

## **A short sketch of the life and teachings of Lord Caitanya, the Preacher of Srimad-Bhagavatam**

"Lord Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, the great apostle of love of God and the father of the congregational chanting of the holy name of the Lord, advented Himself at Sridhama Mayapura, a quarter in the city of Navadvipa in Bengal, on the Phalguni Purnima evening in the year 1407 Sakabda (corresponding to February 1486 by the Christian calendar).

His father, Sri Jagannatha Misra, a learned brahmana from the district of Sylhet, came to Navadvipa as a student because at that time Navadvipa was considered to be the center of education and culture. He domiciled on the banks of the Ganges after marrying Srimati Sacidevi, a daughter of Srila Nilambara Cakravarti, the great learned scholar of Navadvipa.

Jagannatha Misra had a number of daughters by his wife, Srimati Sacidevi, and most of them expired at an early age. Two surviving sons, Sri Visvarupa and Visvambhara, became at last the object of their paternal affection. The tenth and youngest son, who was named Visvambhara, later became known as Nimai Pandita and then, after accepting the renounced order of life, Lord Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu.

Lord Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu exhibited His transcendental activities for forty-eight years and then disappeared in the year 1455 Sakabda at Puri.

For His first twenty-four years He remained at Navadvipa as a student and householder. His first wife was Srimati Laksmipriya, who died at an early age when the Lord was away from home. When He returned from East Bengal He was requested by His mother to accept a second wife, and He agreed. His second wife was Srimati Visnupriya Devi, who bore the separation of the Lord throughout her life because the Lord took the order of sannyasa at the age of twenty-four, when Srimati Visnupriya was barely sixteen years old.

After taking sannyasa, the Lord made His headquarters at Jagannatha Puri due to the request of His mother, Srimati Sacidevi. The Lord remained for twenty-four years at Puri. For six years of this time He traveled continuously all over India (and especially throughout southern India) preaching the Srimad-Bhagavatam.

Lord Caitanya not only preached the Srimad-Bhagavatam but propagated the teachings of the Bhagavad-gita as well in the most practical way. In the Bhagavad-gita Lord Sri Krsna is depicted as the Absolute Personality of Godhead, and His last teachings in that great book of transcendental knowledge instruct that one should give up all the modes of religious activities and accept Him (Lord Sri Krsna) as the only worshipable Lord. The Lord then assured that all His devotees would be protected from all sorts of sinful acts and that for them there would be no cause for anxiety. Unfortunately, despite Lord Sri Krsna's direct order and the teachings of the Bhagavad-gita, less intelligent people misunderstand Him to be nothing but a great historical personality, and thus they cannot accept Him as the original Personality of Godhead. Such men with a poor fund of knowledge are misled by many nondevotees. Thus the teachings of the Bhagavad-gita were misinterpreted even by great scholars. After the disappearance of Lord Sri Krsna there were hundreds of commentaries on the Bhagavad-gita by many erudite scholars, and almost every one of them was motivated by self-interest.

Lord Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu is the selfsame Lord Sri Krsna. This time, however, He appeared as a great devotee of the Lord in order to preach to the people in general, as well as to religionists and philosophers, about the transcendental position of Sri Krsna, the primeval Lord and the cause of all causes. The essence of His preaching is that Lord Sri Krsna, who appeared at Vrajabhumi (Vrndavana) as the son of the King of Vraja (Nanda Maharaja), is the Supreme Personality of Godhead and is therefore worshipable by all. Vrndavana-dhama is nondifferent from the Lord because the name, fame, form and place where the Lord manifests Himself are all identical with the Lord as absolute knowledge. Therefore Vrndavana-dhama is as worshipable as the Lord. The highest form of transcendental worship of the Lord was exhibited by the

damsels of Vrajabhumi in the form of pure affection for the Lord, and Lord Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu recommends this process as the most excellent mode of worship. He accepts the Srimad-Bhagavata Purana as the spotless literature for understanding the Lord, and He preaches that the ultimate goal of life for all human beings is to attain the stage of prema, or love of God.

Many devotees of Lord Caitanya like Srila Vrndavana dasa Thakura, Sri Locana dasa Thakura, Srila Krsnadasa Kaviraja Gosvami, Sri Kavikarnapura, Sri Prabodhananda Sarasvati, Sri Rupa Gosvami, Sri Sanatana Gosvami, Sri Raghunatha Bhatta Gosvami, Sri Jiva Gosvami, Sri Gopala Bhatta Gosvami, Sri Raghunatha dasa Gosvami and in this latter age within two hundred years, Sri Visvanatha Cakravarti, Sri Baladeva Vidyabhusana, Sri Syamananda Gosvami, Sri Narottama dasa Thakura, Sri Bhaktivinoda Thakura and at last Sri Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura and many other great and renowned scholars and devotees of the Lord have prepared voluminous books and literatures on the life and precepts of the Lord. Such literatures are all based on the sastras like the Vedas, Puranas, Upanisads, Ramayana, Mahabharata and other histories and authentic literatures approved by the recognized acaryas. They are unique in composition and unrivaled in presentation, and they are full of transcendental knowledge. Unfortunately the people of the world are still ignorant of them, but when these literatures, which are mostly in Sanskrit and Bengali, come to light the world and when they are presented before thinking people, then India's glory and the message of love will overflow this morbid world, which is vainly searching after peace and prosperity by various illusory methods not approved by the acaryas in the chain of disciplic succession.

The readers of this small description of the life and precepts of Lord Caitanya will profit much to go through the books of Srila Vrndavana dasa Thakura (Sri Caitanya-bhagavata) and Srila Krsnadasa Kaviraja Gosvami (Sri Caitanya-caritamṛta). The early life of the Lord is most fascinatingly expressed by the author of Caitanya-bhagavata, and as far as the teachings are concerned, they are more vividly explained in the Caitanya-caritamṛta. Now they are available to the English-speaking public in our Teachings of Lord Caitanya.

The Lord's early life was recorded by one of His chief devotees and contemporaries, namely Srila Murari Gupta, a medical practitioner of that time, and the latter part of the life of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu was recorded by His private secretary Sri Damodara Gosvami, or Srila Svarupa Damodara, who was practically a constant companion of the Lord at Puri. These two devotees recorded practically all the incidents of the Lord's activities, and later on all the books dealing with the Lord, which are above mentioned, were composed on the basis of kadacas (notebooks) by Srila Damodara Gosvami and Murari Gupta.

So the Lord advented Himself on the Phalguni Purnima evening of 1407 Sakabda, and it was by the will of the Lord that there was a lunar eclipse on that evening. During the hours of eclipse it was the custom of the Hindu public to take bath in the Ganges or any other sacred river and chant the Vedic mantras for purification. When Lord Caitanya was born during the lunar eclipse, all India was roaring with the holy sound of Hare Krsna, Hare Krsna, Krsna Krsna, Hare Hare. Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare. These sixteen names of the Lord are mentioned in many Puranas and Upanisads, and they are described as the Taraka-brahma nama of this age. It is recommended in the sastras that offenseless chanting of these holy names of the Lord can deliver a fallen soul from material bondage. There are innumerable names of the Lord both in India and outside, and all of them are equally good because all of them indicate the Supreme Personality of Godhead. But because these sixteen are especially recommended for this age, people should take advantage of them and follow the path of the great acaryas who attained success by practicing the rules of the sastras (revealed scriptures).

The simultaneous occurrence of the Lord's appearance and the lunar eclipse indicated the distinctive mission of the Lord. This mission was to preach the importance of chanting the holy names of the Lord in this age of Kali (quarrel). In this present age quarrels take place even over trifles, and therefore the sastras have recommended for this age a common platform for realization, namely chanting the holy names of the Lord. People can hold meetings to glorify the Lord in their respective languages and with melodious songs, and if such performances are executed in an offenseless manner, it is certain that the participants will gradually attain spiritual perfection without having to undergo more rigorous methods. At such meetings everyone, the learned and the foolish, the rich and the poor, the Hindus and the Muslims, the Englishmen and the Indians, and the candalas and the brahmanas, can all hear the transcendental

sounds and thus cleanse the dust of material association from the mirror of the heart. To confirm the Lord's mission, all the people of the world will accept the holy name of the Lord as the common platform for the universal religion of mankind. In other words, the advent of the holy name took place along with the advent of Lord Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu.

When the Lord was on the lap of His mother, He would at once stop crying as soon as the ladies surrounding Him chanted the holy names and clapped their hands. This peculiar incident was observed by the neighbors with awe and veneration. Sometimes the young girls took pleasure in making the Lord cry and then stopping Him by chanting the holy name. So from His very childhood the Lord began to preach the importance of the holy name. In His early age Lord Sri Caitanya was known as Nimai. This name was given by His beloved mother because the Lord took His birth beneath a nimba tree in the courtyard of His paternal house.

When the Lord was offered solid food at the age of six months in the anna-prasana ceremony, the Lord indicated His future activities. At this time it was customary to offer the child both coins and books in order to get some indication of the future tendencies of the child. The Lord was offered on one side coins and on the other the Srimad-Bhagavatam. The Lord accepted the Bhagavatam instead of the coins.

