



OCEAN OF NECTAR

ISSUE 81

(E-Magazine for every Ekadasi) dated 28 January 2018 (Bhaimi Ekadasi)

The content of this E-Magazine was based on a Lecture given by HH Bhakti Charu Swami Maharaja on given at Drakensburg Retreat, South Africa on 21 January 2017.
(Compilation and editing by Hemavati Radhika dasi)

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1. CAITANYA MAHAPRABHU TRAVELS TO SOUTH INDIA

Who is Ramananda Raya? Ramananda Raya is Vishaka, for that matter Ramananda Raya is actually four personalities in one. Vishaka, expansion of Vishaka, Lalita, expansion of Lalita, expansion of Arjuna the cowherd boy and expansion of Arjuna the Pandava. Then again how can four personalities become one? The spiritual context one can become many and many can become one. How? What a

question? It is inconceivable. Ramananda Raya became so attached to Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu that he decided to quit his position as the governor of King Pratraparudra. Even King Patraparudra was so understanding that he accepted Ramananda Raya's resignation and he continued to give him his salary.

Caitanya Mahaprabhu continued His journey to South India. There is a beautiful description of Mahaprabhu's travel to South India how He went to places and see different temples. Wherever there was some holy place He would take bath in that river and He had many wonderful encounters. At one place Caitanya Mahaprabhu met one Rama bhakta and that person invited the Lord. This person was constantly chanting the holy name of Rama so Caitanya Mahaprabhu accepted his invitation and stayed at his place and had lunch then He went to some people and came back to this Brahmana's house and He saw that he was not chanting the name of Rama he was chanting the name of Krishna. Mahaprabhu asked "What happened, last time I came you were chanting the name of Rama and now Krishna?" That person told him, from my childhood I was a devotee of Rama and always chanted the holy name of Rama knowing that Rama is the giver of Supreme vision but ever since I met you something happened to Me, once I uttered the name Krishna since then I just cannot stop chanting Krishna's name I don't know what happened." From that discussion a very wonderful awareness came out, Lord Shiva is telling Parvati, "One thousand names of Vishnu equals to one name of Rama and three names of Rama equals to one name of Krishna" He also explained the word Krishna is the personality, na is indicating surrender so in this way through another pastime we see how Caitanya Mahaprabhu influenced the chanting.

This takes us to another encounter of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu with another Rama bhakta so this devotee invited Him for lunch and when Caitanya Mahaprabhu went there He found that he didn't cook anything and said, "You have invited Me for lunch but did not cook anything?" He was so absorbed in Ramachandra's pastimes he said when Lakshmana used to fetch some fruits and roots then Sita Devi used to cook but Lakshmana did not come back as yet, then he realised that he invited Caitanya Mahaprabhu so he quickly cooked something and fed Caitanya Mahaprabhu but he was fasting. Caitanya Mahaprabhu said, "What happened? You are not eating?" and he started to cry and said, "Sita Devi is the mother of the universe and this demon Ravana touched her. And just that thought makes me so miserable and I don't feel like living anymore." Caitanya Mahaprabhu consoled him, "Ravana could not touch Sita, when Ravana came then Sita went away and presented an illusory form and Ravana took that illusory form and not the real Sita." The Brahmana was pacified.

When Caitanya Mahaprabhu was travelling in South India He went to Ramesvaram and there He came across Padma Purana and came across this description that when Ravana came then Sita Devi took shelter of Agnideva and Agnideva took Sita and in place of Sita an illusory form was there. After killing Ravana when Sita had to go through the test of Agni pariksha at that time the real Sita Devi was given to Ramachandra and the Maya Sita disappeared. Caitanya Mahaprabhu went to a place where residents were extremely scholarly but they were all absorbed in different kinds of philosophical fields Naya, Mayavadi. Different people came and they challenged Caitanya Mahaprabhu with their philosophy but Caitanya Mahaprabhu defeated all of them and as a result of that all these intellectuals gave up their respective pursuits and became devotees of Krishna.

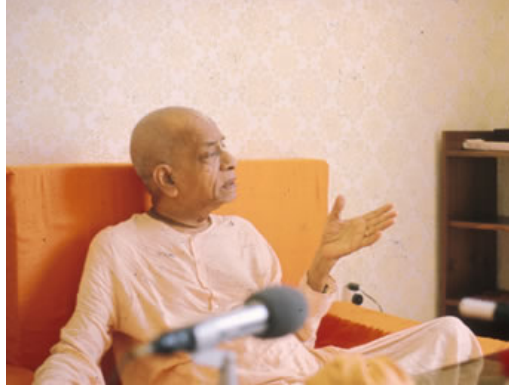
Caitanya Mahaprabhu went to Srirangam and there was Ramanujacarya's Sri sampradaya and there He met an exalted Brahmana, Venkata Bhatta who requested Caitanya Mahaprabhu, "In this four months of monsoon one should not travel so please stay at my place" Caitanya Mahaprabhu accepted his invitation and stayed there for four months and due to Caitanya Mahaprabhu's influence they all became devotees of Krishna. Another great personality was Prabodhananda Sarasvati,

Venkata Bhatta's brother. It has been described that different Brahmanas would invite Caitanya Mahaprabhu for lunch and He went. There were so many Brahmanas and when Caturmasya was finished they could not invite Caitanya Mahaprabhu and they were very disappointed. In this way Caitanya Mahaprabhu travelled through South India.

