

Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakura's
Sri Caitanya's Teachings
1900-1936

Srimad Bhagavatam & Vaisnava Cult

Published in The Harmonist (Sree Sajjanatoshani)

These are answers to the questions put to the author by Pandit
Shyamasundar Chakravarty, a famous leader of the Independence
movement in India and also the then Chief Editor of Servant and
Vasumati (eng). – Ed.

Shyamasundar Chakravarty's Interview

Q: -- Which is the genuine commentary of the Brahma-Sutra?

A: -- It is the Shrimad Bhagavatam, which was explained by Shri Suta Goswami before sixty-thousand sages at Naimisharanya, the famous holy place in Uttara Pradesh. There is a good deal of difference between the Vedantic Schools of Kashi and Naimisharanya. The followers of the Naimisharanya School are genuine Vedantins since they accept only the genuine commentary of the Brahma-Sutra, and not the other spurious ones.

Q: -- Do not the Pandits of the Kashi School accept the Shrimad Bhagavatam?

A: -- They look upon the Bhagavatam as only one particular book among others, a particular Purana among other Puranas. They do not adopt it solely. We think there is no need for any other book than the Bhagavatam. Only those other books are acceptable that say something in its favour; the deliberations that go against it, are not worth being called spiritual.

Q: -- Is there any deliberation going against the Bhagavatam?

A: -- There is no deliberation in the world which is not against the Bhagavatam. All the different currents of thoughts of jivas averse to God from time immemorial are against it.

Q: -- But has there been any man who has openly stood against the Bhagavata deliberations?

A: -- Examples of the antagonist against the Bhagavata ideology have been seen since Satya-yuga (golden age). Hiranyakashipu was one among them. Such antagonists are of two types, disguised and unconcealed. The disguised antagonists are greater enemies than the open ones. Swami



Dayananda, founder of the Arya Samaj, and Kaviraj Gangadhar Sen were open antagonists of the Bhagavatam. But the manner in which the Kashi School is conducted indicates covert views against the Bhagavatam. Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu convinced Swami Prakasananda Saraswati, the then head of the Kashi School, with his followers numbering several thousands, about the indisputable superiority of the doctrine of the Naimisharanya School, so that understanding the evil sectarianism of the Kashi School, he entered to the Naimisharanya School with his followers.

Q: -- Is there no truth in other schools than that of Naimisharanya?

A: -- In other schools, truth is covered under delusion, but in the very beginning of the Vedanta Commentary (Shrimad Bhagavatam) of the Naimisharanya School it has been said: [1] "We always contemplate on the Truth freed from delusions." The plural number 'we' denotes the followers of the Naimisharanya School of Shri Vyasadeva's sect. Here have been indicated the plurality of the contemplators, the non-duality (or singularity) of the Prime Truth and the perpetuality of the connecting link or act, viz., contemplation. This contemplation does not cover the different modes of the thoughts of men. That Prime Truth is incomprehensible and transcendental (i.e., non-empiric).

Q: -- How can the thing be incomprehensible which is capable of being contemplated on?

A: -- Our previous Guru, in the preceptorial line, Shri Rupa Goswami Prabhu, has said in his Shri Bhakti Rasamrita Sindhu: [2] "What, transcending all courses of thought, appears in the heart brightened up with shuddha-sattva and assumes the highest excellence of tasty sweetness, is called Rasa." It is through the function of vishuddha-sattva (the purest or transcendental sattva) or the highest Guru, that Vasudeva, (the Highest Truth) can be contemplated on. Sattva which is one of the three gunas with rajas and tamas is not 'vishuddha sattva'. Vishuddha-sattva is not something of this world. "The name of Vishuddha-sattva is Vasudeva. The Transcendental Purusa who manifests Himself in it is God Vasudeva. I contemplate on that Adhokshaja (Supra-empiric Entity) with my mind." [3] Shiva says this to Sati. The term "Adhokshaja" means what is beyond the scope of material senses. Godhead is He, Who has reserved the absolute right of not being exposed to present human senses.

Q: -- If God is such an Entity, why, then is the phrase 'with my mind' used in the Bhagavata quotation?

A: -- Bhagavatam says, "The mind, purified with Bhakti-yoga having been



thoroughly concentrated, Shri Vyasadeva had a view of the Plenary God with Svarupa-Shakti or Self-Potency also with maya sheltered in a covered manner." [4] The worldly man's mind is the heart, which is the storehouse of decisions and doubts, and the mind which is incessantly engaged in the services of Krishna, giving up the material determination of enjoyments and renunciations, is the pure mind, the sporting ground of the Primary Entity. Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu has said: "Others' hearts are minds, but My mind is Vrindavana, I know the mana (mind) and the vana (Vrindavana, place for Krishna's sports) as the same." Our previous Guru, Srila Narothama Thakura, also has said: "When will my mind be purified, having given up vishaya (sensual objects) and when, then, shall I be able to see Vrindavana?" 'Plenary Entity' indicates Omnipotent God. We cannot see Him with karma or jnana. With karma can be had what is available in the field of karma and not what is beyond it. What nirbheda (absolutely non-distinct) jnana, too, we cannot see Him, for in it the distinction of the seer, the see-able and the seeing is extinguished. God has said [5] "It is with Bhakti that one may know Me in the aspect of truth as regards My Entireness and Entity." He has also said to Shri Uddhava "I am available with ananya-bhakti (exclusive devotion) to Me alone." [6]

Q: -- What is Maya?

