He nevertheless ordered Damodara to leave Jagannatha Puri and relocate to Navadvip, where he could look after Sachimata. Damodara was a great devotee, but it was not his position to advise the spiritual master (who was Krishna Himself).

[8.1-8.103]

Ishvara Puri (Shri Chaitanya's spiritual master) and Ramachandra Puri were both disciples of Madhavendra Puri. While Ishvara Puri maintained the proper mood of service and submission, Ramachandra began criticising and instructing his spiritual master. This offensive mentality destroyed his character and triggered his spiritual downfall. Once, seeing ants in the home of Shri Chaitanya, Ramachandra accused the young *sannyasi* of eating too many sweets. Even though the criticisms were completely unfounded, Shri Chaitanya humbly reduced His eating by half and continued to offer Ramachandra all respect. Amazingly, Ramachandra then criticized Shri Chaitanya for being a dry renunciant who was being unnecessarily austere! On the desperate plea of the devotees Shri Chaitanya resumed His regular eating habits, but demonstrated how a humble Vaishnava can even utilise a faultfinder's criticisms to improve. Due to his countless offenses, Ramachandra was forced leave Jagannatha Puri, deprived of Shri Chaitanya's priceless association forever.

Superficial Discrimination - Pradyumna Mishra

[Antya 5]

[5.1-5.32]

When Pradyumna Mishra approached Shri Chaitanya with the ardent desire to hear topics of Krishna, the Lord directed him to meet Ramananda Raya, who was extremely qualified in this regard. Pradyumna visited Ramananda, but discovered that the former-governor was massaging the bodies of young girls and seemingly engaged in immodest activities. Shocked and bewildered, Pradyumna quickly left the home and avoided any further conversation with Ramananda.

[5.33-5.90]

Seeing Pradyumna the following day, Shri Chaitanya detected his

bewilderment and thus extolled the glories of Ramananda. Ramananda was personally directing the girls in song and dance for the pleasure of Lord Jagannatha. Since he was transfixed in his eternal identity as a maidservant in the spiritual world, such intimate services could not bewilder or agitate him. When Pradyumna later approached the former-governor with a different mindset, eagerly requesting him to narrate the pastimes of Krishna, an unprecedented flow of transcendental nectar emanated from Ramananda's mouth. On a superficial level, Pradyumna was a highly qualified *brahmana*, whereas Ramananda was an ordinary *grhastha-sudra* engaged in duties; Shri Chaitanya, however, wanted to highlight the principle that advancement is based on internal realisation rather than superficial indication.

Respecting Teachers - Vallabha Bhatta [Antya 7]

[7.1-7.79]

Once, Vallabha Bhatta began glorifying Shri Chaitanya for His magnanimity and compassion in delivering so many conditioned souls. In response, Shri Chaitanya began to glorify His associates, explaining the different things He had learnt from each one of them. He expertly did this to curb Vallabha's pride, sensing that the scholarly teacher was proud of his knowledge. Vallabha met all those devotees, served them *prasadam*, and witnessed their ecstatic devotion at the Rathayatra festival.

[7.80-7.173]

Later, he requested Shri Chaitanya to hear his commentary on Shrimad-Bhagavatam, but the disinterested Lord declined him. Vallabha then began to debate with devotees like Advaita Acharya and Svarupa Damodara, and even began to question their incessant chanting of Krishna's names. As always, however, Vallabha was soundly defeated in philosophical debate. When he returned the next day, claiming to have refuted the explanations of the legendary scriptural commentator Shridhar Swami, Shri Chaitanya called him a prostitute for his unfaithfulness toward the *parampara*. Vallabha realised his grave mistake and humbly surrendered to Shri Chaitanya, eventually taking initiation from Gadadhara Pandita.



Once, seeing ants at the home of Shri Chaitanya, Ramachandra accused the young *sannyasi* of eating too many sweets. His critical nature eventually led to his spiritual downfall.

Daily practices like chanting, study of wisdom, practical devotional service and ritual worship are known as *sadhana*, which literally means “eternal wealth”. When we associate with Vaishnavas and participate within a Krishna-centred community, we’re regularly drawn into spiritually-significant acts. We earn considerable spiritual credit without even being aware of it. Unfortunately, however, devotees unknowingly waste that wealth through their negligence and insensitivity in other areas. Transgressions of etiquette, improper conduct, philosophical deviation and insensitive interactions, cause one to squander that wealth and stunt their spiritual growth. By following the basic spiritual practices, whilst consciously avoiding impulsive and imprudent acts, we become enriched with love of Godhead very quickly.

Shri Chaitanya compares the gradual development of this unalloyed love to the different states of sugar. First is the seed of the sugarcane, then the sugarcane plant. Next comes the sweet juice of the sugarcane. When the juice is boiled, it becomes liquid molasses and, later, solid molasses. This then becomes sugar and, finally, rock candy. Similarly, love of God evolves through various stages of development, each more concentrated than the last. To taste this sweet love is possible, provided one remains vigilant and attentive in the cultivation of their devotional creeper.

Having instructed His devotees in various ways for 6 years, Shri Chaitanya was ready to fully immerse Himself in this sweet, concentrated love of God.

