

The Golden Avatar

for **THE IRON AGE**

Emperor Akbar sang, "Hail Thee, O Chaitanya – the victor of my heart. Mark the rhythm of this mystic dance, in lofty ecstasy quite alone. Merrily sounds the tabor and the cymbals' notes keep time.....O my heart's Lord, how can I express the love I have for Thee? Shah Akbar craves a drop from the sea of Thy love and piety."(D. C. Sen., in *Chaitanya and His Age*). These verses – coming from a Muslim emperor -- illustrate the universal appeal of the

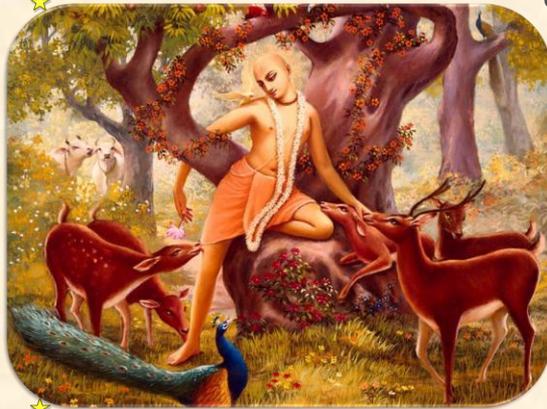
divine love that Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu personified and propagated.

Integration was at the core of his cosmopolitan teachings. Instead of negating the physical to achieve the spiritual – as often happens in silent meditation, He integrated the physical with the spiritual to propound a joyful, natural, easy process of spiritual realization. Shri Chaitanya (1486-1533)

recommended *sankirtana*,

congregational chanting and dancing, accompanied by soothing music, as a sort of spiritual music therapy to heal the soul in our current age of iron, Kali yuga. Just as iron burdens the person carrying it, negative thoughts and emotions burden most people in the present age. Sankirtana of the holy names of God like the Hare Krishna maha-mantra floods the heart with positive emotions like love, faith and joy and flushes away negative emotions like hatred, anxiety and sorrow.

Indeed Shri Chaitanya's mission was to integrate humanity with divinity through spiritual love, as awakened by sankirtana, and thus eradicate all bad qualities. Every avatar has his weapons to fulfill his mission. Shri Chaitanya's weapon was his beauty, which inspired the human heart to integrate and harmonize - lovingly and joyfully - with the divine will. By his captivating complexion, his mesmerizing dance, his spellbinding glance of grace, he would fill the hearts of all who beheld him with the divine love that was overflowing in his own heart. The most dramatic example of Shri Chaitanya's potency is the transformation of two rogues Jagai and Madhai.



the spiritual scientist

Though born in a cultured family, these two brothers had, by bad association, perpetrated every conceivable transgression – repeatedly. But Shri Chaitanya, in a brief encounter, blessed them with divine love so profusely that their past devious habits were forever banished from their hearts and they soon became saintly.

Shri Chaitanya also integrated the head and the heart –the rational and emotional faculties – into a smooth spiritual expressway. As a teenager Shri Chaitanya became a peerless pundit of scriptures, defeating all scholars of his time. Subsequently he chose bhakti as the most efficacious way to spiritual transformation – individually and socially. When divine emotions are regulated and directed by philosophical thoughts and when philosophical thoughts are enlivened by divine emotions, then the head and the heart integrate together to propel the soul on the expressway to the divine.

Shri Chaitanya personified integration on another dimension; he is considered to be an integrated incarnation of the Divine Couple Radha-Krishna. He is the supreme divinity Krishna with the golden complexion and devotional fervor of Radha. Indeed when the *mahabhava* (great emotion) of Radha is accepted by the supreme *prabhu* (Lord), the divine personality of *Maha-prabhu* is said to manifest. Indeed he is celebrated as the Golden avatar for the Iron Age.

Shri Chaitanya prophesied over five hundred years ago that sankirtana would spread to “every town and village on the earth.” His prediction is well on the way to being fulfilled as more and more people all over the world are transcending all boundaries to integrate in the sankirtana of the holy names. Srila Prabhupada, founder of ISKCON and the most prominent follower of Shri Chaitanya in modern times, envisioned that this legacy of integration be manifest in a magnificent memorial at his birthplace in Mayapur, West Bengal. This skyscraping temple-planetarium (*adbhuta mandira*) that will integrate ancient scriptural cosmology with state-of-the-art architectural technology has the potential to integrate all peoples in Shri Chaitanya’s legacy of love.