A: -- The derivative meaning of maya is what is measurable. Bhagavan is the Lord of maya; He cannot be measured. Where there is attempt to measure God, there is maya and not God. 'ma ' means 'not' and 'ya ' means 'what', i.e., 'what is not God', is maya. The 'maya' as said in the Shrimad Bhagavatam is not like the Satan in the Christian theology, a separate entity from God, altogether another entity. According to the Bhagavata school, maya is in Bhagavan (God) in the condemned state [7] in order to award condign punishment on the atomic sentience (i.e. jivas) controlled by maya. In the Gita God has said [8]: "Earth, water, fire, air, sky, the mind, intelligence and egoism - these constitute My separate inferior potency, whereas other than this is My superior potency constituting the jivas by which is supported the universe." This inferior potency is the maya potency. This inferior potency has been stupefying the jivas that are apathetic towards God since before the beginning of time and causing misunderstanding in them, sometimes assuming the form of 'twenty-four items of entity' of Kapila, (the originator of the Sankhya System), sometimes as the 'atom' of Kanada (of the Vaiseshika System), sometimes



also as Jaimini's principle of 'elevation' (in the Purva Mimamsa System), sometimes again as the 'sixteen objects' of Gautama (in the Nyaya System), sometimes as 'superhuman power and absolute oneness with God' of Patanjali (of the Yoga System), and sometimes as the pretence of search after Brahman (of the Shankar School).

Q: -- Why does such an event happen?

A: -- Because the jivas have free will of their own.

Q: -- Then how can this be reconciled with the teaching of the Gita which says: "God stays in the heart of all the creatures and makes them whirl round, in a machine, as it were, by the agency of maya"? [9]

A: -- This instruction in the Gita rather supports the above statement. It is Shri Vishnu Who is God, the Controller of all beings. God gives the jivas the fruit according as they perform karma. Their nature acts under the direction of God according to their previous karma. Jiva is the doer and God is the Giver. God's authority is seen in the giving of the fruits and governance of the cause and effect. So God is the Giver of the fruit and the jivas, the enjoyers thereof.

Q: -- Why is there the independence of the jivas?

A: -- Jivas are the atomic parts of God, the vibhu-chit (Plenary Sentience). The property of the sea, viz., water, is present in an atomic degree in a drop, too. Vibhu (or Over Lord) God is totally independent; there is independence in anu-chit-jiva (i.e., atomic sentience), too, proportionally.

Q: -- Is the proper use or abuse of the independence of jivas instigated by God?

A: -- If it had been God-instigated, then that would have amounted to the service of God and not caused the Jiva's forgetfulness about Him.

Q: -- Then how can the conclusion be arrived at, viz., 'everything depends upon God's Will'? I am putting these questions not for the sake of discussion, I am asking them, because you are a great scholar and a great devotee at the same time. In the Hindi Gita of Shri Tilaka I read an abhanga (panegyric to God) by Tuka-Rama, the sense of which runs thus: "O God, if my karma brings me liberation, then what should I have to do with You?"

A: -- The Shrimad Bhagavatam has given a reply to this:[10] "He is an heir to liberation, O God, who, feeling Your Grace in every thing and enduring the troubles caused by his own karma, bows down to You with mind, speech and body i.e., whole-heartedly". He who has acquired fitness for being freed from the world, understands that if the blame is laid at the



door of God, then, on account of the want of the tendency towards doing service to God, liberation is never available, but only that person can easily become the possessor of the position of liberation, who is fortunate in having the tendency for the chit -service aroused in him, and he can be more attracted towards God, considering all the troubles and difficulties as His Grace.

Q: -- Then, are the sins, that we commit, due to God's Grace?