When He was a mere baby crawling in the yard, one day a snake appeared before Him, and the Lord began to play with it. All the members of the house were struck with fear and awe, but after a little while the snake went away, and the baby was taken away by His mother. Once He was stolen by a thief who intended to steal His ornaments, but the Lord took a pleasure trip on the shoulder of the bewildered thief, who was searching for a solitary place in order to rob the baby. It so happened that the thief, wandering hither and thither, finally arrived just before the house of Jagannatha Misra and, being afraid of being caught, dropped the baby at once. Of course the anxious parents and relatives were glad to see the lost child.

Once a pilgrim brahmana was received at the house of Jagannatha Misra, and when he was offering food to the Godhead, the Lord appeared before him and partook of the prepared food. The eatables had to be rejected because the child touched them, and so the brahmana had to make another preparation. The next time the same thing happened, and when this happened repeatedly for the third time, the baby was finally put to bed. At about twelve at night when all the members of the house were fast asleep within their closed rooms, the pilgrim brahmana offered his specially prepared foods to the Deity, and, in the same way, the baby Lord appeared before the pilgrim and spoiled his offerings. The brahmana then began to cry, but since everyone was fast asleep, no one could hear him. At that time the baby Lord appeared before the fortunate brahmana and disclosed His identity as Krsna Himself. The brahmana was forbidden to disclose this incident, and the baby returned to the lap of His mother.

There are many similar incidents in His childhood. As a naughty boy He sometimes used to tease the orthodox brahmanas who used to bathe in the Ganges. When the brahmanas complained to His father that He was splashing them with water instead of attending school, the Lord suddenly appeared before His father as though just coming from school with all His school clothes and books. At the bathing ghata He also used to play jokes on the neighboring girls who engaged in worshiping Siva in hopes of getting good husbands. This is a common practice amongst unmarried girls in Hindu families. While they were engaged in such worship, the Lord naughtily appeared before them and said, "My dear sisters, please give Me all the offerings you have just brought for Lord Siva. Lord Siva is My devotee, and Parvati is My maidservant. If you worship Me, then Lord Siva and all the other demigods will be more satisfied." Some of them refused to obey the naughty Lord, and He would curse them that due to their refusal they would be married to old men who had seven children by their previous wives. Out of fear and sometimes out of love the girls would also offer Him various goods, and then the Lord would bless them and assure them that they would have very good young husbands and that they would be mothers of dozens of children. The blessings would enliven the girls, but they used often to complain of these incidents to their mothers.

In this way the Lord passed His early childhood. When He was just sixteen years old He started His own catuspathi (village school conducted by a learned brahmana). In this school He would simply explain

Krsna, even in readings of grammar. Srila Jiva Gosvami, in order to please the Lord, later composed a grammar in Sanskrit, in which all the rules of grammar were explained with examples that used the holy names of the Lord. This grammar is still current. It is known as Hari-namamrta-vyakarana and is prescribed in the syllabus of schools in Bengal.

During this time a great Kashmir scholar named Kesava Kasmiri came to Navadvipa to hold discussions on the sastras. The Kashmir pandita was a champion scholar, and he had traveled to all places of learning in India. Finally he came to Navadvipa to contest the learned panditas there. The panditas of Navadvipa decided to match Nimai Pandita (Lord Caitanya) with the Kashmir pandita, thinking that if Nimai Pandita were defeated, they would have another chance to debate with the scholar, for Nimai Pandita was only a boy. And if the Kashmir pandita were defeated, then they would even be more glorified because people would proclaim that a mere boy of Navadvipa had defeated a champion scholar who was famous throughout India. It so happened that Nimai Pandita met Kesava Kasmiri while strolling on the banks of the Ganges. The Lord requested him to compose a Sanskrit verse in praise of the Ganges, and the pandita within a short time composed a hundred slokas, reciting the verses like a storm and showing the strength of his vast learning. Nimai Pandita at once memorized all the slokas without an error. He quoted the sixty-fourth sloka and pointed out certain rhetorical and literary irregularities. He particularly questioned the pandita's use of the word bhavani-bhartuh. He pointed out that the use of this word was redundant. Bhavani means the wife of Siva, and who else can be her bharta, or husband? He also pointed out several other discrepancies, and the Kashmir pandita was struck with wonder. He was astonished that a mere student of grammar could point out the literary mistakes of an erudite scholar. Although this matter was ended prior to any public meeting, the news spread like wildfire all over Navadvipa. But finally Kesava Kasmiri was ordered in a dream by Sarasvati, the goddess of learning, to submit to the Lord, and thus the Kashmir pandita became a follower of the Lord.

The Lord was then married with great pomp and gaiety, and at this time He began to preach the congregational chanting of the holy name of, the Lord at Navadvipa. Some of the brahmanas became envious of His popularity, and they put many hindrances on His path. They were so jealous that they finally took the matter before the Muslim magistrate at Navadvipa. Bengal was then governed by Pathans, and the governor of the province was Nawab Hussain Shah. The Muslim magistrate of Navadvipa took up the complaints of the brahmanas seriously, and at first he warned the followers of Nimai Pandita not to chant loudly the name of Hari. But Lord Caitanya asked His followers to disobey the orders of the Kazi, and they went on with their sankirtana (chanting) party as usual. The magistrate then sent constables who interrupted a sankirtana and broke some of the mrdangas (drums). When Nimai Pandita heard of this incident He organized a party for civil disobedience. He is the pioneer of the civil disobedience movement in India for the right cause. He organized a procession of one hundred thousand men with thousands of mrdangas and karatalas (hand cymbals), and this procession passed over the roads of Navadvipa in defiance of the Kazi who had issued the order. Finally the procession reached the house of the Kazi, who went upstairs out of fear of the masses. The great crowds assembled at the Kazi's house displayed a violent temper, but the Lord asked them to be peaceful. At this time the Kazi came down and tried to pacify the Lord by addressing Him as his nephew. He pointed out that Nilambara Cakravarti referred to him as an uncle, and consequently, Srimati Sacidevi, the mother of Nimai Pandita, was his sister. He asked the Lord whether his sister's son could be angry at His maternal uncle, and the Lord replied that since the Kazi was His maternal uncle he should receive his nephew well at his home. In this way the issue was mitigated, and the two learned scholars began a long discussion on the Koran and Hindu sastras. The Lord raised the question of cow-killing, and the Kazi properly answered Him by referring to the Koran. In turn the Kazi also questioned the Lord about cow sacrifice in the Vedas, and the Lord replied that such sacrifice as mentioned in the Vedas is not actually cow-killing. In that sacrifice an old bull or cow was sacrificed for the sake of receiving a fresh younger life by the power of Vedic mantras. But in the Kali-yuga such cow sacrifices are forbidden because there are no qualified brahmanas capable of conducting such a sacrifice. In fact, in Kali-yuga all yajnas (sacrifices) are forbidden because they are useless attempts by foolish men. In Kali-yuga only the sankirtana yajna is recommended for all practical purposes. Speaking in this way, the Lord finally convinced the Kazi, who became the Lord's follower. The Kazi thenceforth declared that no one should hinder the sankirtana movement which was started by the Lord, and the Kazi left this order in his will for the sake of progeny. The Kazi's tomb still exists in the area of Navadvipa, and

Hindu pilgrims go there to show their respects. The Kazi's descendants are residents, and they never objected to sankirtana, even during the Hindu-Muslim riot days.

This incident shows clearly that the Lord was not a so-called timid Vaisnava. A Vaisnava is a fearless devotee of the Lord, and for the right cause he can take any step suitable for the purpose. Arjuna was also a Vaisnava devotee of Lord Krsna, and he fought valiantly for the satisfaction of the Lord. Similarly, Vajrangaji, or Hanuman, was also a devotee of Lord Rama, and he gave lessons to the nondevotee party of Ravana. The principles of Vaisnavism are to satisfy the Lord by all means. A Vaisnava is by nature a nonviolent, peaceful living being, and he has all the good qualities of God, but when the nondevotee blasphemes the Lord or His devotee, the Vaisnava never tolerates such impudency.

After this incident the Lord began to preach and propagate His Bhagavata-dharma, or sankirtana movement, more vigorously, and whoever stood against this propagation of the yuga-dharma, or duty of the age, was properly punished by various types of chastisement. Two brahmana gentlemen named Capala and Gopala, who also happened to be maternal uncles of the Lord, were inflicted with leprosy by way of chastisement, and later, when they were repentant, they were accepted by the Lord. In the course of His preaching work, He used to send daily all His followers, including Srila Nityananda Prabhu and Thakura Haridasa, two chief whips of His party, from door to door to preach the Srimad-Bhagavatam. All of Navadvipa was surcharged with His sankirtana movement, and His headquarters were situated at the house of Srivasa Thakura and Sri Advaita Prabhu, two of His chief householder disciples. These two learned heads of the brahmana community were the most ardent supporters of Lord Caitanya's movement. Sri Advaita Prabhu was the chief cause for the advent of the Lord. When Advaita Prabhu saw that the total human society was full of materialistic activities and devoid of devotional service, which alone could save mankind from the threefold miseries of material existence, He, out of His causeless compassion for the age-worn human society, prayed fervently for the incarnation of the Lord and continually worshiped the Lord with water of the Ganges and leaves of the holy tulasi tree. As far as preaching work in the sankirtana movement was concerned, everyone was expected to do his daily share according to the order of the Lord.