1. Invocation
2. Incarnation
3. Education
4. Transformation
5. Renunciation
6. Propagation
7. Aspiration
8. Organisation
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10. Correction
11. Intoxication
12. Instruction



Antya-Lila I Chapters 14-19

In His final twelve years, Shri Chaitanya retreats into seclusion. His feelings of separation from Krishna result in highly elevated transcendental moods, displaying the character of a madly intoxicated lover of God.

Feelings of Separation

[Antya 14]

[14.1-14.16]

For the final twelve years of Shri Chaitanya's manifest pastimes, He remained secluded in the Gambhira, the garden house of Kasi Mishra. The Lord merged into a deep spiritual communion, obsessed day and night in thought of Krishna. This esoteric phenomenon is described by Krishnadasa: *"When Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu felt separation from Krishna, His condition exactly corresponded to that of the gopis in Vrindavana after Krishna's departure for Mathura. Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's emotions exactly corresponded to those of Shrimati Radharani when She met Uddhava in Vrindavana."*⁶¹

During these years, Shri Chaitanya was surrounded by a few intimate associates, headed by Svarupa Damodara and Ramananda Raya. These two personalities are Lalita and Vishakha, the intimate confidantes of Shrimati Radharani in Krishna-lila. Svarupa and Ramananda would enhance the ecstatic mood of Shri Chaitanya by singing appropriate songs and reciting select verses. Shri Chaitanya especially liked to hear Bilvamangala Thakura's Krishna-karnamrita, the poetry of Vidyapati, and Shri Gita-govinda, by Jayadeva Goswami.⁶²

Shri Chaitanya's ecstasy resulted in bodily transformations and delirious behaviour which resembled that of a madman. He would sometimes catch hold of the necks of His associates and plead *"My dear friends, please listen to Me. What shall I do? Where shall I go? Where can I go to get Krishna? Please, both of you, tell Me how I can find Him."*⁶³ In this way, Shri Chaitanya exhibited the intense longing of a pure devotee.

Lessons in Eagerness

[Antya 14 & 16]

Nestled in these ecstatic narrations are some instructive stories on the quality of eagerness and enthusiasm. This eagerness is the natural characteristic of an advanced Vaishnava, and the cultivation of such eagerness is the fuel which drives forward our spiritual journey.

[14.17-14.30]

Woman from Orissa – when she entered the Jagannatha Temple, her intense desire to see the Deity prompted her to climb onto the Garuda Stambha by placing her foot on Shri Chaitanya’s shoulder! Both acts were a serious breach of etiquette, and Govinda immediately went to correct her. Shri Chaitanya, however, interjected, and instead appreciated her great eagerness to see Lord Jagannatha, praying that He develop a similar enthusiasm. She finally came to her senses, realised her mistake, and quickly stepped down, begging forgiveness for her unconventional behaviour.

[16.1-16.64]

Kalidasa – was the uncle of Raghunath das Goswami who visited Jagannatha Puri along with the Bengali Vaishnavas. In addition to his incessant chanting, he was renowned for his great eagerness to honour the *prasadam* remnants of Vaishnavas. He would hide while the Vaishnavas ate, and then secretly relish the leftovers from their rejected plates. Once, he ate the remnants of the saintly Jhadu Thakur, and later received great mercy from Shri Chaitanya for his enthusiastic disposition. He even managed to drink the water that had washed Shri Chaitanya’s feet, thus accruing valuable spiritual blessings.

Instances of Ecstasy

[Antya 14-19]

In Chapters 14 to 19, Krishnadasa narrates the details of Shri Chaitanya’s ecstasy. Due to His feelings of separation, a variety of occurrences would trigger and induce His transcendental madness. This would agitate a variety of bodily transformations and ecstatic symptoms, which could only be pacified by the loud chanting of the holy name. After coming back to ‘external consciousness’, Shri Chaitanya would again fall into a deep separation, recounting His transcendental experiences. At this time He would request Ramananda and Svarupa to soothe His consciousness by reciting appropriate verses from the scriptures and singing select songs.

[14.31-14.58]

Krishna is Jagannatha – while taking darshan in the temple, Shri Chaitanya perceived the Deity of Jagannatha as the cowherd boy, Krishna. While absorbed in that ecstatic meditation, the Orissan lady

stepped on Him and He thus returned to external consciousness. Seeing the Deity as Jagannatha again, Shri Chaitanya was plunged into anxiety and moroseness, thinking that he had left Vrindavana and was now in Kurukshetra. When various ecstatic bodily symptoms manifested, He began explaining how the “yogi of His mind” had become completely captured by Krishna.

[14.84-14.123]

Sand Dune (Chataka Parvata) – when Shri Chaitanya saw a sand dune, He mistook it for Govardhana Hill and began running towards it in great anticipation, falling to the ground in ecstasy. Coming back to partial consciousness, Shri Chaitanya explained how He was witnessing the beautiful scene of Govardhana where Krishna regularly performs His playful pastimes. Thus, He began to lament that He was no longer there.