A: -- No, they are not. The predilection for sins has been given to test us, in the same manner as money, paddy, a copy of the Shrimad Bhagavatam, etc., are placed before an infant at the time of the first-rice ceremony to see what it takes according to its innate tendency. Before the thread ceremony, too, the Acharya tests the tendency of the boy to be initiated. God's cruelty is what the human intellect apprehends when it is apathetic towards God. If one takes it to be a punishment, it is to be understood that such a one is wanting in a serving temper and in attraction for God. God is the shelter for all. He sends many obstacles and inconveniences to those who wish for shelter under Him, in order to test their ardour and steadiness. For example, when the Vaidya prescribes bitter and astringent medicines and distasteful diets, or the doctor opens the abscess with his lancet, if the patient, is displeased with them, on the ground that they are cruel and not his well-wishers, his decision is wrong, as he has taken his real friends to be enemies. The divine potency, maya, has kept tempting objects as exhibits for alluring me, just as the fishing hook or the net, or the rat-trap or the chain, is set to delude fish, rats, elephants, etc. The object is that I may thereby get more and more entangled in the worldly meshes. Misled by these deluding traps, sometimes I become a wanton performer of misdeeds, sometimes a philanthropist doing good deeds, sometimes again consider oneness with non-distinct Brahman as the good for me, feeling a high regard for the doctrines of Buddha, Shankaracharya or Kapila. Maya Devi has placed in order alluring things according to the diverse temperments of the persons who are deluded by the tenets of karma or jnana due to their having desires to things other than the Truth. Jiva will attain his true well-being, when he engages himself in the accounts relating to God; there is no other way thereto. God does not set up obstructions against anyone, and He is not the destroyer of chetana-dharma or sentience in him. It would have been an act of cruelty on His part, if He had placed obstacles against this sentience; He is only informing the sentient entities of what is the proper use of their sentience



and what are its abuses.

Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu has asked us not to act upon the instructions of the sage Jaimini about worldly elevations, nor upon those of Shri Dattatreya, Shankara, etc., about the culture of non-distinct Brahman; for that is not the proper use of our sentience or independence. Just work for doing service to God and never do a thing which is not meant for it. He has said all this for the true well-being of jivas who have got material perceptions for generating, rather uncovering, their sentience. No one is engaged in a piece of work being propelled by a desire for distress. The bereaved mother is hitting her chest hard with her hands and hurting her head against a piece of stone only to destroy her grief. A patient is belching out by disturbing his throat with his fingers, only to obtain a speedy relief. The Karmis being desirous of the fruit of their karma are making different performances only to get such speedy remedies. Their inner motive is to secure instantaneous relief. Being duped by matters pleasant for the time being they are running towards the mirage of maya. According to them, the method for the speedy end of worldly troubles is: 'I shall be the overlord of the world, become Indra of the heaven, or enjoy and distribute the various worldly enjoyments.' This is only apathy towards God. The culture of non-distinct Brahman is only another phase in our attempts to secure a speedy remedy. The fact is that we want some fees (i.e., the return of some good for our exertions) in some shape or another. We run for enjoyments when we think ourselves dissociated from God. Then we think that it is necessary to make the proper use of our canine teeth, to revel in the functions peculiar to youth, to bring round other people to civic order or social civilization, and so forth. Those attempts are only the results of our forgetfulness about God. These predilections are only meant for enjoyment, as God has said: "All acts are performed by the gunas of nature or maya, and being misled by egotism I thing [sic] myself as the doer. [11]"

The jivatma is an entity beyond the gunas; he is above the Mayashakti, for he serves God. But the power of maya is far above. The aptitude or inclination of a jiva apathetic towards God is to be bound down by maya, to swallow the bait, and bathed in sweat from head to foot due to hard labour and wasting the invaluable life, to gather fuel for the enjoyment of the wives, sons, daughters, grandsons, great-grandsons, many of whom we shall not have any chance even to see, and leave it behind for their sake. I plant a palm-tree, the fruit of which will be enjoyed by others



whom I shall never meet with and who will one day squander away all my hoarded wealth and property. All my efforts are to this end! There is a Shloka to the effect: "O Krishna, I have obeyed the wrong commands of karma (desires), etc., numberless and of any type, but yet they are nor [sic] kind to me, nor feel ashamed, and there is no cessation of these. Now I have got true intelligence, and having thrown them up have taken shelter with You with the prayer that I may be employed in Your service." Those who are given to karma admit God indirectly; those of the jnana-marga wish for being one with God; but we do not cherish any such wrong desire. Our hope is to become the carriers of foot-wear for servants of Hari unlike those who adopt jnana. We do not claim to possess learning, nor intelligence; we mind only the truth received from the lotus-feet of Shri Gurudeva in the capacity of his servants; we do not lay down any new proposition. We say only what we have got to say in favour of the realisation of that one Truth.

What we hear from a true Guru for the first time seems to be revolting. We feel the rise of an inclination in us to make good what appears to be the inadequacy of the Guru's intelligence by means of our empiricism. But the current of thought prevalent in the external or material world cannot assail Shri Gurudeva, who is too heavy for them. He has been able to keep them at a distance of innumerable crores of miles. He is 'Guru' or the heaviest object, because his position is not shifting. At the outset we think that he sticks to his narrow conceptions on account of his ignorance of the external objects; so we want to widen the scope of his conceptions and ideals by telling him everything about the empiric world. Such an idea is due to the dullness of understanding of the school of empiricism. Our Gurudeva is free from such an idea. My Gurudeva is the servant of the Absolute Truth, not of partial truth.