Laksmi is the most chaste wife and She is absolutely surrendered so why is She hankering for the association of Krishna? She is the most chaste personality. Venkat Vakta said Narayana and Krishna is the same so when She gets attracted to Krishna there is nothing wrong and in this way they had a discussion and through that discussion Caitanya Mahaprabhu pointed out the position of Krishna is even beyond Narayana. Laksmi wanted to enter into Rasa dance and Narayana said you have to follow one of the Gopis of Vrindavan. Laksmi said, "I am Laksmi how can I be submissive to someone else?" Narayana said, "Then forget about going to the Rasa dance." Laksmi performed great austerities and as a result of that Krishna came to Her and asked, "Why are you performing such austerities?" She said, "I want to enter into Your Rasa dance" Krishna blessed Laksmi on Her chest. He pointed out the way to go to Vrindavan is to be submissive to one of the residents of Vrindavan. Residents of Vrindavan, that bhakti Raganuga anuga means following. It reminds me of something I will share it. A few years back some individuals were saying that Prabhupada did not give us everything and in order to get the higher stuff we have to go to them. What Prabhupada didn't give us? Rāgānuga bhakti. So in order to defeat this misconception I gave a seminar and the topic was Srila Prabhupada gave us everything. How I pointed out simple words rāgānuga bhakti means following the Ragatmika bhakta of Vrindavan. At the same time Rupa Goswami is saying *ṛuti-smāti-purāēādi-paīcarātra-vidhiā vinā aikāntikē harer bhaktir utpātāyaiva kalpate*. Anything besides this is simply a disturbance to society. Vaidhi means rules and regulations, if devotional service is executed no matter how earnest it maybe and if it is not following the rules and regulations even by sruti, smrti, etc it creates disturbance so that means one must follow Vaidhi bhakti. If devotional service is not followed by Vaidhi bhakti, then it simply creates disturbance and we saw that those who introduced that simply created disturbance. The point is devotional service must be followed following rules and regulations of the scripture which is called Vaidhi bhakti. There is another kind of bhakti called rāgānuga bhakti means one follows the footsteps of one of the residents of Vrindavan. In simple words we have to follow Vaidhi Bhakti what is the vaidhi bhakti for us? Follow Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu and how to follow Caitanya Mahaprabhu? Congregational chanting of the holy name and that is the Vaidhi bhakti for this age. Now through sankirtan when we follow Caitanya Mahaprabhu there is a catch. Who is Caitanya Mahaprabhu? Krishna and Srimati Radharani and who is the best rāgānuga bhakta? Srimati Radharani so when you are following Caitanya Mahaprabhu who are you following? Radharani the best of the rāgānuga bhaktas so does it automatically become rāgānuga bhakti? So Vaidhi bhakti in this way is becoming rāgānuga bhakti. Srila Prabhupada gave the perfect process, it is not that Prabhupada is concocting something new this is what Caitanya Mahaprabhu gave.

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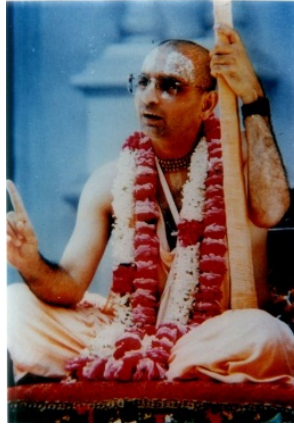
SRILA PRABHUPADA APPRECIATION



A few years back some individuals were saying that Prabhupada did not give us everything and in order to get the higher stuff we have to go to them. What Prabhupada didn't give us? Rāgānuga bhakti. So in order to defeat this misconception I gave a seminar and the topic was Srila Prabhupada gave us everything. So Vaidhi bhakti in this way is becoming Rāgānuga bhakti. Srila Prabhupada gave the perfect process, it is not that Prabhupada is concocting something new this is what Caitanya Mahaprabhu gave.

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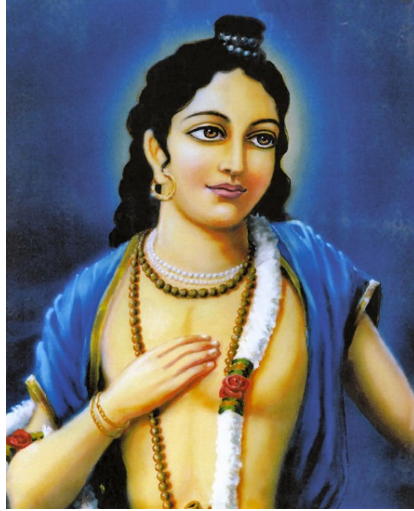
GURU MAHARAJA'S INSTRUCTION



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4.

NITYANANDA TRAYODASI



Nityananda Prabhu is the custodian of Caitanya Mahaprabhu. Without the mercy of Nityananda Prabhu, one cannot get RadhaKrishna, *hena nitai bine bhai radha krishna paite nai*, one cannot approach Caitanya Mahaprabhu. So if we want to approach Caitanya Mahaprabhu we have to go through Nityananda Prabhu and a bona fide spiritual master is a representative of Nityananda Prabhu, he functions as an agent of Nityananda Prabhu. We are very fortunate that somehow or the other by Srila Prabhupada's mercy we got to know about Nityananda Prabhu's glories and Caitanya Mahaprabhu's mercy. We have an opportunity to approach RadhaKrishna.

(Excerpt from lecture given by HH Bhakti Charu Swami in Ujjain on 12 February 2014)