[15.28-15.99]

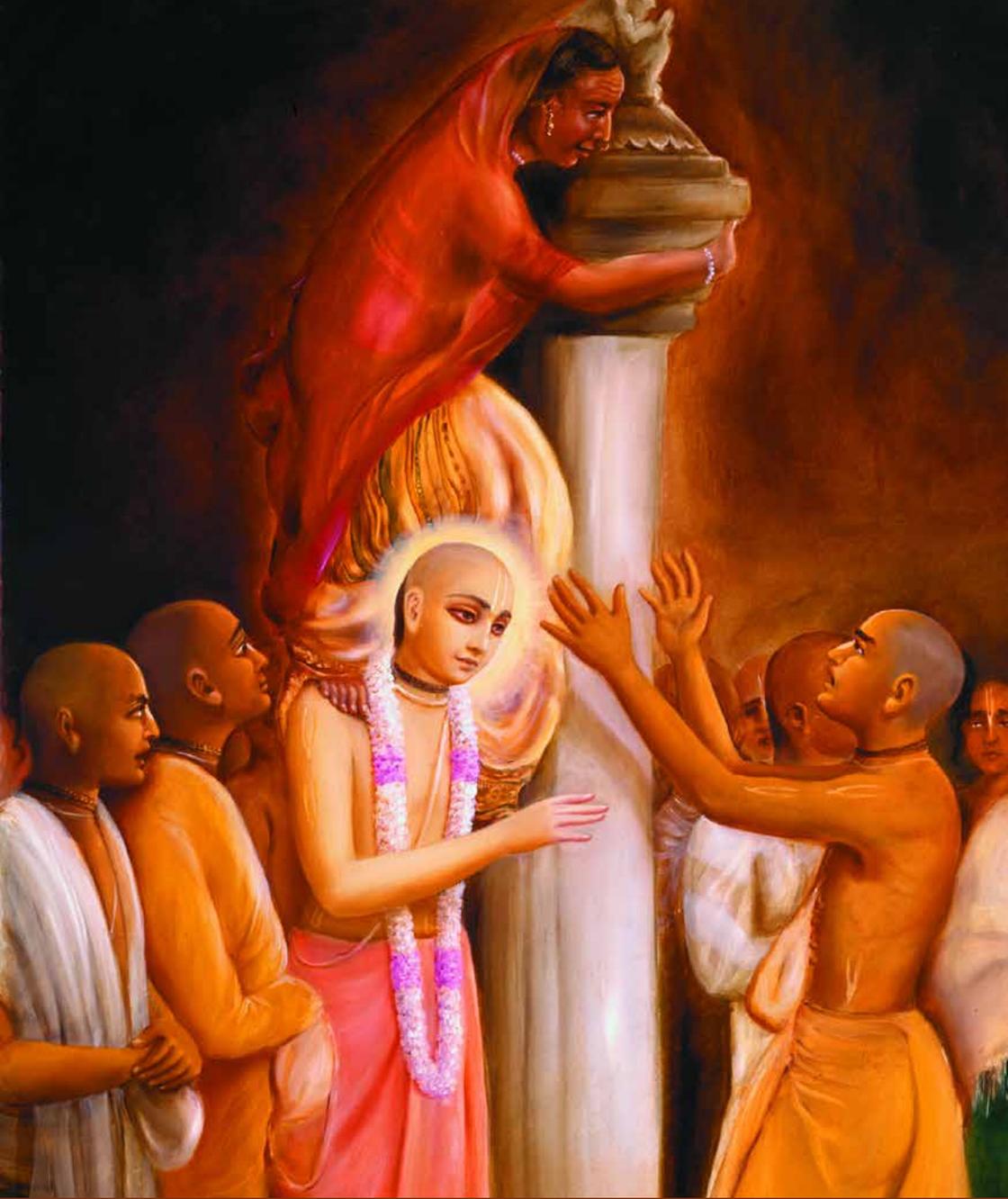
Flower Garden – while walking by the sea, Shri Chaitanya came across a flower garden and immediately envisioned Vrindavana. He adopted the mood of *gopis* who were anxiously looking for Radha and Krishna after They had left the *rasa* dance. Thus, Shri Chaitanya wandered around that garden in ecstatic love, inquiring from the trees, creepers, flowers and animals about the whereabouts of Krishna. When Shri Chaitanya finally found Krishna, He fell unconscious.

[16.80-16.151]

Prasadam of Jagannatha – after taking darshan and tasting the *maha-prasadam* from Jagannatha, Shri Chaitanya meditated on how the food had touched Krishna’s lips. This sent Him into a fit of ecstasy! With the help of His associates, Shri Chaitanya became immersed in thoughts of Krishna’s flute, which is eternally enjoying the nectar of Krishna’s lips.

[17.1-17.73]

Sound of the Flute – when Shri Chaitanya was in the Gambhira He heard the sound of Krishna’s flute. Although the three doors were locked and Govinda was guarding the room, Shri Chaitanya mystically managed to escape. Realising what had happened, the devotees began frantically searching for Him. They eventually found Him lying unconscious in a cow shed, with all His limbs sunken into His body like a tortoise. After bringing



The Orissan woman was so eager to see the Deity that she climbed onto the Garuda Stambha by placing her foot on Shri Chaitanya's shoulder.

the Lord back to consciousness, the devotees recited a series of verses glorifying the enchanting sound of Krishna's flute. His escaping from the Gambhira became a repeated event.⁶⁴

[18.1-18.121]

Jumping in the Sea – while reciting verses describing the *rasa-lila*, Shri Chaitanya reached the section glorifying Krishna's frolicking with the *gopis* in the river Yamuna. Absorbed in that mood, Shri Chaitanya walked past the sea, remembered the Yamuna, and instinctively jumped in. He fell unconscious, floated downstream, and eventually disappeared out-of-sight. After a desperate search, the devotees encountered a delirious fisherman who had retrieved what he thought was a dead corpse. After handling the body he manifested signs of madness, and had concluded he was now haunted! Svarupa Damodara could understand that this was the transcendental effect of touching Shri Chaitanya's body, and he thus pacified the fisherman. The devotees went to see Shri Chaitanya, whose body had become subject to mystical convulsions. After chanting loudly, Shri Chaitanya suddenly returned to consciousness and enthusiastically narrated the water pastimes of Krishna.