Q: -- What is the meaning of the word 'anartha'?

A: -- What blockades 'artha' (chief necessity of beings), at the very pith of it, is 'anartha' (mischief). This 'anartha' has been converting us into a group of its servitors.

Q: -- When will this 'anartha' come to its end?

A: -- The things that we can measure with our akshas or senses, those which appear to the senses as good and are, according to the judgment of our senses, preyaḥ or our wished-for objects in the form of duties, are akshaja or empiric. The service done to plants, to animals, to some people, and to the country, as also the desire for being regarded as



intelligent and for acquiring the material fame as a Sadhu, these are services to the akshaja or sense matters. All the endeavours of the karmis, jnanis, yogis and men of other desires are all services to akshaja; and all this is apathy towards God Krishna.

Q: -- How can it be known that all this is apathy towards God Krishna?

A: -- Shri Vyasadeva has compiled the Satvata Samhita or Shrimad Bhagavatam for men not knowing it (viz., what is apathy to God). No one had any intention and effort for this knowledge. The non-devotee sects are ever ready to serve the things that are not 'Krishna'. Shri Vyasadeva, who was grace-incarnate, published the Satvata Samhita for those people who did not know all these matters. In this Satvata Samhita, (Shrimad Bhagavatam) the motiveless service of only Adhokshaja (i.e., Entity beyond the scope of empiric knowledge) has been dwelt on as the highest virtue, leaving off the service of all akshaja or empiric things.

Q: -- What is the thing known as 'Bhakti'?

A: -- 'Bhakti' is the eternal natural function of the soul; and it is this alone which is the eternal virtue of jivas in their svarupa or essential nature (i.e., when not covered by avidya or maya). There is no other virtue in jivas in their svarupa. The other functions are not the virtues of the jiva-svarupa; they are virtues of contrary natures. These are changeable and ephemeral. This Bhakti destroys grief, infatuation and fear' [12] It is from dvitiyabhinivesa or an ardent intentness for the second thing i.e., what is different from the One Entity viz. God that fear, grief, distraction, etc. grow. It is the conception of other entities than Krishna and His objects viz. devotees, which constitute the intentness for the second thing. "So long as people do not accept as the only shelter the safe and fearless lotus-like Feet of God, they labour under the fear lest their wealth, bodies, relations connected therewith, and friends should be lost, under the grief when they are lost, under desire to get them back, under a hankering thirst after them, etc. [13] Again when these reappear, the material attachment for anatma things (that are not related to the soul with the conception of 'I'-ness and 'mine'-ness) become prominent." This is the root-cause of Samsara.

The desire for authority arising out of the measuring tendency is an anti-devotional thing. Just as one attacked by intestinal worms cannot get nutrition of the body from any quantity of vitamin food consumed, so when the tendencies for karma and jnana prevail, the function of the soul is obstructed.



Q: -- With Vaishnavism some may be personally benefited; but what benefit does the world derive from it?

A: -- That is not the true position; it may be applicable for archana or ritual worship, and not to those who perform kirtana or recite the glories of God. The ritual worshipper does his rituals for his own personal good; but a reciter does service to the world, nay to all the creatures of the universe, to all beasts and birds, to men and gods, even to trees, creepers and rocks, too; that service is of the highest type.

Q: -- I do not find any liking of men for this.

A: -- It is meaningless if we expect many persons to come for it. The number of post-graduates is very limited. Lord Krishna has said, [14] "Among thousands of men, only one or a few endeavour for accomplishment in self-realisation and of these, too, even though accomplished, only one or so may have an insight into My nature." Lord Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu has dilated on it citing a Bhagavata Shloka: [15] "Even among crores of the accomplished and liberated even a single devotee of Lord Narayana is rare." Craftiness is the main thing in the world.

Q: -- What benefit has Vaishnavism done to the world?

A: -- Politics will not be able to do even one part of a crore parts, in thousands of eras, of the benefit that the Vaishnavas have done to the world. We are not advising others to be such narrow sectarians as the politicians are.

Q: -- How many people are there who know of Vaishnavism?

A: -- How many post-graduates are being turned out? How many Newtons have been born? Is it a wise principle to give up the culture of science because many Prof. J.C. Boses are not being produced?

Q: -- By what means can devotion to Krishna grow?

