



The Life of Lord Chaitanya and His Sankirtana Movement in India

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"If by chance we get the association of a pure devotee, then by his mercy our illusion becomes over. Therefore it is advised that everyone should seek association of saintly persons. And by saintly person's instructions, the darkness of ignorance can be removed." There is no question of 'loss' in devotional service. God has taken care of it as well.

There are innumerable names for the Supreme Lord, both in India and elsewhere. All of them are equally good because they all indicate the Supreme personality of Godhead. But this particular *Mahamantra* - "*Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare - Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama Hare Hare*" which consists of sixteen names or words are especially recommended for this era, called *Kali-yuga* (the age of quarrel), is the best for people to take advantage of them and thus follow the path of the great *Acharyas*, the saintly teachers who attained success by practicing this system.

In congregational chanting of the holy names of the Lord, people can come together and glorify the Lord in their respective languages to the accompaniment of melodious music. And if such performances are executed sincerely, it is certain that the participants will gradually attain spiritual perfection without

undergoing more rigorous methods. The *Srimad-bhagavatam* states, "In this age of *Kali*, people who are endowed with sufficient intelligence will worship the gold-complexioned Lord by performing the *Sankirtana-yajna*, the sacrifice of chanting the Holy names of God." So the *Sankirtana* movement of Lord Chaitanya, the Golden Avatar, is not a concoction, for it presents the fulfillment of what is stated in the revealed scripture, just as the appearance of Lord Buddha and other *Avatars* is forefold in the Vedic literature. And to fulfill the Lord's mission, all the people of world should accept the holy name of God as the common platform for the universal religion of mankind.

The Biography of Lord Chaitanya :

The advent of the holy name thus took place alongwith the advent of Sri Chitanya. When on the lap of his mother, he once stopped crying as soon as the ladies surrounding him chanted the Holy name of Sri Krishna and clapped their hands. Sometimes the young ladies took pleasure in making him cry, so that they could then stop him by chanting '*Hare Krishna Hare Rama*'. By the age of sixteen, he was regarded as a great scholar of India called *Nimai Pandit*.



He was then married and began to spread the 'Hare Krishna' movement in Navadvipa. There some of the *Brahmanas* soon became envious and put many hindrances in his path, at length complaining to the Muslim Magistrate against him. The Kazi as this official was called, took their complaints seriously and he at first warned the followers of Chaitanya not to chant the name of Sri Krishna loudly. But Chaitanya asked his followers not to care the orders of the Kazi and they went on with their Sankirtana parties as usual. The Kazi then sent constables who broke some of the *Mridangas* (Drums) during *Sankirtana*. When Lord Chaitanya heard of this, he organized a civil disobedience movement in Navadvipa. He was the pioneer of civil disobedience movement in India and for the right cause. He organized a procession of a huge crowd of people carrying thousands of *Mridangas* and *Karatalas* (Hard cymbals) and the procession passed through the roads of Navadvipa without any fear of the Kazi.

At length the party reached the house of the Kazi, who fled upstairs in fear of the masses. The men assembled there showed hot tempers but Chaitanya pacified them. When the Kazi came down, Chaitanya had an amicable discussion with him about the Koran and the Vedic *Shastras*.

The Kazi questioned Chaitanya about cow sacrifice, which the Vedas prescribe, and the Chaitanya replied that the sacrifice which he (Kazi) cited from the *Vedas* is not actually cow-killing. In that sacrifice an old bull or cow is killed to give it a new life by the power of Vedic *mantras*. In the *Kali-yuga* however, such cow sacrifice is forbidden because there are not so many learned *Brahmanas* who can conduct that type of ceremony. Now the

scriptures recommend only the sacrifice through *Sankirtana* for all purposes.

Lastly the Kazi was convinced by Sri Chaitanya and at once he became his follower. Indeed, the Kazi declared that hence forward no one could hinder the chanting of *Harekrishna* in Navadvipa, an injunction observed up to the present day. Following this incident, Chaitanya began to propagate *Sankirtana* more vigorously than ever. In the course of his preaching, he sent out all his followers every day, chief among whom were Srila Nityananda and Thakura Haridasa. They would go from door to door and preach the Science of Love *Sree Krishna*. One day as they were walking along the main road, they came across two brothers named Jagai and Madhai. Though these brothers were the sons of a respectable *Brahmana*, they had fallen to the most despicable position and were meat eaters, womenisers and decoits of the first order. Upon learning of these two, Srila Nityananda at once decided that if they could be delivered by the holy name then Sri Chaitanya would be all the more glorified. With this in mind Srila Nityananda at once approached the two brothers and requested them to chant the holy name of Krishna. But the drunken brothers flew into a rage and attacked Srila Nityananda injuriously, who hurriedly left the place with Haridas Thakura, the drunkards chasing them for a considerable distance. The next day Srila Nityananda again went to see the brothers. But as soon as he approached them Madhai threw a piece of broken earthen pot at him and struck his head, drawing profuse blood. Srila Nityananda was so kind towards them that instead of protesting their heinous act, he said, "It doesnot matter that you have injured me, I still request you to chant the holy name of God."



Jagai was astonished and moved by Srila Nityananda's behaviour and he at once fell down at his feet, begging pardon for their sinful behaviour. But as Madhai again attempted to hurt Srila Nityananda, Jagai protected him and implored him to also fall down at his feet. Meanwhile Sri Chaitanya having heard of Nityananda's injury at once rushed to the spot to take a stiff action against them but Nityananda refrained him from his mission namely, to deliver the hopelessly fallen souls of the *Kaliyuga*. The brothers Jagai and Madhai were, after all, typical examples of the present day population. Because of Nityananda's intervention and their own sincere surrender at Chaitanya's lotus feet, Chaitanya at length was pacified, and the brothers became welcome devotees of Sri Chaitanya.

To deliver the debased population of *Kaliyuga* Sri Chaitanya appeared, and out of his mercy he gave us the simple method of self-realisation - chanting of the holy name of God. Once when the great impersonalist *Sanyasi* Prakashananda Saraswati asked Sri Chaitanya why he was propogating the *Sankirtana* movement instead of studying the *Vedanta-Sutra*, which is generally understood to be the duty of a *Sanyasi*, Sri Chaitanya replied very humbly as follows :

"The reason why I perform *Sankirtana* instead of studying the *Vedanta-Sutra* is that I am a

great fool. And because I am a great fool my spiritual master forbade me to play with *Vedanta* philosophy. He said it would be better for me to chant the holy name of the Lord for that would beliver me from material bondage."

Swami and Goswami are different synonyms of the word for persons who are in full control of the senses. Don't think that you cannot control your senses. Everyone is able. You'll get strength by this process. This chanting of *mantra* will help you to feel the God everywhere. Don't be dejected by thinking that you have no strength. You will get strength by continuing this process of *Kirtanam Sravanam*, which means chanting of *Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna . . .* and hear some passages from the *Bhagavad Gita* and *Srimad Bhagavatam*, utilize these two processes and you will find strength for your spiritual life.

So in this age there is no religion other than glorifying the Lord by chanting His holy name and that is the injunction of all the revealed scriptures. Everything is there in the chanting of "*Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna Hare Hare, Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama Hare Hare.*"

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