[19.1-19.77]

Advaita Acharya's sonnet – when Jagadananda was returning to Jagannatha Puri from Bengal, he brought a sonnet written by Advaita Acharya. The sonnet described how everyone in Bengal was going mad due to separation from Shri Chaitanya. The profound words of the Acharya doubled the Lord's feelings of ecstasy, as He remembered the scene of Krishna's departure to Mathura, which threw the *gopis* into pangs of separation. In that emotional remembrance, Shri Chaitanya rubbed His face against the walls of the Gambhira till He was bleeding.

[19.78-19.112]

Ashoka Tree – when Shri Chaitanya entered the Jagannatha Vallabha gardens, He saw Krishna sitting underneath an Ashoka Tree. He ran towards Him, but Krishna smiled and disappeared. The garden emanated the scent of Krishna's body, and when Shri Chaitanya smelt that transcendental aroma He fell unconscious and wandered around like a bumblebee.



The devotees encountered an ecstatic fisherman who had retrieved what he thought was a dead corpse. It was, in fact, the transcendental body of Shri Chaitanya, who had jumped into the river in ecstatic madness.

Although these esoteric pastimes are unfathomable to spiritual novices, they do highlight a practical aspiration that each one of us can strive for. The quintessential spiritual vision is highlighted by Shri Krishna in the Bhagavad-Gita: *“For one who sees Me everywhere and sees everything in Me, I am never lost, nor is he ever lost to Me.”*⁶⁵ People complain that they cannot see God at work, that He is not manifest in person before their eyes, and that they have no direct experience of His existence. *“Show me God, and then I’ll believe in Him,”* the sceptics posit. The entire process of *bhakti*, however, is meant to purify our consciousness and bring us face-to-face with Krishna. Over TIME, one can learn to see Krishna everywhere:

T – Temple – Some people doubt that God can appear in a ‘material’ form made of marble, metal or wood. To them, it appears limiting, imaginary and childish – to treat God like a doll by bathing Him, dressing Him and feeding Him. Deities, however, are not simply representations or icons, but actual manifestations of the divine personality. Anyone who enters such transcendental exchange with devotion and sincerity can personally experience a deep and direct reciprocation.

I – Individual – The advanced Vaishnavas, by virtue of their knowledge and devotion, see Krishna seated within every living entity. They treat all beings with utmost respect, and practically perceive how the Supersoul within different individuals can offer guidance, inspiration and instruction.

M – Material Nature – A devotee sees Krishna as the source of creation and also within the creation. The extreme intricacy and sophistication of the cosmos, reminds one of the higher intelligence behind it; as pearls are strung upon an indiscernible thread, God similarly designs, creates and sustains the entire universe yet remains invisible to the immature observer. Krishna is also perceivable within the creation; the taste of water, light of the sun, and ability in man, are all examples of His all-pervading opulence. One can thus think about, meditate upon, and see Krishna within every aspect of the material world.

E – Events – Not a blade of grass moves without the sanction of God. A mature and realised devotee can thus see Krishna’s hand behind everything, impregnating each event with purpose and meaning. Rather

than becoming sentimentally elated or depressed and down, a devotee gracefully embraces every situation as part of the Lord's master plan for his spiritual development.

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12. Instruction



Antya-Lila I Chapter 20

Chaitanya-Charitamrita concludes with eight essential prayers (Shikshastakam) which encapsulate the teachings and instructions of Shri Chaitanya.

Shikshastakam

[Antya 20]

[20.1-20.65]

One day, in the intimate company of Ramananda Raya and Svarupa Damodara, Shri Chaitanya recited a series of prayers and began to expound upon their meaning. These original compositions are known as the *Shikshastakam*, “Eight prayers of instruction.” The actual verses are found in texts 13, 16, 21, 29, 32, 36, 39 and 47 of the final chapter of Chaitanya-Charitamrita.

Although Shri Chaitanya had defeated the greatest scholars, educated the Goswamis, and philosophically convinced those who were averse to Krishna, He didn’t personally author any literature. Instead, He left eight succinct verses which comprehensively encapsulate the mood, mission, practices and theology of Gaudiya Vaishnavism. The spiritual significance of these historic stanzas has been described by Bhakti Tirtha Swami:

“We should recognize this valuable key that can open sacred doors to the spiritual world. As we recite these slokas daily, we should constantly endeavour to enter more deeply into their meaning and mystery. This Shikshastakam states the conclusion of Krishna consciousness and offers the culmination of all the Vedas; therefore, it is the necklace that all Vaishnavas should wear. A necklace worn around the neck practically touches the heart. These verses are essential for us and should be kept close to our hearts. They should not be viewed as optional or as an extracurricular aspect of our spiritual life.”¹⁶⁶

(See Appendix: Shikshastakam Breakdown)

Closing Pastimes

[Antya 20]

[20.66-20.101]

After spending 12 years in this kind of ecstatic reflection, Shri Chaitanya finally left the world. Krishnadasa humbly submits that his narrations are like a drop from an unlimited ocean of nectar. He credits all his writing to Krishna and His various representatives, who graciously showered him with blessings and empowerment.