A: -- Devotion to the Supreme Lord Krishna is generated when one listens to the accounts of His Glories, etc., attentively with a serving mood from such guileless devotees of God as have nothing to do except incessantly chanting these accounts. [16] He is Vishnu Who is sustaining the entire universe with the function in which the sattva is the chief element. As He has been making the world chetana or alive to the concerns of Krishna He is known as Krishna Chaitanya. It is for generating chaitanya (alive-ness) in jivas that were without it that He adopted Sannyasa. But yet we have got chaitanya (i.e., been brought to sense). It is not the virtue of pure chaitanya to make other attempts than that of motiveless service. In the



function of shuddha (pure) chetana there is no service to to [sic] be done to anartha (which is not the true artha or necessary, i.e. God); there is only the service to Artha. The Kshatriyas, Vaisyas, Shudras, etc., are busy in thinking about the external things in nature; the knowers of Brahman (i.e. the true Brahmanas) have no such engagement; only service to Hari is their duty. And the Kshatriyas, Vaisyas, etc., should also make all endeavours in favour of that service of those Brahmajnas. It is the only duty of jivas to be engaged in the service of God.

Q: -- Is the Vaishnava Dharma acceptable to all?

A: -- It is only the Vaishnava Dharma that is the sole Dharma of all chit entities, it is the only Dharma of the jiva in his own essential nature. There is no need to call oneself a Christian, Moslem or even a Hindu; all should become Vaishnavas. All should accept the eternal dharma of jivas in their own true nature, all even birds and beasts, plants and stones; deities, demons and men, who need not have their present forms of existence, should be Vaishnavas. Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu performed this deed; He converted all to Vaishnavism, whomsoever his Lordship met during His South Indian tour, even grass shrubs, creepers, birds, beasts, trees, stones, along the Jharikhanda route through Orissa and Bihar; He did not allow them to stay with their conceits as such against their true nature; all became Vaishnavas including Shaivas, Shaktas, heretic Hindus, Pathans, Bouddhas, Mayavadis, emancipationists, elevationists, yogis, tapasvis, literates, illiterates, those in good or bad health. His Lordship's only weapon was Krishna-kirtana. Besides, those who were becoming Vaishnavas, at the command of the Lord, were performing the function of Gurus with Kirtana and were converting as Vaishnavas those who came into contact with them. Shriman Mahaprabhu told them that every man in Bharata (India) should be doing others good and there is nothing so good as loud Sankirtana which helps all creatures attain the highest good possible, just as one who sustains a thousand people, is much better than one who sustains only oneself. There has not been, there will not be, such benefactors of the highest merit as Mahaprabhu and His devotees have been. The offer of other benefits is only a deception; it is rather a great harm, whereas the benefit done by Him and His followers is the truest and greatest eternal benefit. That is not a benefit lasting only for a few days, being only a timely benefit. His Lordship or His followers did not delude people by speaking of such benefits as would, after a short time, produce harm, by which some other party would be harmed, just as the



benefit of one country connotes mischief to another, just as when I am benefited by driving in a coach the horses are harmed, had when I give another an advantage for the time being, I suffer a proportionate disadvantage. They have spoken of such a benefit, they have given such a thing, as is the highest benefit for all, for all times, for all conditions. This benefit is not for a particular country causing mischief to another; but it benefits the whole universe. Mahaprabhu's benefit does not produce any evil. For this, from His Grace no evil arises, and for this again His is the highest benevolence, and so are His devotees' too. These statements are the greatest truth, not mere gossip, nor imaginative poetry and literature.

Q: -- What is, then, Vishnu-seva?

A: -- Vishnu is the Adhokshaja Entity Whom I cannot measure with my senses or enjoy. But I am enjoyable by Him. The name of Shreya (real Truth) is beloved to Vishnu. To gratify His Senses is seva (service). The pretence of Vishnu-seva for maintaining the body is no true Vishnu-seva. In modern times endeavours are rampant to enjoy Vishnu in the name of Vishnu-seva; Vishnu is being treated as a servant, supplying our needs. Endeavour is made to enjoy Vishnu, when we think ourselves the enjoyers of the river water, the fruits of trees, the beauty of nature, the health-giving open air. I think that He will sleep on the same side (left or right as I wish,) as if He were a tenant choosing me for His dwelling place. I treat Him as my gardener who will supply me with nose-gays of flowers, so that I may enjoy their agreeable fragrance. Who is it then that do not want Bhakti? It is they who say, "I shall rule over the country, or I shall remain as a subject, tilling the ground, or I shall be a politician or warrior." It is they who say, "It is I who am the doer of everything."

Q: -- Shall we, then, give up all avocations and the daily round of our duties?

A: -- We shall do everything as Vaishnavas and not take up the path of karma. Our former Gurudeva Shri Rupa Goswami Prabhu has said: [17] "He, whose endeavours are all for doing service to Hari, with body, mind and speech, is called 'jivan-mukta' or 'liberated while living,' in whatever stage of life he may be." He has also said: [18] "When one is detached from worldly enjoyments, and with the acceptance of the objects favourable to Krishna's service is ardently attached to Him, one is said to have the proper abnegation."

Q: -- What is the duty of a Vaishnava?