Once Nityananda Prabhu and Srila Haridasa Thakura were walking down a main road, and on the way they saw a roaring crowd assembled. Upon inquiring from passers-by, they understood that two brothers, named Jagai and Madhai, were creating a public disturbance in a drunken state. They also heard that these two brothers were born in a respectable brahmana family, but because of low association they had turned into debauchees of the worst type. They were not only drunkards but also meat-eaters, woman-hunters, dacoits and sinners of all description. Srila Nityananda Prabhu heard all of these stories and decided that these two fallen souls must be the first to be delivered. If they were delivered from their sinful life, then the good name of Lord Caitanya would be even still more glorified. Thinking in this way, Nityananda Prabhu and Haridasa pushed their way through the crowd and asked the two brothers to chant the holy name of Lord Hari. The drunken brothers became enraged upon this request and attacked Nityananda Prabhu with filthy language. Both brothers chased them a considerable distance. In the evening the report of the preaching work was submitted to the Lord, and He was glad to learn that Nityananda and Haridasa had attempted to deliver such a stupid pair of fellows.

The next day Nityananda Prabhu went to see the brothers, and as soon as He approached them one of them threw a piece of earthen pot at Him. This struck Him on the forehead, and immediately blood began to flow. But Nityananda Prabhu was so kind that instead of protesting this heinous act, He said, "It does not matter that you have thrown this stone at Me. I still request you to chant the holy name of Lord Hari."

One of the brothers, Jagai, was astonished to see this behavior of Nityananda Prabhu, and he at once fell down at His feet and asked Him to pardon his sinful brother. When Madhai again attempted to hurt Nityananda Prabhu, Jagai stopped him and implored him to fall down at His feet. In the meantime the news of Nityananda's injury reached the Lord, who at once hurried to the spot in a fiery and angry mood. The Lord immediately invoked His Sudarsana cakra (the Lord's ultimate weapon, shaped like a wheel) to kill the sinners, but Nityananda Prabhu reminded Him of His mission. The mission of the Lord was to deliver the hopelessly fallen souls of Kali-yuga, and the brothers Jagai and Madhai were typical examples of these fallen souls. Ninety percent of the population of this age resembles these brothers, despite high

birth and mundane respectability. According to the verdict of the revealed scriptures, the total population of the world in this age will be of the lowest sudra quality, or even lower. It should be noted that Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu never acknowledged the stereotyped caste system by birthright; rather, He strictly followed the verdict of the sastras in the matter of one's svarupa, or real identity.

When the Lord was invoking His Sudarsana cakra and Srila Nityananda Prabhu was imploring Him to forgive the two brothers, both the brothers fell down at the lotus feet of the Lord and begged His pardon for their gross behavior. The Lord was also asked by Nityananda Prabhu to accept these repenting souls, and the Lord agreed to accept them on one condition, that they henceforward completely give up all their sinful activities and habits of debauchery. Both the brothers agreed and promised to give up all their sinful habits, and the kind Lord accepted them and did not again refer to their past misdeeds.

This is the specific kindness of Lord Caitanya. In this age no one can say that he is free from sin. It is impossible for anyone to say this. But Lord Caitanya accepts all kinds of sinful persons on the one condition that they promise not to indulge in sinful habits after being spiritually initiated by the bona fide spiritual master.

There are a number of instructive points to be observed in this incident of the two brothers. In this Kali-yuga practically all people are of the quality of Jagai and Madhai. If they want to be relieved from the reactions of their misdeeds, they must take shelter of Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu and after spiritual initiation thus refrain from those things which are prohibited in the sastras. The prohibitory rules are dealt with in the Lord's teachings to Srila Rupa Gosvami.

During His householder life, the Lord did not display many of the miracles which are generally expected from such personalities, but He did once perform a wonderful miracle in the house of Srinivasa Thakura while sankirtana was in full swing. He asked the devotees what they wanted to eat, and when He was informed that they wanted to eat mangoes, He asked for a seed of a mango, although this fruit was out of season. When the seed was brought to Him He sowed it in the yard of Srinivasa, and at once a creeper began to grow out of the seed. Within no time this creeper became a full-grown mango tree heavy with more ripened fruits than the devotees could eat. The tree remained in Srinivasa's yard, and from then on the devotees used to take as many mangoes from the tree as they wanted.

The Lord had a very high estimation of the affections of the damsels of Vrajabhumi (Vrindavana) for Krsna, and in appreciation of their unalloyed service to the Lord, once Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu chanted the holy names of the gopis (cowherd girls) instead of the names of the Lord. At this time some of His students, who were also disciples, came to see Him, and when they saw that the Lord was chanting the names of the gopis, they were astonished. Out of sheer foolishness they asked the Lord why He was chanting the names of the gopis and advised Him to chant the name of Krsna. The Lord, who was in ecstasy, was thus disturbed by these foolish students. He chastised them and chased them away. The students were almost the same age as the Lord, and thus they wrongly thought of the Lord as one of their peers. They held a meeting and resolved that they would attack the Lord if He dared to punish them again in such a manner. This incident provoked some malicious talks about the Lord on the part of the general public.

When the Lord became aware of this, He began to consider the various types of men found in society. He noted that especially the students, professors, fruitive workers, yogis, nondevotees, and different types of atheists were all opposed to the devotional service of the Lord. "My mission is to deliver all the fallen souls of this age," He thought, "but if they commit offenses against Me, thinking Me to be an ordinary man, they will not benefit. If they are to begin their life of spiritual realization, they must some way or another offer obeisances unto Me." Thus the Lord decided to accept the renounced order of life (sannyasa) because people in general were inclined to offer respects to a sannyasi.

Five hundred years ago the condition of society was not as degraded as it is today. At that time people would show respects to a sannyasi, and the sannyasi was rigid in following the rules and regulations of the renounced order of life. Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu was not very much in favor of the renounced order of life in this age of Kali, but that was only for the reason that very few sannyasis in this age are able to

observe the rules and regulations of sannyasa life. Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu decided to accept the order and become an ideal sannyasi so that the general populace would show Him respect. One is duty-bound to show respect to a sannyasi, for a sannyasi is considered to be the master of all varnas and asramas.

While He was contemplating accepting the sannyasa order, it so happened that Kesava Bharati, a sannyasi of the Mayavadi school and resident of Katwa (in Bengal), visited Navadvipa and was invited to dine with the Lord. When Kesava Bharati came to His house, the Lord asked him to award Him the sannyasa order of life. This was a matter of formality. The sannyasa order is to be accepted from another sannyasi. Although the Lord was independent in all respects, still, to keep up the formalities of the sastras, He accepted the sannyasa order from Kesava Bharati, although Kesava Bharati was not in the Vaisnava-sampradaya (school).

After consulting with Kesava Bharati, the Lord left Navadvipa for Katwa to formally accept the sannyasa order of life. He was accompanied by Srila Nityananda Prabhu, Candrasekhara Acarya, and Mukunda Datta. Those three assisted Him in the details of the ceremony. The incident of the Lord's accepting the sannyasa order is very elaborately described in the Caitanya-bhagavata by Srila Vrndavana dasa Thakura.

Thus at the end of His twenty-fourth year the Lord accepted the sannyasa order of life in the month of Magha. After accepting this order He became a full-fledged preacher of the Bhagavata-dharma. Although He was doing the same preaching work in His householder life, when He experienced some obstacles to His preaching He sacrificed even the comfort of His home life for the sake of the fallen souls. In His householder life His chief assistants were Srila Advaita Prabhu and Srila Srivasa Thakura, but after He accepted the sannyasa order His chief assistants became Srila Nityananda Prabhu, who was deputed to preach specifically in Bengal, and the six Gosvamis (Rupa Gosvami, Sanatana Gosvami, Jiva Gosvami, Gopala Bhatta Gosvami, Raghunatha dasa Gosvami and Raghunatha Bhatta Gosvami), headed by Srila Rupa and Sanatana, who were deputed to go to Vrndavana to excavate the present places of pilgrimage. The present city of Vrndavana and the importance of Vrajabhumi were thus disclosed by the will of Lord Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu.

The Lord, after accepting the sannyasa order, at once wanted to start for Vrndavana. For three continuous days He traveled in the Radha-desa (places where the Ganges does not flow). He was in full ecstasy over the idea of going to Vrndavana. However, Srila Nityananda diverted His path and brought Him instead to the house of Advaita Prabhu in Santipura. The Lord stayed at Sri Advaita Prabhu's house for a few days, and knowing well that the Lord was leaving His hearth and home for good, Sri Advaita Prabhu sent His men to Navadvipa to bring mother Saci to have a last meeting with her son. Some unscrupulous people say that Lord Caitanya met His wife also after taking sannyasa and offered her His wooden slipper for worship, but the authentic sources give no information about such a meeting. His mother met Him at the house of Advaita Prabhu, and when she saw her son in sannyasa, she lamented. By way of compromise, she requested her son to make His headquarters in Puri so that she would easily be able to get information about Him. The Lord granted this last desire of His beloved mother. After this incident the Lord started for Puri, leaving all the residents of Navadvipa in an ocean of lamentation over His separation.

The Lord visited many important places on the way to Puri. He visited the temple of Gopinathaji, who had stolen condensed milk for His devotee Srila Madhavendra Puri. Since then Deity Gopinathaji is well known as Ksira-cora-gopinatha. The Lord relished this story with great pleasure. The propensity of stealing is there even in the absolute consciousness, but because this propensity is exhibited by the Absolute, it loses its perverted nature and thus becomes worshipable even by Lord Caitanya on the basis of the absolute consideration that the Lord and His stealing propensity are one and identical. This interesting story of Gopinathaji is vividly explained in the Caitanya-caritamrta by Krsnadasa Kaviraja Gosvami.