[20.102-20.157]

The author concludes his 'magnum opus' by summarising the entire Antya-Lila.

Concluding Words

Krishnadasa begins the Chaitanya-Charitamrita with an **invocation**, philosophically preparing the reader to hear the sweet pastimes of Shri Chaitanya. The next chapters describe the **incarnation and education** of Nimai, who became renowned as the greatest of scholars. His true purpose, however, was to spread the movement of *nama-sankirtan*, and this only manifested after a pronounced **transformation** – initially by His *mantra*-initiation and later through His *sannyasa*-initiation.

Now known as Shri Chaitanya, He settled into His life of **renunciation**, making Jagannatha Puri His headquarters. From here, He journeyed all over India in mass **propagation** of the *sankirtan* mission. As years went by, His desire to visit Vrindavana kept growing, until He finally fulfilled that long-cherished **aspiration**. On His return journey to Jagannatha Puri, Shri Chaitanya strategically met Rupa and Sanatana Goswamis, carefully instructing them on the **organisation** of the *sankirtan* mission.

Retiring to Jagannatha Puri for the final years of His life, Shri Chaitanya resided with His devotees, offering **appreciation and correction** to practically establish the culture of Vaishnavism. After extensively doing that for 6 years, Shri Chaitanya retreated to the house of Kasi Mishra and absorbed Himself in the spiritual **intoxication** of Shrimati Radharani. In these final days, Shri Chaitanya offered eight stanzas of **instruction** to carefully guide the future generations in the beautiful process of bhakti.

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Appendix

Mangalacharana Breakdown

The first fourteen verses of Chapter One (Adi-Lila) form the *mangalacharana* (auspicious invocation prayers) for the entire work. These verses are expanded upon in the first seven chapters of the Adi-Lila:

Verse in Chapter 1	Subject	Further Expansion
1-2	General obeisances to Shri Chaitanya	Chapter 1 (44-110)
3	Proving Divinity of Shri Chaitanya	Chapter 2
4	External reason for the advent of Shri Chaitanya	Chapter 3
5-6	Internal reason for the advent of Shri Chaitanya	Chapter 4
7-11	Nityananda Prabhu	Chapter 5
12-13	Advaita Acharya	Chapter 6
14	Pancha Tattva	Chapter 7

Ramananda-Samvada

The conversations between Shri Chaitanya and Ramananda Raya are replete with profound spiritual insight. Through careful inquiry and gentle encouragement, Shri Chaitanya extracts the essence of Vaishnava theology, arriving at the most profound and esoteric conclusions of pure devotion. By the empowerment of Shri Chaitanya, Ramananda expertly DRAWS the entire landscape of various spiritual practices, clearly establishing what the aspiration of every sincere Vaishnava should be:

D – Duties

R – Results

A – Abandon

W – Wisdom

S – Self-Surrender

D – Duties (8.57-58)

When asked to articulate the ultimate goal of life, Ramananda began by promoting the observance of one's worldly duties in the *varnasrama* system. However, since this scientific division of society has become perverted in the modern age, with material ambition taking precedence over spiritual elevation, Shri Chaitanya asked Ramananda to go deeper and elucidate further. Although strict adherence to *varnasrama* obligations can certainly support one's spirituality, internal surrender and pure devotion to the Supreme Personality must ultimately manifest. Shri Chaitanya encouraged Ramananda to express these finer points.

R – Results (8.59)

Digging deeper, Ramananda explained that whilst fulfilling worldly obligations one should actively offer the results of that work to Krishna. This added element introduces a more personal and direct connection with the Supreme Person, and is thus considered a more elevated position. Yet Shri Chaitanya was still not satisfied; though offering the results of work gradually purifies one's consciousness, it may not completely extricate one from material life, since worldly attachments could still remain.

A – Abandon (8.60-63)

At this point Ramananda suggested that one abandon *varnasrama* altogether and fully embrace a life of renunciation. Though this is undoubtedly an advanced stage of spirituality, is still fails to fully connect us with Krishna. Perfection of consciousness is a combination of material detachment and spiritual attachment. This stage focuses on the negation of the material, but does not fully connect one with the sweet devotional service of Krishna. Thus, Shri Chaitanya urged Ramananda to explain further.

W – Wisdom (8.64-65)

The Governor then extolled the glories of devotional service based on wisdom, philosophy and logic (*jnana-misra-bhakti*). Here, simultaneous to detachment from the world, is a more conscious understanding of the Absolute Truth. This understanding, however, is limited to the impersonal feature of the Supreme, and does not fully appreciate the personality, activities and variegatedness of Krishna in the spiritual world. Convinced

that Ramananda had more to contribute, Shri Chaitanya patiently egged him on.

S – Self-surrender (8.66-67)

Ramananda arrived at the apex of spiritual understanding when he outlined pure devotional service, free from material desires and philosophical speculation, as the ultimate goal of life. Here, the surrendered soul selflessly dedicates his body, mind and words in the service of Krishna. His external social position is of no consequence since he has transcended the world by dint of his complete absorption in spiritual activity. He is liberated even while living.