A: -- It is said in the Pancharatra, [19] that those who want to have Bhakti



should perform only such secular and Vedic deeds as are favourable to the service of Hari. It is also said in the Pancharatra, [20] that such acts as are ordained in the Shastras for the service of Hari are called by saintly persons as Bhakti with the performance of which is gradually generated the superior type of Bhakti. The doctrine of naishkarmya (cessation of karma) is this. Whatever we do should be done as favourable to the service of Hari. The desire of the salvationists is to get rid of all actions, to get rid of Hari's service.

Q: -- How can one do Hari-seva?

A: -- Hari-seva can be done in three ways by acts, by speech, and with the mind.

Q: -- What type of service is done by acts, the mind and the speech?

A: -- When asked by the father about what good study he had done, Shri Prahlada said [21] "The performance of the nine kinds of Bhakti directly offered to God Vishnu, hearing, chanting, remembering, serving, the Feet, worshipping, saluting with hymns, serving as a servitor, dealing with friendliness and surrendering the self, -- is to be regarded as the best form of study." Hiranyakashipu, astonished to bear [sic] about the idea of seva from his boy, said, "You are giving a new type of idea, which we of the school of empiricists do not know."

Q: -- Will not those who serve Hari serve jivas?

A: -- Hari is the Entire Entity; it is the servants of Hari who really serve jivas. Those who being fascinated with the external appearance of jivas think the service of the external body of Hari as the service of Hari or that of jivas are vivarta-vadins or advocates of the theory that the whole creation is a mere illusion; they do not serve the jivas; they serve only maya, the external Body of Hari. By serving maya thus, one benefits neither oneself nor another. If you impute poverty to Narayana, You serve only maya, neither Narayana, nor His servants, the jivas. The service of vivarta (illusion) is that of the mirage of maya, not of the real substance. The true substance is only Krishna; the jivas are the associated counterparts of His Entity. We shall serve Hari; we shall serve the Harijanas (i.e., devotees of Hari) and also those who cannot understand the true Harijanas, so that they may have a true understanding of the Harijans; we shall help them mentally and physically, too. We shall serve even those who are against the Harijanas, but that with indifference. Our best friends are the servants of God with whom we ally. I shall speak about the service of Hari to such friends of mine as are possessed of lesser



power of understanding and have taken up the duties of Kshatriyas, Vaisyas and Shudras, if they are not antagonistic. But we shall declare non-co-operation with them that have become antagonistic, such as the casteless, the Agnostics, the Epicureans and followers of Charvaka who regard their physical pleasures as the summum bonum of life, and such others.

Q: -- What do you mean by the term 'jiva-daya' or kindness to creatures? Is it not the offering of help with the supply of food, clothes, etc?

A: -- We shall offer such help to him who has got faith in God even after several births and has begun service of God. We should feed and clothe the needy and do them other benefits in order to make them serve Hari; otherwise, what is the need of nourishing a snake with milk and banana? That is no kindness, rather it would entrap men with maya or tempt them towards nihilism. The kindness that Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu has shown to jivas, absolves them eternally from all wants, from all inconveniences and from all the distresses known as tritapa. That kindness does not produce any evil and the jivas who have got it will not be victims of the evils of the world; they will rather be swimming in the nectarous sea of Love, eternally enjoying its sweetness.

Q: -- How is Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's grace different from other forms of kindness?

A: -- Unlike other forms of kindness, His Lordship's Grace is unproductive of evils. His Grace has been described by Shri Svarupa Damodara Goswami, His closest associate, as easily scattering away all evils, as clear and unmixed, as extending pure delight like a full-blown flower, as setting at rest all scriptural conflicts, as distributing true tasty sweetness of devotion, as causing of ecstatic mood of the mind like madness (in love of God), as giving the eternal bliss of devotion, as introducing a spirit of equality among the high and the low and as revealing the extreme limit of spiritual sweetness.' Shri Rupa Goswami considers His Lordship as Krishna Himself, bearing the Name Shri Krishna Chaitanya and a fair complexion, as the greatest benevolent Entity, distributing love of Krishna. Shri Krishna Dasa Kaviraja Goswami, (author of Shri Chaitanya Charitamrita), too, has said: "Deliberate with discrimination [sic] on the Grace of Shri Chaitanya Chandra and you will be amazed with the highest excellence."

Q: -- How can there be a discriminate deliberation thereof?

A: -- Kaviraja Goswami Prabhu has asked us to make a comparative study



between Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's Grace and all the so-called kindnesses that are incomplete and imperfect. Where there is not the gift of an eternal nature, there must be inadequacy, defect and deception. If somebody makes a comparative study with impartially, [sic] he will find that Shri Chaitanya Chandra's Grace is plenary kindness, whereas all the other kindnesses are limited and deceptive. The Incarnations of God, like the Matsya, Kurma, and Varaha Devas, not only They, but even God Krishna Himself, have distributed Grace among the devotees only; but they have killed the antagonists; whereas Mahaprabhu, instead of killing them, has shown them kindness; for example, He has not refrained from distributing His Grace, unproductive of any evil even among the Quazis and the Bouddhas. He has converted, as pure devotees, also the Ramayets who, though they profess to worship Shri Ramachandra, are really emancipationists.