After visiting the temple of Ksira-cora-gopinatha of Remuna at Balasore in Orissa, the Lord proceeded towards Puri and on the way visited the temple of Saksi-gopala, who appeared as a witness in the matter of two brahmana devotees' family quarrel. The Lord heard the story of Saksi-gopala with great pleasure because He wanted to impress upon the atheists that the worshipable Deities in the temples approved by

the great acaryas are not idols, as alleged by men with a poor fund of knowledge. The Deity in the temple is the arca incarnation of the Personality of Godhead, and thus the Deity is identical with the Lord in all respects. He responds to the proportion of the devotee's affection for Him. In the story of Saksi-gopala, in which there was a family misunderstanding by two devotees of the Lord, the Lord, in order to mitigate the turmoil as well as to show specific favor to His servitors, traveled from Vrndavana to Vidyanagara, a village in Orissa, in the form of His arca incarnation. From there the Deity was brought to Cuttack, and thus the temple of Saksi-gopala is even today visited by thousands of pilgrims on the way to Jagannatha Puri. The Lord stayed overnight there and began to proceed toward Puri. On the way, His sannayasa rod was broken by Nityananda Prabhu. The Lord became apparently angry with Him about this and went alone to Puri, leaving His companions behind.

At Puri, when He entered the temple of Jagannatha, He became at once saturated with transcendental ecstasy and fell down on the floor of the temple unconscious. The custodians of the temple could not understand the transcendental feats of the Lord, but there was a great learned pandita named Sarvabhauma Bhattacharya, who was present, and he could understand that the Lord's losing His consciousness upon entering the Jagannatha temple was not an ordinary thing. Sarvabhauma Bhattacharya, who was the chief appointed pandita in the court of the King of Orissa, Maharaja Prataparudra, was attracted by the youthful luster of Lord Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu and could understand that such a transcendental trance was only rarely exhibited and only then by the topmost devotees who are already on the transcendental plane in complete forgetfulness of material existence. Only a liberated soul could show such a transcendental feat, and the Bhattacharya, who was vastly learned, could understand this in the light of the transcendental literature with which he was familiar. He therefore asked the custodians of the temple not to disturb the unknown sannyasi. He asked them to take the Lord to his home so He could be further observed in His unconscious state. The Lord was at once carried to the home of Sarvabhauma Bhattacharya, who at that time had sufficient power of authority due to his being the sabha-pandita, or the state dean of faculty in Sanskrit literatures. The learned pandita wanted to scrutinizingly test the transcendental feats of Lord Caitanya because often unscrupulous devotees imitate physical feats in order to flaunt transcendental achievements just to attract innocent people and take advantage of them. A learned scholar like the Bhattacharya can detect such imposters, and when he finds them out he at once rejects them.

In the case of Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu, the Bhattacharya tested all the symptoms in the light of the sastras. He tested as a scientist, not as a foolish sentimentalist. He observed the movement of the stomach, the beating of the heart and the breathing of the nostrils. He also felt the pulse of the Lord and saw that all His bodily activities were in complete suspension. When he put a small cotton swab before the nostrils, he found that there was a slight breathing as the fine fibers of cotton moved slightly. Thus he came to know that the Lord's unconscious trance was genuine, and he began to treat Him in the prescribed fashion. But Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu could only be treated in a special way. He would respond only to the resounding of the holy names of the Lord by His devotees. This special treatment was unknown to Sarvabhauma Bhattacharya because the Lord was still unknown to him. When the Bhattacharya saw Him for the first time in the temple, he simply took Him to be one of many pilgrims.

In the meantime the companions of the Lord, who reached the temple a little after Him, heard of the Lord's transcendental feats and of His being carried away by the Bhattacharya. The pilgrims at the temple were still gossiping about the incident. But by chance, one of these pilgrims had met Gopinatha Acarya, who was known to Gadadhara Pandita, and from him it was learned that the Lord was lying in an unconscious state at the residence of Sarvabhauma Bhattacharya, who happened to be the brother-in-law of Gopinatha Acarya. All the members of the party were introduced by Gadadhara Pandita to Gopinatha Acarya, who took them all to the house of Bhattacharya where the Lord was lying unconscious in a spiritual trance. All the members then chanted loudly the holy name of the Lord Hari as usual, and the Lord regained His consciousness. After this, Bhattacharya received all the members of the party, including Lord Nityananda Prabhu, and asked them to become his guests of honor. The party, including the Lord, went for a bath in the sea, and the Bhattacharya arranged for their residence and meals at the house of Kasi Misra. Gopinatha Acarya, his brother-in-law, also assisted. There were some friendly talks about the Lord's divinity between the two brothers-in-law, and in this argument Gopinatha Acarya, who knew the Lord before, now tried to establish the Lord as the Personality of Godhead, and the Bhattacharya tried to

establish Him as one of the great devotees. Both of them argued from the angle of vision of authentic sastras and not on the strength of sentimental vox populi. The incarnations of God are determined by authentic sastras and not by popular votes of foolish fanatics. Because Lord Caitanya was an incarnation of God in fact, foolish fanatics have proclaimed so many so-called incarnations of God in this age without referring to authentic scriptures. But Sarvabhauma Bhattacharya or Gopinatha Acarya did not indulge in such foolish sentimentalism; on the contrary, both of them tried to establish or reject His divinity on the strength of authentic sastras.

Later it was disclosed that Bhattacharya also came from the Navadvipa area, and it was understood from him that Nilambara Cakravarti, the maternal grandfather of Lord Caitanya, happened to be a class fellow of the father of Sarvabhauma Bhattacharya. In that sense, the young sannyasi Lord Caitanya evoked paternal affection from Bhattacharya. Bhattacharya was the professor of many sannyasis in the order of the Sankaracarya-sampradaya, and he himself also belonged to that cult. As such, the Bhattacharya desired that the young sannyasi Lord Caitanya also hear from him about the teachings of Vedanta.

Those who are followers of the Sankara cult are generally known as Vedantists. This does not, however, mean that Vedanta is a monopoly study of the Sankara-sampradaya. Vedanta is studied by all the bona fide sampradayas, but they have their own interpretations. But those in the Sankara-sampradaya are generally known to be ignorant of the knowledge of the Vedantist Vaisnavas. For this reason the Bhaktivedanta title was first offered to the author by the Vaisnavas.

The Lord agreed to take lessons from Bhattacharya on the Vedanta, and they sat together in the temple of Lord Jagannatha. The Bhattacharya went on speaking continually for seven days, and the Lord heard him with all attention and did not interrupt. The Lord's silence raised some doubts in Bhattacharya's heart, and he asked the Lord how it was that He did not ask anything or comment on his explanations of Vedanta.

The Lord posed Himself before the Bhattacharya as a foolish student and pretended that He heard the Vedanta from him because the Bhattacharya felt that this was the duty of a sannyasi. But the Lord did not agree with his lectures. By this the Lord indicated that the so-called Vedantists amongst the Sankara-sampradaya, or any other sampradaya who do not follow the instructions of Srila Vyasadeva, are mechanical students of the Vedanta. They are not fully aware of that great knowledge. The explanation of the Vedanta-sutra is given by the author himself in the text of Srimad-Bhagavatam. One who has no knowledge of the Bhagavatam will hardly be able to know what the Vedanta says.

The Bhattacharya, being a vastly learned man, could follow the Lord's sarcastic remarks on the popular Vedantist. He therefore asked Him why He did not ask about any point which He could not follow. The Bhattacharya could understand the purpose of His dead silence for the days He heard him. This showed clearly that the Lord had something else in mind; thus the Bhattacharya requested Him to disclose His mind.

Upon this, the Lord spoke as follows: "My dear sir, I can understand the meaning of the sutras like janmady asya yatah, sastra-yonitvat, and athato brahma jijnasa of the Vedanta-sutra, but when you explain them in your own way it becomes difficult for Me to follow them. The purpose of the sutras is already explained in them, but your explanations are covering them with something else. You do not purposely take the direct meaning of the sutras but indirectly give your own interpretations."

The Lord thus attacked all Vedantists who interpret the Vedanta-sutra fashionably, according to their limited power of thinking, to serve their own purpose. Such indirect interpretations of the authentic literatures like the Vedanta-sutra are hereby condemned by the Lord.

The Lord continued: "Srila Vyasadeva has summarized the direct meanings of the mantras in the Upanisads in the Vedanta-sutra. Unfortunately you do not take their direct meaning. You indirectly interpret them in a different way.

"The authority of the Vedas is unchallengeable and stands without any question of doubt. And whatever is stated in the Vedas must be accepted completely, otherwise one challenges the authority of the Vedas.

"The conchshell and cow dung are bone and stool of two living beings. But because they have been recommended by the Vedas as pure, people accept them as such because of the authority of the Vedas."

The idea is that one cannot set his imperfect reason above the authority of the Vedas. The orders of the Vedas must be obeyed as they stand, without any mundane reasoning. The so-called followers of the Vedic injunctions make their own interpretations of the Vedic injunctions, and thus they establish different parties and sects of the Vedic religion. Lord Buddha directly denied the authority of the Vedas, and he established his own religion. Only for this reason, the Buddhist religion was not accepted by the strict followers of the Vedas. But those who are so-called followers of the Vedas are more harmful than the Buddhists. The Buddhists have the courage to deny the Vedas directly, but the so-called followers of the Vedas have no courage to deny the Vedas, although indirectly they disobey all the injunctions of the Vedas. Lord Caitanya condemned this.