Shrila Prabhupada wonderfully summarises this progression of spiritual practice as follows: *“In this age there is no possibility of acquiring spiritual knowledge by discharging one’s duties in the varnashrama-dharma system, by devotional service mixed with fruitive activity, by renunciation, or by devotional service mixed with 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 Chaitanya, 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 the Bhagavad-Gita and Shrimad-Bhagavatam. The transcendental messages of the scriptures should be heard from the lips of realized souls. In this way a person may continue to live in whatever condition he is in and still make spiritual progress. Thus one can surely advance and fully realize the Supreme Personality of Godhead.”*¹⁶⁷

Ramananda then elucidated the various degrees and relationships of spontaneous love between Krishna and His devotees. His answers culminate in descriptions of the gopis, and Srimati Radharani in particular, highlighting their intense selfless love which remains unparalleled within the entire universe.

CC Family Tree

Personality	Description	Original Identity
Advaita Acharya	The Vaishnava leader in the Navadvip area who fervently prayed for Shri Chaitanya to descend.	Maha Vishnu / Sadashiva
Gadadhara Pandita	The childhood companion of Shri Chaitanya.	Shrimati Radharani
Gopal Bhatta Goswami	The son of Vyenkata Bhatta, an aristocratic brahmana who met Shri Chaitanya while He travelled in South India.	Guna Manjari
Govinda	The godbrother of Shri Chaitanya who became His personal servant in Jagannatha Puri.	Bhangura (servant of Krishna)
Haridas Thakur	The <i>namacharya</i> – a celebrated Vaishnava who embodied pure chanting of the holy name.	Brahma + Prahlada
Ishvara Puri	Disciple of Madhavendra Puri and the initiating spiritual master of Shri Chaitanya.	
Jagannatha Mishra	The father of Shri Chaitanya.	Nanda
Jiva Goswami	The nephew of Rupa and Sanatana, who was considered by many scholars to be the greatest philosopher India has ever produced.	Vilasa Manjari
Lakshmipriya	First wife of Shri Chaitanya	Rukmini
Madhavendra Puri	Considered the root of the Gaudiya <i>parampara</i> , his main disciples were Ishvara Puri and Advaita Acharya	Kalpa-Vriksha (Desire Tree)
Nityananda Prabhu	Was born in Ekachakra, and eventually joined Shri Chaitanya in Navadvip when the <i>sankirtan</i> mission began.	Balaram

Pundarika Vidyanidhi	A disciple of Shri Madhavendra Puri, who became the guru of Gadadhara Pandita and an intimate friend of Svarupa Damodara.	Vrishabhanu
Raghunath Bhatta Goswami	The son of Tapan Mishra who met Shri Chaitanya in East Bengal and eventually joined the Six Goswamis.	Rasa Manjari
Raghunath das Goswami	Was the emblem of renunciation who imparted knowledge of Shri Chaitanya's life to Krishnadasa Kaviraja Goswami.	Rati Manjari
Ramananda Raya	One of Shri Chaitanya's most intimate associates, who revealed the topmost conclusions of <i>bhakti</i> .	Arjuna, Visakha
Rupa Goswami	The leader of the Goswamis, who was known as the <i>rasacarya</i> – the authority on transcendental mellows and relationships	Rupa Manjari
Sachimata	The mother of Shri Chaitanya.	Yashoda
Sanatana Goswami	The oldest of the Goswamis, who was formerly a high-ranking government minister and was later jailed for his devotion.	Lavanga Manjari
Shrivas Thakur	The saintly Vaishnava who assisted Shri Chaitanya in organising the daily <i>sankirtan</i> in Navadvip.	Narada Muni
Svarupa Damodara	An intimate <i>sannyasi</i> associate of Shri Chaitanya, who acted as His personal secretary in the final days.	Lalita
Vishnupriya	Second wife of Shri Chaitanya	Bhu-Shakti (1 of the 3 Lakshmis)
Vishvarupa	The brother of Shri Chaitanya	Shankarshana

Shikshastakam Breakdown

Within Vaishnava theology, various models are presented to describe the practitioner's progress on their journey to spiritual perfection. In general, one progresses through three broad categories: *sambandha*, *abhideya*, and *prayojana*. *Sambandha* means to understand one's relationship with Krishna, *abhideya* means to act in that relationship, and *prayojana* means to fully awaken one's dormant love of God.

Vishvanath Chakravarti Thakur expands on this idea, detailing the progress through 9 stages: *shraddha* (initial faith), *sadhu-sanga* (association of devotees), *bhajana-kriya* (committed practice of devotional service), *anartha-nivrtti* (cleansing of the heart), *nistha* (firm conviction), *ruchi* (higher taste), *asakti* (attachment), *bhava* (ecstatic love), *prema* (pure love of God).