Q: --- Are not the Ramayets true Vaishnavas?

A: -- The Ramayets belong to the Ramanandi Sects; they do not belong to the correct Ramanuja Sect. As most of them cherish a desire for emancipation, the Shuddha (pure) Vaishnavas count them among the Viddha (adulterated) Vaishnava class. Once Shrila Raghunatha Bhatta Goswami took with him to Shri Mahaprabhu, at Puri, one Ramadasa, teacher of Kavya-prakasa (a famous work on rhetoric in Sanskrit). Though Ramadasa had a crouching humility and a spirit of doing service to Vaishnavas and Brahmanas, yet Mahaprabhu dealt with him with indifference and apathy, having noticed the desire for emancipation lurking in his heart.

Q: -- What do you think about the Bouddhas?

A: -- 'Bouddha' is another name for 'Vaishnava'; but the present-day men going by the name of 'Bouddhas' are wanting in the true knowledge about the soul. As the worshippers of Shri Rama are the Ramayets, so the worshippers of Buddha, an Incarnation of Vishnu, are Bouddhas. But as the Auls, Bauls, Gauranganagaris, Smartas, Caste-Goswami's etc., though professing to be the followers of Shri Gauranga, have fallen off from His teachings, so have the Bouddhas deviated from the path shown by Buddha Deva, though they called themselves Vaishnavas. When however, they follow the Shuddha Vaishnavas, their true intrinsic nature will be manifested, as it did in the case of the Bouddhas, on their obtaining the Grace of Shri Mahaprabhu. So when the men of the misled sects, like the Auls, Bauls, etc., give up their wrong beliefs and customs and worship



Gaur-Krishna under the direction of the Shuddha Vaishnavas, then we shall recognise them as the devotees of Shri Gauranga Mahaprabhu.

Q: -- Do not the Smartas worship Vishnu?

A: -- The worship of Vishnu by the Smartas is another form of their worship of Ganesa, Surya, Shiva and Shakti. Vishnu is not worshipped thereby. The worship of Vishnu as one of the five deities, makes His highest Dignity, which is without any equal, similar to that of the other deities and His Lordship is counted as one of several deities which is a great spiritual offence. According to Shri Chaitanya Deva, one who looks on Shri Narayana as equal to the different gods like Brahma, Rudra, etc., surely becomes the lowest heretic (pashandi). He regards also him as a pashandi who counts one Krishna-nama and a crore of asvamedhas (horse-sacrifices). There is much deliberation of these matters in the Brahma Samhita, the most valuable treatise on the Vaishnava doctrine, found by His Lordship in South India. The worship of Vishnu as found in Panchopasana (worship of five deities) do not please Vishnu, and being only the worship of a deity and also heterodox it is highly improper.

Q: -- Why do you call it improper?

A: -- God Himself has said this in the Gita: "Those who worship other deities worship Me improperly." [22]

Q: -- Though improper, all the same, it is Krishna's worship.

A: -- It is Krishna Who is the only Super-Lord over the entire universe and beyond it of Vaikuntha (i.e., Transcendental Region). As such, no one can raise any obstacle against His Enjoyment. Everyone is offering Him worship, but it is given in an improper manner, and the worshipper gains nothing. Even they, too, who are worshipping Surya, Ganesa, Shakti, etc., are worshipping the reflectional potency of Krishna; because nothing has a separate existence from Him. But the reflection being worshipped, they do not get the true knowledge of intrinsic nature of their soul and the sambandha-jnana (essential knowledge about the relation between God and the jivas). When that sambandha-jnana is acquired, they will know that Krishna is the Sole Master, that every jiva is Krishna's eternal servitor and that Krishna-seva is the eternal function of jivas.

Q: -- What deliberation is there in the Brahma Samhita?