The examples given by the Lord of the conchshell and the cow dung are very much appropriate in this connection. If one argues that since cow dung is pure, the stool of a learned brahmana is still more pure, his argument will not be accepted. Cow dung is accepted, and the stool of a highly posted brahmana is rejected. The Lord continued:

"The Vedic injunctions are self-authorized, and if some mundane creature adjusts the interpretations of the Vedas, he defies their authority. It is foolish to think of oneself as more intelligent than Srila Vyasadeva. He has already expressed himself in his sutras, and there is no need of help from personalities of lesser importance. His work, the Vedanta-sutra, is as dazzling as the midday sun, and when someone tries to give his own interpretations on the self-effulgent sunlike Vedanta-sutra, he attempts to cover this sun with the cloud of his imagination.

"The Vedas and Puranas are one and the same in purpose. They ascertain the Absolute Truth, which is greater than everything else. The Absolute Truth is ultimately realized as the Absolute Personality of Godhead with absolute controlling power. As such, the Absolute Personality of Godhead must be completely full of opulence, strength, fame, beauty, knowledge and renunciation. Yet the transcendental Personality of Godhead is astonishingly ascertained as impersonal.

"The impersonal description of the Absolute Truth in the Vedas is given to nullify the mundane conception of the absolute whole. Personal features of the Lord are completely different from all kinds of mundane features. The living entities are all individual persons, and they are all parts and parcels of the supreme whole. If the parts and parcels are individual persons, the source of their emanation must not be impersonal. He is the Supreme Person amongst all the relative persons.

"The Vedas inform us that from Him [Brahman] everything emanates, and on Him everything rests. And after annihilation, everything merges in Him only. Therefore, He is the ultimate dative, causative and accommodating cause of all causes. And these causes cannot be attributed to an impersonal object.

"The Vedas inform us that He alone became many, and when He so desires He glances over material nature. Before He glanced over material nature there was no material cosmic creation. Therefore, His glance is not material. Material mind or senses were unborn when the Lord glanced over material nature. Thus evidence in the Vedas proves that beyond a doubt the Lord has transcendental eyes and a transcendental mind. They are not material. His impersonality therefore is a negation of His materiality, but not a denial of His transcendental personality.

"Brahman ultimately refers to the Personality of Godhead. Impersonal Brahman realization is just the negative conception of the mundane creations. Paramatma is the localized aspect of Brahman within all kinds of material bodies. Ultimately the Supreme Brahman realization is the realization of the Personality of Godhead according to all evidence of the revealed scriptures. He is the ultimate source of visnu-tattvas.

"The Puranas are also supplementary to the Vedas. The Vedic mantras are too difficult for an ordinary man. Women, sudras and the so-called twice-born higher castes are unable to penetrate into the sense of the Vedas. And thus the Mahabharata as well as the Puranas are made easy to explain the truths of the Vedas. In his prayers before the boy Sri Krsna, Brahma said that there is no limit to the fortune of the residents of Vrajabhumi headed by Sri Nanda Maharaja and Yasodamayi because the eternal Absolute Truth has become their intimate relative.

"The Vedic mantra maintains that the Absolute Truth has no legs and no hands and yet goes faster than all and accepts everything that is offered to Him in devotion. The latter statements definitely suggest the personal features of the Lord, although His hands and legs are distinguished from mundane hands and legs or other senses.

"Brahman, therefore, is never impersonal, but when such mantras are indirectly interpreted, it is wrongly thought that the Absolute Truth is impersonal. The Absolute Truth Personality of Godhead is full of all opulences, and therefore He has a transcendental form of full existence, knowledge and bliss. How then can one establish that the Absolute Truth is impersonal?

"Brahman, being full of opulences, is understood to have manifold energies, and all these energies are classified under three headings under the authority of Visnu Purana [6.7.60], which says that the transcendental energies of Lord Visnu are primarily three. His spiritual energy and the energy of the living entities are classified as superior energy, whereas the material energy is an inferior one which is sprouted out of ignorance.

"The energy of the living entities is technically called ksetrajna energy. This ksetrajna-sakti, although equal in quality with the Lord, becomes overpowered by material energy out of ignorance and thus suffers all sorts of material miseries. In other words, the living entities are located in the marginal energy between the superior (spiritual) and inferior (material) energies, and in proportion to the living being's contact with either the material or spiritual energies, the living entity is situated in proportionately higher and lower levels of existence.

"The Lord is beyond the inferior and marginal energies as above mentioned, and His spiritual energy is manifested in three different phases: as eternal existence, eternal bliss and eternal knowledge. As far as eternal existence is concerned, it is conducted by the sandhini potency; similarly, bliss and knowledge are conducted by the hladhini and samvit potencies respectively. As the supreme energetic Lord, He is the supreme controller of the spiritual, marginal and material energies. And all these different types of energies are connected with the Lord in eternal devotional service.

"The Supreme Personality of Godhead is thus enjoying in His transcendental eternal form. Is it not astounding that one dares to call the Supreme Lord nonenergetic? The Lord is the controller of all energies, and the living entities are parts and parcels of one of the energies. Therefore there is a gulf of difference between the Lord and the living entities. How then can one say that the Lord and the living entities are one and the same? In the Bhagavad-gita also the living entities are described as belonging to the superior energy of the Lord. According to the principles of intimate correlation between the energy and the energetic, both of them are nondifferent also. Therefore, the Lord and the living entities are nondifferent as the energy and the energetic.

"Earth, water, fire, air, ether, mind, intelligence and ego are all inferior energies of the Lord, but the living entities are different from all as superior energy. This is the version of Bhagavad-gita [7.4].

"The transcendental form of the Lord is eternally existent and full of transcendental bliss. How then can such a form be a product of the material mode of goodness? Anyone, therefore, who does not believe in the form of the Lord is certainly a faithless demon and as such is untouchable, a not to be seen persona non grata fit to be punished by the Plutonic king.

"The Buddhists are called atheists because they have no respect for the Vedas, but those who defy the Vedic conclusions, as above mentioned, under the pretense of being followers of the Vedas, are verily more dangerous than the Buddhists.

"Sri Vyasadeva very kindly compiled the Vedic knowledge in his Vedanta-sutra, but if one hears the commentation of the Mayavada school (as represented by the Sankara-sampradaya) certainly he will be misled on the path of spiritual realization.

"The theory of emanations is the beginning subject of the Vedanta-sutra. All the cosmic manifestations are emanations from the Absolute Personality of Godhead by His inconceivable different energies. The example of the touchstone is applicable to the theory of emanation. The touchstone can convert an unlimited quantity of iron into gold, and still the touchstone remains as it is. Similarly, the Supreme Lord can produce all manifested worlds by His inconceivable energies, and yet He is full and unchanged. He is purna [complete], and although an unlimited number of purnas emanate from Him, He is still purna.

"The theory of illusion of the Mayavada school is advocated on the ground that the theory of emanation will cause a transformation of the Absolute Truth. If that is the case, Vyasadeva is wrong. To avoid this, they have skillfully brought in the theory of illusion. But the world or the cosmic creation is not false, as maintained by the Mayavada school. It simply has no permanent existence. A nonpermanent thing cannot be called false altogether. But the conception that the material body is the self is certainly wrong.

"Pranava [om], or the omkara in the Vedas, is the primeval hymn. This transcendental sound is identical with the form of the Lord. All the Vedic hymns are based on this pranava omkara. Tat tvam asi is but a side word in the Vedic literatures, and therefore this word cannot be the primeval hymn of the Vedas. Sripada Sankaracarya has given more stress on the side word tat tvam asi than on the primeval principle omkara."

The Lord thus spoke on the Vedanta-sutra and defied all the propoganda of the Mayavada school. \* The Bhattacharya tried to defend himself and his Mayavada school by jugglery of logic and grammar, but the Lord defeated him by His forceful arguments. He affirmed that we are all related with the Personality of Godhead eternally and that devotional service is our eternal function in exchanging the dealings of our relations. The result of such exchanges is to attain prema, or love of Godhead. When love of Godhead is attained, love for all other beings automatically follows because the Lord is the sum total of all living beings.

The Lord said that but for these three items--namely, eternal relation with God, exchange of dealings with Him and the attainment of love for Him--all that is instructed in the Vedas is superfluous and concocted.

The Lord further added that the Mayavada philosophy taught by Sripada Sankaracarya is an imaginary explanation of the Vedas, but it had to be taught by him (Sankaracarya) because he was ordered to teach it by the Personality of Godhead. In the Padma Purana it is stated that the Personality of Godhead ordered His Lordship Siva to deviate the human race from Him (the Personality of Godhead). The Personality of Godhead was to be so covered so that people would be encouraged to generate more and more population. His Lordship Siva said to Devi: "In the Kali-yuga, I shall preach the Mayavada philosophy, which is nothing but clouded Buddhism, in the garb of a brahmana."