Although the content of the Shikshastakam overlaps, a closer study reveals the overall flow of the prayers as follows⁶⁸:

Verse	Key Theme	Sambandha, Abhideya, Prayojana	Shraddha to Prema
1	Importance of <i>nama-sankirtan</i> & 7 effects of chanting	Sambandha / Abhideya	Shraddha
2	Our weakness and inability to engage in the process	Sambandha / Abhideya	Sadhu Sanga, Bhajana Kriya, Anartha Nivrtti
3	The proper mood and disposition for spiritual success	Sambandha / Abhideya	The supporting mood
4	Elimination of material desires and development of spiritual desires	Sambandha / Abhideya	Nistha / Ruchi

5	Awakening of our real spiritual identity	Sambandha / Abhideya	Asakti
6	The experience of good fortune by coming in contact with the Lord	Abhideya / Prayojana	Bhava
7	The mood of separation within advanced devotees	Abhideya / Prayojana	Bhava
8	The highest perfection and ultimate goal	Abhideya / Prayojana	Prema

References & Extra Reading

The following books, which were used to compile this summary study of Shrila Prabhupada's Chaitanya-Charitamrita, are a rich source of information and inspiration:

“Shri Chaitanya: His Life and Precepts” by Shrila Bhaktivinoda Thakur

“Teachings of Lord Chaitanya” by A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

“The Philosophy & Religion of Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu” by O.B.L Kapoor

“Shri Krishna Chaitanya” by Nisikanta Sanyal

“The Life and Times of Lord Chaitanya” by Steven Rosen

“Six Goswamis of Vrindavana” by Steven Rosen

“The Birth of Kirtan” by Ranchor Prime

“Chaitanya Charitamrita Condensed” by Purnaprajna das

End Notes

1. Taittiriya Upanisad (2.7)
2. Adi-Lila 4.238-269
3. Adi-Lila 2.117-118
4. Adi-Lila 1.1
5. Adi-Lila 14.18 purport
6. Adi Lila 2.22 Purport
7. Adi-Lila 13.88-90
8. Adi-Lila 3.41-45 / 14.7-20
9. Adi-Lila 3.35-36 / 3.47
10. Adi-Lila 4.40
11. Adi-Lila 4.230
12. Adi-Lila 7.6
13. Adi-Lila 5.135
14. Adi-Lila 10.92-103 / Madhya-Lila 2.84 Purport
15. Adi-Lila 9.34-36
16. Adi-Lila 9.18
17. Chaitanya-Bhagavata Antya-khanda 4.126
18. Chaitanya Manjusa (commentary on Shrimad-Bhagavatam)
19. Adi-Lila 14.94
20. Adi-Lila 7.71-96 (Shri Chaitanya to Prakshananada Saraswati)
21. Adi-Lila 17.11 / 17.18 / 17.65-71
22. Adi-Lila 17.13
23. Adi-Lila 17.17
24. Adi-Lila 17.79-88
25. Adi-Lila 17.91-98
26. Adi-Lila 17.103-114
27. Adi-Lila 17.115-120
28. Adi-Lila 17.228-240
29. Adi-Lila 17.17
30. Adi-Lila 17.37-59
31. Adi-Lila 17.60-64
32. Adi-Lila 17.121-226
33. Adi-Lila 17.222
34. Adi-Lila 17.247-273
35. Brahma Vaivarta Purana (quoted in Adi-Lila 17.164)
36. Madhya-Lila 3.6
37. Madhya-Lila 7.128-129
38. Madhya-Lila 9.10
39. Madhya-Lila 9.309
40. Madhya-Lila 11.97
41. Madhya-Lila 11.217
42. Madhya-Lila 12.135 Purport

43. Stages from Shraddha (faith) to Prema (pure love) are described in his book "Madhurya-Kadambini"
44. Madhya-Lila 13.119 Purport
45. Madhya-Lila 14.227
46. Nectar of Instruction verse 9
47. Madhya-Lila Chapter 4 narrates the entire story
48. From O.B.L Kapoor's "The Philosophy & Religion of Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu"
49. Antya-Lila 6.220
50. Madhya-Lila 19.115
51. Madhya-Lila 20.97
52. Madhya-Lila 19.123-134
53. Antya-Lila 4.214-239
54. Adi-Lila 7.49-161
55. Antya-Lila 1.193 / 1.196-7 contains further glorification
56. Antya-Lila 2.34-35
57. Antya-Lila 3.49-164
58. Antya-Lila 6.236-237
59. Adi-Lila 10.99
60. Antya-Lila 9.135
61. Antya-Lila 14.12-13
62. Antya-Lila 15.27
63. Antya-Lila 15.24
64. see also Antya-Lila 14.57-83
65. Bhagavad-Gita 6.30
66. Excerpt from Bhakti Tirtha Swami's "Reflections on Sacred Teachings: Shikshastakam"
67. Teachings of Lord Chaitanya
68. Based on Bhaktivinoda Thakur's "Sanmodana Bhasyam" and Bhakti Tirtha Swami's "Reflections on Sacred Teachings: Shikshastakam"

Shri Chaitanya's major travels, as described in Chaitanya-Charitamrita:

Chapter 3: Education

Navadvip – East Bengal – Navadvip

- expands His scholastic influence

Chapter 4: Transformation

Navadvip – Gaya – Navadvip

- receives *mantra* initiation from Ishvara Puri

Navadvip – Katwa

- receives *sannyasa* initiation from Keshava Bharati

Chapter 5: Renunciation

Katwa – Shantipur

- meets His Navadvip associates

Shantipur – Jagannatha Puri

- makes Jagannatha Puri His headquarters

Chapter 6: Propagation

Jagannatha Puri – South India – Jagannatha Puri

- preaching tour of South India

Jagannatha Puri – Alalanatha – Jagannatha Puri

visits here after Snanayatra festival

Chapter 7: Aspiration

Jagannatha Puri – Ramakeli – Shantipur - Jagannatha Puri

- travels towards Vrindavana, meets Rupa and Sanatana at Ramakeli, and then decides to return to Jagannatha Puri