After hearing all these speeches of the Lord Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, the Bhattacharya was struck with wonder and awe and regarded Him in dead silence. The Lord then encouraged him with assurance that there was no cause to wonder. "I say that devotional service unto the Personality of Godhead is the highest goal of human life." He then quoted a sloka from the Bhagavatam and assured him that even the liberated souls who are absorbed in the spirit and spiritual realization also take to the devotional service of the Lord Hari because the Personality of Godhead has such transcendental qualities that He attracts the heart of the liberated soul too.

Then the Bhattacharya desired to listen to the explanation of the "atmarama" sloka from the Bhagavatam (1.7.10). The Lord first of all asked Bhattacharya to explain it, and after that He would explain it. The Bhattacharya then explained the sloka in a scholarly way with special reference to logic. He explained the sloka in nine different ways chiefly based on logic because he was the most renowned scholar of logic of the time.

The Lord, after hearing the Bhattacharya, thanked him for the scholarly presentation of the sloka, and then, at the request of the Bhattacharya, the Lord explained the sloka in sixty-four different ways without touching the nine explanations given by the Bhattacharya.

Thus after hearing the explanation of the atmarama sloka from the Lord, the Bhattacharya was convinced that such a scholarly presentation is impossible for an earthly creature.\* Before this, Sri Gopinatha Acarya had tried to convince him of the divinity of the Lord, but at the time he could not so accept Him. But the Bhattacharya was astounded by the Lord's exposition of the Vedanta-sutra and explanations of the atmarama sloka, and thus he began to think that he had committed a great offense at the lotus feet of the Lord by not recognizing Him to be Krsna Himself. He then surrendered unto Him, repenting for his past dealings with Him, and the Lord was kind enough to accept the Bhattacharya. Out of His causeless mercy, the Lord manifested before him first as four-handed Narayana and then again as two-handed Lord Krsna with a flute in His hand.

The Bhattacharya at once fell down at the lotus feet of the Lord and composed many suitable slokas in praise of the Lord by His grace. He composed almost one hundred slokas in praise of the Lord. The Lord then embraced him, and out of transcendental ecstasy the Bhattacharya lost consciousness of the physical state of life. Tears, trembling, throbbing of the heart, perspiration, emotional waves, dancing, singing, crying and all the eight symptoms of trance were manifested in the body of the Bhattacharya. Sri Gopinatha Acarya became very glad and astonished by this marvelous conversion of his brother-in-law by the grace of the Lord.

Out of the hundred celebrated slokas composed by the Bhattacharya in praise of the Lord, the following two are most important, and these two slokas explain the mission of the Lord in gist.

1. Let me surrender unto the Personality of Godhead who has appeared now as Lord Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu. He is the ocean of all mercy and has now come down to teach us material detachment, learning and devotional service to Himself.
2. Since pure devotional service of the Lord has been lost in the oblivion of time, the Lord has appeared to renovate the principles, and therefore I offer my obeisances unto His lotus feet.

The Lord explained the word mukti to be equivalent to the word Visnu, or the Personality of Godhead. To attain mukti, or liberation from the bondage of material existence, is to attain to the service of the Lord.

The Lord then proceeded towards South India for some time and converted all He met on the way to become devotees of Lord Sri Krsna. Such devotees also converted many others to the cult of devotional service, or to the Bhagavata-dharma of the Lord, and thus He reached the bank of the Godavari, where He met Srila Ramananda Raya, the governor of Madras on behalf of Maharaja Prataparudra, the King of Orissa. His talks with Ramananda Raya are very important for higher realization of transcendental knowledge, and the conversation itself forms a small booklet. We shall, however, give herewith a summary of the conversation.

Sri Ramananda Raya was a self-realized soul, although outwardly he belonged to a caste lower than the brahmana in social status. He was not in the renounced order of life, and besides that he was a high government servant in the state. Still, Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu accepted him as a liberated soul on the strength of the high order of his realization of transcendental knowledge. Similarly, the Lord accepted Srila Haridasa Thakura, a veteran devotee of the Lord coming from a Mohammedan family. And there are many other great devotees of the Lord who came from different communities, sects and castes. The Lord's only criterion was the standard of devotional service of the particular person. He was not concerned with the

outward dress of a man; He was concerned only with the inner soul and its activities. Therefore all the missionary activities of the Lord are to be understood to be on the spiritual plane, and as such the cult of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, or the cult of Bhagavata-dharma, has nothing to do with mundane affairs, sociology, politics, economic development or any such sphere of life. Srimad-Bhagavatam is the purely transcendental urge of the soul.

When He met Sri Ramananda Raya on the bank of the Godavari, the varnasrama-dharma followed by the Hindus was mentioned by the Lord. Srila Ramananda Raya said that by following the principles of varnasrama-dharma, the system of four castes and four orders of human life, everyone could realize Transcendence. In the opinion of the Lord, the system of varnasrama-dharma is superficial only, and it has very little to do with the highest realization of spiritual values. The highest perfection of life is to get detached from the material attachment and proportionately realize the transcendental loving service of the Lord. The Personality of Godhead recognizes a living being who is progressing in that line. Devotional service, therefore, is the culmination of the culture of all knowledge. When Sri Krsna, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, appeared for the deliverance of all fallen souls, He advised the deliverance of all living entities as follows. The Supreme Absolute Personality of Godhead, from whom all living entities have emanated, must be worshiped by all their respective engagements, because everything that we see is also the expansion of His energy. That is the way of real perfection, and it is approved by all bona fide acaryas past and present. The system of varnasrama is more or less based on moral and ethical principles. There is very little realization of the Transcendence as such, and Lord Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu rejected it as superficial and asked Ramananda Raya to go further into the matter.

Sri Ramananda Raya then suggested renunciation of fruitive actions unto the Lord. The Bhagavad-gita (9.27) advises in this connection: "Whatever you do, whatever you eat and whatever you give, as well as whatever you perform in penance, offer to Me alone." This dedication on the part of the worker suggests that the Personality of Godhead is a step higher than the impersonal conception of the varnasrama system, but still the relation of the living being and the Lord is not distinct in that way. The Lord therefore rejected this proposition and asked Ramananda Raya to go further.

Raya then suggested renunciation of the varnasrama-dharma and acceptance of devotional service. The Lord did not approve of this suggestion also for the reason that all of a sudden one should not renounce his position, for that may not bring in the desired result.

It was further suggested by Raya that attainment of spiritual realization freed from the material conception of life is the topmost achievement for a living being. The Lord rejected this suggestion also because on the plea of such spiritual realization much havoc has been wrought by unscrupulous persons; therefore all of a sudden this is not possible. The Raya then suggested sincere association of self-realized souls and hearing submissively the transcendental message of the pastimes of the Personality of Godhead. This suggestion was welcomed by the Lord. This suggestion was made following in the footsteps of Brahmaji, who said that the Personality of Godhead is known as ajita, or the one who cannot be conquered or approached by anyone. But such ajita also becomes jita (conquered) by one method, which is very simple and easy. The simple method is that one has to give up the arrogant attitude of declaring oneself to be God Himself. One must be very meek and submissive and try to live peacefully by lending the ear to the speeches of the transcendently self-realized soul who speaks on the message of Bhagavata-dharma, or the religion of glorifying the Supreme Lord and His devotees. To glorify a great man is a natural instinct for living beings, but they have not learned to glorify the Lord. Perfection of life is attained simply by glorifying the Lord in association with a self-realized devotee of the Lord. \* The self-realized devotee is he who surrenders unto the Lord fully and who does not have attachment for material prosperity. Material prosperity and sense enjoyment and their advancement are all activities of ignorance in human society. Peace and friendship are impossible for a society detached from the association of God and His devotees. It is imperative, therefore, that one sincerely seek the association of pure devotees and hear them patiently and submissively from any position of life. The position of a person in the higher or lower status of life does not hamper one in the path of self-realization. The only thing one has to do is to hear from a self-realized soul with a routine program. The teacher may also deliver lectures from the Vedic literatures, following in the footsteps of the bygone acaryas who realized the Absolute Truth. Lord

Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu recommended this simple method of self-realization generally known as Bhagavata-dharma. Srimad-Bhagavatam is the perfect guide for this purpose.

Above these topics discussed by the Lord and Sri Ramananda Raya, there were still more elevated spiritual talks between the two great personalities, and we purposely withhold those topics for the present because one has to come to the spiritual plane before further talks with Ramananda Raya can be heard. We have presented further talks of Srila Ramananda Raya with the Lord in another book (Teachings of Lord Caitanya).

At the conclusion of this meeting, Sri Ramananda Raya was advised by the Lord to retire from service and come to Puri so that they could live together and relish a transcendental relationship. Some time later, Sri Ramananda Raya retired from the government service and took a pension from the King. He returned to his residence in Puri, where he was one of the most confidential devotees of the Lord. There was another gentleman at Puri of the name Sikhi Mahiti, who was also a confidant like Ramananda Raya. The Lord used to hold confidential talks on spiritual values with three or four companions at Puri, and He passed eighteen years in that way in spiritual trance. His talks were recorded by His private secretary Sri Damodara Gosvami, one of the four most intimate devotees.

The Lord extensively traveled all over the southern part of India. The great saint of Maharashtra known as Saint Tukarama was also initiated by the Lord. Saint Tukarama, after initiation by the Lord, overflowed the whole of the Maharashtra Province with the sankirtana movement, and the transcendental flow is still rolling on in the southwestern part of the great Indian peninsula.

The Lord excavated from South India two very important old literatures, namely the Brahma-samhita and Krsna-karnamrta, and these two valuable books are authorized studies for the person in the devotional line. The Lord then returned to Puri after His South Indian tour.