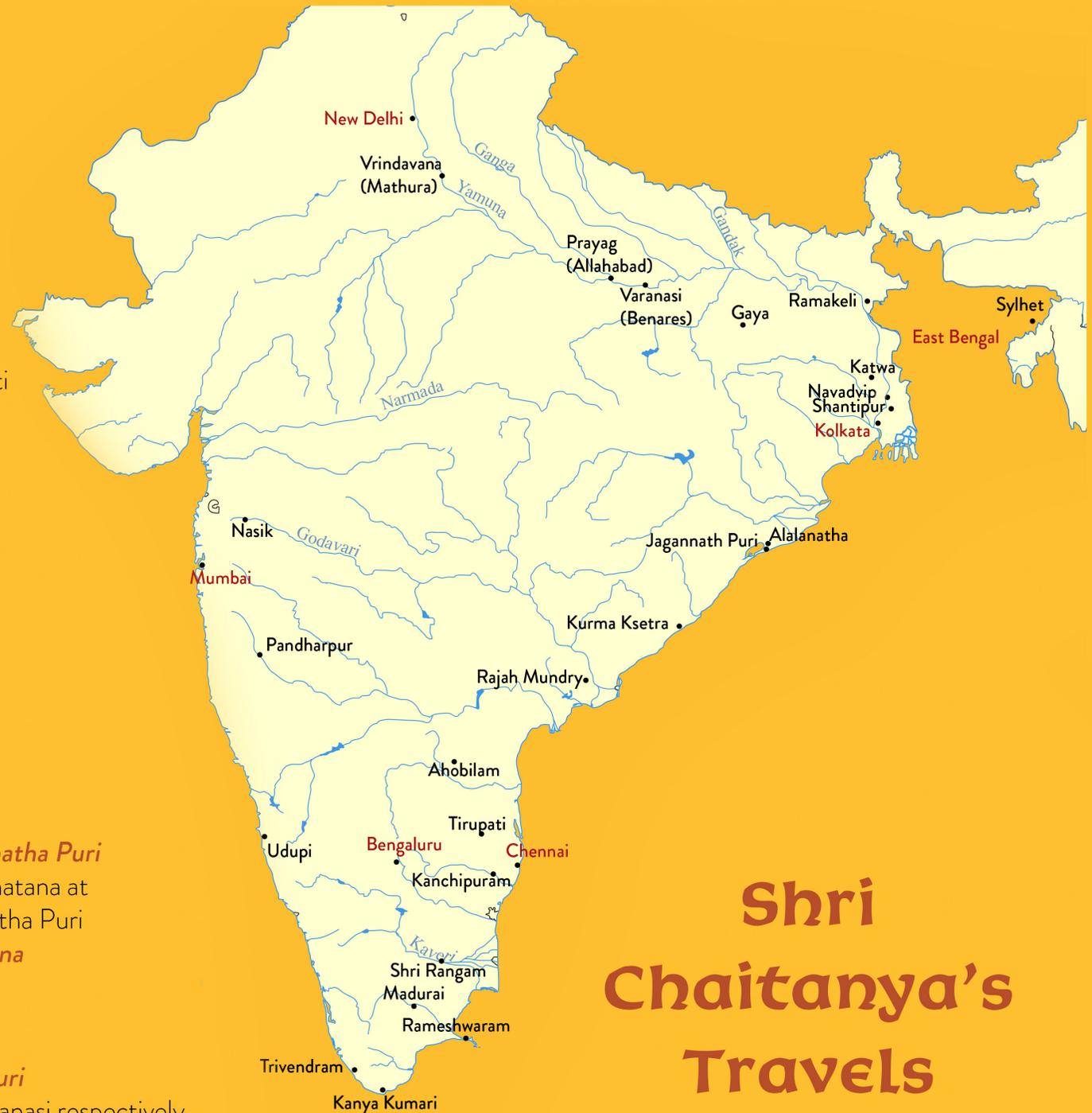
Jagannatha Puri – Varanasi – Prayaga – Vrindavana

- performs Vraja mandala Parikrama

Chapter 8: Organisation

Vrindavana – Prayaga – Varanasi – Jagannatha Puri

- instructs Rupa and Sanatana at Prayaga and Varanasi respectively



The tree outlines the prominent guru-disciple relationships within the Gaudiya-Vaishnava disciplic succession. Various teachers have expressed different opinions on who was formally initiated by who, but these connections indicate the most widely accepted understanding

“All glories to Shri Madhavendra Puri, the storehouse of all devotional service unto Krishna! He is a desire tree of devotional service, and it is in him that the seed of devotional service first fructified.”
(Adi-Lila 9.10)



Many great teachers came in this lineage, including:
Vishvanath Chakravarti Thakur
Baladeva Vidyabhusana

“The description of Lord Chaitanya as the gardener and the tree is inconceivable. Now hear with attention about the branches of this tree. The associates of Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu were many, but none of them should be considered lower or higher. This cannot be ascertained. All the great personalities in the line of Lord Chaitanya enumerated these devotees, but they could not distinguish between the greater and the lesser.”

(Adi-Lila 10.3-5)

CC Family Tree

○ devotees, relish daily the nectar of
Shri Chaitanya-Charitamrita and the pastimes of
Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, for by doing so one can
merge in transcendental bliss and attain full knowledge
of devotional service. (Antya-Lila 5.89)



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