On His return to Puri, all the anxious devotees of the Lord got back their life, and the Lord remained there with continued pastimes of His transcendental realizations. The most important incident during that time was His granting audience to King Prataparudra. King Prataparudra was a great devotee of the Lord, and he considered himself to be one of the servants of the Lord entrusted with sweeping the temple. This submissive attitude of the King was very much appreciated by Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu. The King requested both Bhattacharya and Raya to arrange his meeting with the Lord. When, however, the Lord was petitioned by His two stalwart devotees, He flatly refused to grant the request, even though it was put forward by personal associates like Ramananda Raya and Sarvabhauma Bhattacharya. The Lord maintained that it is dangerous for a sannyasi to be in intimate touch with worldly money-conscious men and with women. The Lord was an ideal sannyasi. No woman could approach the Lord even to offer respects. Women's seats were accommodated far away from the Lord. As an ideal teacher and acarya, He was very strict in the routine work of a sannyasi. Apart from being a divine incarnation, the Lord was an ideal character as a human being. His behavior with other persons was also above suspicion. In His dealing as acarya, He was harder than the thunderbolt and softer than the rose. One of His associates, Junior Haridasa, committed a great mistake by lustfully glancing at a young woman. The Lord as Supersoul could detect this lust in the mind of Junior Haridasa, who was at once banished from the Lord's association and was never accepted again, even though the Lord was implored to excuse Haridasa for the mistake. Junior Haridasa afterwards committed suicide due to being disassociated from the company of the Lord, and the news of suicide was duly related to the Lord. Even at that time the Lord was not forgetful of the offense, and He said that Haridasa had rightly met with the proper punishment.

On the principles of the renounced order of life and discipline, the Lord knew no compromise, and therefore even though He knew that the King was a great devotee, He refused to see the King, only because the King was a dollar-and-cent man. By this example the Lord wanted to emphasize the proper behavior for a transcendentalist. A transcendentalist has nothing to do with women and money. He must always refrain from such intimate relations. The King was, however, favored by the Lord by the expert arrangement of the devotees. This means that the beloved devotee of the Lord can favor a neophyte more liberally than the Lord. Pure devotees, therefore, never commit an offense at the feet of another pure

devotee. An offense at the lotus feet of the Lord is sometimes excused by the merciful Lord, but an offense at the feet of a devotee is very dangerous for one who actually wants to make progress in devotional service.

As long as the Lord remained at Puri, thousands of His devotees used to come to see Him during the Ratha-yatra car festival of Lord Jagannatha. And during the car festival, the washing of the Gundica temple under the direct supervision of the Lord was an important function. The Lord's congregational sankirtana movement at Puri was a unique exhibition for the mass of people. That is the way to turn the mass mind towards spiritual realization. The Lord inaugurated this system of mass sankirtana, and leaders of all countries can take advantage of this spiritual movement in order to keep the mass of people in a pure state of peace and friendship with one another. This is now the demand of the present human society all over the world.

After some time the Lord again started on His tour towards northern India, and He decided to visit Vrndavana and its neighboring places. He passed through the jungles of Jharikhanda (Madhya Bharata), and all the wild animals also joined His sankirtana movement. The wild tigers, elephants, bears and deer all together accompanied the Lord, and the Lord accompanied them in sankirtana. By this He proved that by the propagation of the sankirtana movement (congregational chanting and glorifying of the name of the Lord) even the wild animals can live in peace and friendship, and what to speak of men who are supposed to be civilized. No man in the world will refuse to join the sankirtana movement. Nor is the Lord's sankirtana movement restricted to any caste, creed, color or species. Here is direct evidence of His great mission: He allowed even the wild animals to partake in His great movement.

On His way back from Vrndavana He first came to Prayaga, where He met Rupa Gosvami along with his younger brother, Anupama. Then He came down to Benares. For two months, He instructed Sri Sanatana Gosvami in the transcendental science. The instruction to Sanatana Gosvami is in itself a long narration, and full presentation of the instruction will not be possible here. The main ideas are given as follows.

Sanatana Gosvami (formerly known as Sakara Mallika) was in the cabinet service of the Bengal government under the regime of Nawab Hussain Shah. He decided to join with the Lord and thus retired from the service. On His way back from Vrndavana, when He reached Varanasi, the Lord became the guest of Sri Tapan Misra and Candrasekhara, assisted by a Maharastra brahmana. At that time Varanasi was headed by a great sannyasi of the Mayavada school named Sripada Prakasananda Sarasvati. When the Lord was at Varanasi, the people in general became more attracted to Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu on account of His mass sankirtana movement. Wherever He visited, especially the Visvanatha temple, thousands of pilgrims would follow Him. Some were attracted by His bodily features, and others were attracted by His melodious songs glorifying the Lord.

The Mayavadi sannyasis designate themselves as Narayana. Varanasi is still overflowed with many Mayavadi sannyasis. Some people who saw the Lord in His sankirtana party considered Him to be actually Narayana, and this report reached the camp of the great sannyasi Prakasananda.

In India there is always a kind of spiritual rivalry between the Mayavada and Bhagavata schools, and thus when the news of the Lord reached Prakasananda he knew that the Lord was a Vaisnava sannyasi, and therefore he minimized the value of the Lord before those who brought him the news. He deprecated the activities of the Lord because of His preaching the sankirtana movement, which was in his opinion nothing but religious sentiment. Prakasananda was a profound student of the Vedanta, and he advised his followers to give attention to the Vedanta and not to indulge in sankirtana.

One devotee brahmana, who became a devotee of the Lord, did not like the criticism of Prakasananda, and he went to the Lord to express his regrets. He told the Lord that when he uttered the Lord's name before the sannyasi Prakasananda, the latter strongly criticized the Lord, although the brahmana heard Prakasananda uttering several times the name Caitanya. The brahmana was astonished to see that the sannyasi Prakasananda could not vibrate the sound Krsna even once, although he uttered the name Caitanya several times.

The Lord smilingly explained to the devotee brahmana why the Mayavadi cannot utter the holy name of Krsna. "The Mayavadis are offenders at the lotus feet of Krsna, although they utter always brahma, atma, or caitanya, etc. And because they are offenders at the lotus feet of Krsna, they are actually unable to utter the holy name of Krsna. The name Krsna and the Personality of Godhead Krsna are identical. There is no difference in the absolute realm between the name, form or person of the Absolute Truth because in the absolute realm everything is transcendental bliss. There is no difference between the body and the soul for the Personality of Godhead, Krsna. Thus He is different from the living entity who is always different from his outward body. Because of Krsna's transcendental position, it is very difficult for a layman to actually know the Personality of Godhead, Krsna, His holy name and fame, etc. His name, fame, form and pastimes all are one and the same transcendental identity, and they are not knowable by the exercise of the material senses.

"The transcendental relationship of the pastimes of the Lord is the source of still more bliss than one can experience by realization of Brahman or by becoming one with the Supreme. Had it not been so, then those who are already situated in the transcendental bliss of Brahman would not have been attracted by the transcendental bliss of the pastimes of the Lord."

After this, a great meeting was arranged by the devotees of the Lord in which all the sannyasis were invited, including the Lord and Prakasananda Sarasvati. In this meeting both the scholars (the Lord and Prakasananda) had a long discourse on the spiritual values of the sankirtana movement, and a summary is given below.

The great Mayavadi sannyasi Prakasananda inquired from the Lord as to the reason for His preferring the sankirtana movement to the study of the Vedanta-sutra. Prakasananda said that it is the duty of a sannyasi to read the Vedanta-sutra. What caused the Lord to indulge in sankirtana?

After this inquiry, the Lord submissively replied: "I have taken to the sankirtana movement instead of the study of Vedanta because I am a great fool." The Lord thus represented Himself as one of the numberless fools of this age who are absolutely incapable of studying the Vedanta philosophy. The fools' indulgence in the study of Vedanta has caused so much havoc in society. The Lord thus continued: "And because I am a great fool, My spiritual master forbade Me to play with Vedanta philosophy. He said that it is better that I chant the holy name of the Lord, for that would deliver Me from material bondage.

"In this age of Kali there is no other religion but the glorification of the Lord by utterance of His holy name, and that is the injunction of all the revealed scriptures. And My spiritual master has taught Me one sloka [from the Brhan-naradiya Purana]:

*harer nama harer nama harer namaiva kevalam kalau nasty eva nasty eva nasty eva gatih anyatha*

"So on the order of My spiritual master, I chant the holy name of Hari, and I am now mad after this holy name. Whenever I utter the holy name I forget Myself completely, and sometimes I laugh, cry and dance like a madman. I thought that I had actually gone mad by this process of chanting, and therefore I asked My spiritual master about it. He informed Me that this was the real effect of chanting the holy name, which produces a transcendental emotion that is a rare manifestation. It is the sign of love of God, which is the ultimate end of life. Love of God is transcendental to liberation [mukti], and thus it is called the fifth stage of spiritual realization, above the stage of liberation. By chanting the holy name of Krsna one attains the stage of love of God, and it was good that fortunately I was favored with the blessing."

On hearing this statement from the Lord, the Mayavadi sannyasi asked the Lord what was the harm in studying the Vedanta along with chanting the holy name. Prakasananda Sarasvati knew well that the Lord was formerly known as Nimai Pandita, a very learned scholar of Navadvipa, and His posing as a great fool was certainly to some purpose. Hearing this inquiry by the sannyasi, the Lord smiled and said, "My dear sir, if you do not mind, I will answer your inquiry."

All the sannyasis there were very much pleased with the Lord for His honest dealings, and they unanimously replied that they would not be offended by whatever He replied. The Lord then spoke as follows:

"Vedanta-sutra consists of transcendental words or sounds uttered by the transcendental Personality of Godhead. As such, in the Vedanta there cannot be any human deficiencies like mistake, illusion, cheating or inefficiency. The message of the Upanisads is expressed in the Vedanta-sutra, and what is said there directly is certainly glorified. Whatever interpretations have been given by Sankaracarya have no direct bearing on the sutra, and therefore such commentation spoils everything.

"The word Brahman indicates the greatest of all, which is full with transcendental opulences, superior to all. Brahman is ultimately the Personality of Godhead, and He is covered by indirect interpretations and established as impersonal. Everything that is in the spiritual world is full of transcendental bliss, including the form, body, place and paraphernalia of the Lord. All are eternally cognizant and blissful. It is not the fault of the Acarya Sankara that he has so interpreted Vedanta, but if someone accepts it, then certainly he is doomed. Anyone who accepts the transcendental body of the Personality of Godhead as something mundane certainly commits the greatest blasphemy."

The Lord thus spoke to the sannyasi almost in the same way that He spoke to the Bhattacharya of Puri, and by forceful arguments He nullified the Mayavada interpretations of the Vedanta-sutra. All the sannyasis there claimed that the Lord was the personified Vedas and the Personality of Godhead. All the sannyasis were converted to the cult of bhakti, all of them accepted the holy name of the Lord Sri Krsna, and they dined together with the Lord in the midst of them. After this conversion of the sannyasis, the popularity of the Lord increased at Varanasi, and thousands of people assembled to see the Lord in person. The Lord thus established the primary importance of Srimad-Bhagavata-dharma, and He defeated all other systems of spiritual realization. After that everyone at Varanasi was overwhelmed with the transcendental sankirtana movement.

While the Lord was camping at Varanasi, Sanatana Gosvami also arrived after retiring from office. He was formerly one of the state ministers in the government of Bengal, then under the regime of Nawab Hussain Shah. He had some difficulty in getting relief from the state service, for the Nawab was reluctant to let him leave. Nonetheless he came to Varanasi, and the Lord taught him the principles of devotional service. He taught him about the constitutional position of the living being, the cause of his bondage under material conditions, his eternal relation with the Personality of Godhead, the transcendental position of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, His expansions in different plenary portions of incarnations, His control of different parts of the universe, the nature of His transcendental abode, devotional activities, their different stages of development, the rules and regulations for achieving the gradual stages of spiritual perfection, the symptoms of different incarnations in different ages, and how to detect them with reference to the context of revealed scriptures.

The Lord's teachings to Sanatana Gosvami form a big chapter in the text of Sri Caitanya-caritamrta, and to explain the whole teachings in minute details will require a volume in itself. These are treated in detail in our book Teachings of Lord Caitanya.

At Mathura, the Lord visited all the important places; then He reached Vrndavana. Lord Caitanya appeared in the family of a high-caste brahmana, and over and above that as sannyasi He was the preceptor for all the varnas and asramas. But He used to accept meals from all classes of Vaisnavas. At Mathura the Sanodiya brahmanas are considered to be in the lower status of society, but the Lord accepted meals in the family of such a brahmana also because His host happened to be a disciple of the Madhavendra Puri family.

At Vrndavana the Lord took bath in twenty-four important bathing places and ghats. He traveled to all the twelve important vanas (forests). In these forests all the cows and birds welcomed Him, as if He were their very old friend. The Lord also began to embrace all the trees of those forests, and by doing so He felt the symptoms of transcendental ecstasy. Sometimes He fell unconscious, but He was made to regain

consciousness by the chanting of the holy name of Kṛṣṇa. The transcendental symptoms that were visible on the body of the Lord during His travel within the forest of Vṛndāvana were all unique and inexplicable, and we have just given a synopsis only.

Some of the important places that were visited by the Lord in Vṛndāvana were Kāmyāvana, Adisvara, Pavana-sarovara, Khadiravana, Sesasayi, Khela-tirtha, Bhandiravana, Bhadravana, Srivana, Lauhavana, Mahavana, Gokula, Kaliya-hrada, Dvadasaditya, Kesi-tirtha, etc. When He saw the place where the rasa dance took place, He at once fell down in trance. As long as He remained at Vṛndāvana, He made His headquarters at Akrura-ghata.

From Vṛndāvana His personal servitor Kṛṣṇadāsa Vipra induced Him to go back to Prayaga to take bath during the Magha-mela. The Lord acceded to this proposal, and they started for Prayaga. On the way they met with some Pathans, amongst whom there was a learned Moulana. The Lord had some talks with the Moulana and his companions, and the Lord convinced the Moulana that in the Koran also there are descriptions of Bhagavata-dharma and Kṛṣṇa. All the Pathans were converted to His cult of devotional service.

When He returned to Prayaga, Śrīla Rupa Gosvami and his youngest brother met Him near Bindu-madhava temple. This time the Lord was welcomed by the people of Prayaga more respectfully. Vallabha Bhatta, who resided on the other bank of Prayaga in the village of Adaila, was to receive Him at his place. But while going there the Lord jumped in the River Yamuna. With great difficulty He was picked up in an unconscious state. Finally He visited the headquarters of Vallabha Bhatta. This Vallabha Bhatta was one of His chief admirers, but later on he inaugurated his own party, the Vallabha-sampradaya.

On the bank of the Dasasvamedha-ghata at Prayaga for ten days continually the Lord instructed Rupa Gosvami in the science of devotional service to the Lord. He taught the Gosvami the divisions of the living creatures in the 8,400,000 species of life. Then He taught him about the human species. Out of them He discussed the followers of the Vedic principles, out of them the fruitive workers, out of them the empiric philosophers, and out of them the liberated souls. He said that there are only a few who are actually pure devotees of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

Śrīla Rupa Gosvami was the younger brother of Sanātana Gosvami, and when he retired from service he brought with him two boatfuls of gold coins. This means that he brought with him some hundreds of thousands of rupees accumulated by the labor of his service. And before leaving home for Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu, he divided the wealth as follows: fifty percent for the service of the Lord and His devotees, twenty-five percent for relatives and twenty-five percent for his personal needs in case of emergency. In that way he set an example for all householders.

The Lord taught the Gosvami about devotional service, comparing it to a creeper, and advised him to protect the bhakti creeper most carefully against the mad elephant offense against the pure devotees. In addition, the creeper has to be protected from the desires of sense enjoyment, monistic liberation and perfection of the hatha-yoga system. They are all detrimental on the path of devotional service. Similarly, violence against living beings, and desire for worldly gain, worldly reception and worldly fame are all detrimental to the progress of bhakti, or Bhagavata-dharma.

Pure devotional service must be freed from all desires for sense gratification, fruitive aspirations and culture of monistic knowledge. One must be freed from all kinds of designations, and when one is thus converted to transcendental purity, one can then serve the Lord by purified senses.

As long as there is the desire to enjoy sensually or to become one with the Supreme or to possess the mystic powers, there is no question of attaining the stage of pure devotional service.

Devotional service is conducted under two categories, namely primary practice and spontaneous emotion. When one can rise to the platform of spontaneous emotion, he can make further progress by spiritual attachment, feeling, love, and many higher stages of devotional life for which there are no English words.

We have tried to explain the science of devotional service in our book *The Nectar of Devotion*, based on the authority of *Bhakti-rasamrta-sindhu* by Srila Rupa Gosvami.

Transcendental devotional service has five stages of reciprocation:

1. The self-realization stage just after liberation from material bondage is called the *santa*, or neutral stage.
2. After that, when there is development of transcendental knowledge of the Lord's internal opulences, the devotee engages himself in the *dasya* stage.
3. By further development of the *dasya* stage, a respectful fraternity with the Lord develops, and above that a feeling of friendship on equal terms becomes manifest. Both these stages are called *sakhya* stage, or devotional service in friendship.
4. Above this is the stage of paternal affection toward the Lord, and this is called the *vatsalya* stage.
5. And above this is the stage of conjugal love, and this stage is called the highest stage of love of God, although there is no difference in quality in any of the above stages. The last stage of conjugal love of God is called the *madhurya* stage.

Thus He instructed Rupa Gosvami in devotional science and deputed him to Vrndavana to excavate the lost sites of the transcendental pastimes of the Lord. After this, the Lord returned to Varanasi and delivered the *sannyasis* and instructed the elder brother of Rupa Gosvami. We have already discussed this.

The Lord left only eight slokas of His instructions in writing, and they are known as the *Siksastaka*. All other literatures of His divine cult were extensively written by the Lord's principal followers, the six Gosvamis of Vrndavana, and their followers. The cult of Caitanya philosophy is richer than any other, and it is admitted to be the living religion of the day with the potency for spreading as *visva-dharma*, or universal religion. We are glad that the matter has been taken up by some enthusiastic sages like *Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Gosvami Maharaja* and his disciples. We shall eagerly wait for the happy days of *Bhagavata-dharma*, or *prema-dharma*, inaugurated by the Lord Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu.

**Srimad-Bhagavatam, Introduction**