A: -- The Brahma Samhita has refuted Pancho-pasana. It is the eternal duty of all jivas to serve Krishna, the Lord of all Lords. All the other deities are His servitors. Their function is only to carry out Govinda's commands. They will never acquire liberation, who conceive of the deities



as the different names and bodies of Vishnu instead of knowing them as His servitors. In five Shlokas of the Brahma Samhita have been described the natures of the five deities, named above: (1) "I (i.e., Brahma) adore the Primaeval Lord Govinda, in pursuance of whose order the Sun-God, the King of the planets and the eye of this world, performs his journey mounting the wheel of Time." [23] (2) "I adore the Primaeval Lord Govinda, Whose Lotus-like Feet are always held by Ganesa on the head in order to obtain power for his function of destroying all the obstacles of the three worlds." [24] (3) "I adore the Primaeval Lord Govinda, in accordance with whose will Durga, His external potency, conducts her function as the creating, preserving and destroying agent of the world" [25] (4) "I adore the Primaeval Lord Govinda, Who transforms Himself as Sambhu for performing the work of destruction, just as milk is transformed into curd which is neither the same as, nor different from, milk" [26] (5) "I adore the Primaeval Lord Govinda, Who manifests Himself as Vishnu in the same manner as one burning candle communicates its light to another candle which, though existing separately, is of the same quality as the first. [27]

Q: -- What is the distinction between a Brahmana and a Vaishnava? A: -- The worshipper of Shri Vishnu with distinctive attributes and sentient playfulness is a Vaishnava, whereas the culturist of Attributeless Brahman is a Brahmana. The name of the knower of Brahman is Brahmana, and when he worships Bhagavan his name is Vaishnava. The fully manifested Truth is Bhagavan and the insufficiently manifested Truth is Brahman. Consequently it is a Brahmana with the knowledge of relativities who can be a Vaishnava by means of worship. The contrivance of the worship of Brahman by the professors of non-distinction in five forms with an attribution of attributes to Him on the basis of the theory of illusion does not refer to the Truth of the knowledge of singularity. These illusionists with the self-conceit as Brahmanas think Brahmanism confined to the religion for the attainment of worldly desires, whereas the virtue of the knower of Brahman is eternally innate in the essential condition of jivas. When a Brahmana is fortunate to get rid of the clutches of maya through Vishnu's Grace, he is able to become a pure Brahmana i.e., a Vaishnava. In his Bhakti-Sandarbha Shri Jiva Goswami has cited the following from the Garuda Purana: "A performer of sacrifices is better than a thousand Brahmanas; a scholar of Vedanta is better than a thousand performers of sacrifices; a devotee of Vishnu is superior to a crore of Vedanta scholars;



whereas one, solely devoted to Vishnu is superior to a thousand Vaishnavas."

Q: -- Are the Vaishnavas, too, Brahmanas?

A: -- That the Vaishnavas, too are Brahmanas you have learnt in answer to the above question. Brahmanism is the lowest rang [sic] of the ladder of Vaishnavism which is far higher than the other. A Brahmana is the attendant to a Vaishnava. Just as the owner of a lakh of rupees possesses also a thousand rupees, so one who is a Vaishnava is certainly a Brahmana.

Q: -- Now-a-days very few think along this line. Whenever the term 'Vaishnava' is used, people generally interpret it in quite a different manner.

A: -- It is on account of the people's forgetfulness about these deliberations and of the fact that the highest seat of Vaishnavism has been looked down upon with a degree of contumely due to the want of necessary culture and sufficient propagation by means of proper custom and conduct, that, as willed by God, the institution of the Gaudiya Maths has come into existence. This intitution [sic] has undertaken the task of re-establishing the system of daiva-varnashrama (deistic form of castes and stages of life) for re-instating such persons in the proper functioning of true Brahmanas as have forgotten the principle of the dharma of jivas as servitors to Vaishnavas and have been consequently running after the function of Kshatriyas, Vaisyas, etc. Mahaprabhu Shri Chaitanya Deva has said: "He alone can function as a Guru (spiritual instructor) who is conversant with the knowledge of Krishna, whether he is born as a Brahmana

or a Shudra, or is a Sannyasi or otherwise." An a-Brahmana (one who is not a true Brahmana) cannot be a Guru, the word 'Guru' implies a Brahmana. He who knows the truth about Krishna i.e., who is an adept in the full perception of the true knowledge of singularity is certainly not an a-Brahmana, as in him there is the knowledge about Brahman by implication. Shri Narada says: "If the symptoms indicating the varnas (castes) appear in persons born elsewhere, they should be regarded as belonging to the castes as shown by the symptoms." Shridhara Swamipada has said: "The ascertainment of castes as Brahmanas, etc., should be made from the presence or absence of the attributes like self-control, tranquility, etc., and not only from births." If these virtues are seen in a person not born in a Brahmana family, his varna is to be determined as



Brahmana. Shri Advaita Acharya honoured his ancestors by offering Shradha-patra to Thakur Haridasa who had been born of a moslem family, telling him: "Crores of Brahmanas are fed by feeding you."

Q: -- But why is not such a custom now-a-days observed in your Vaishnava community?

A: -- Everything is going to be obsolete in course of time. How distorted have become the teachings that were given by Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu! Now-a-days, trade, lechery, hypocrisy, deceitfulness, etc., have been rampant in society in the name of Vaishnavism. Though Thakur Haridasa had come out of a moslem family, the devotees of God regarded him as the Guru of Brahmanas. As such, Yadunandan Acharya, Ramananda Basu and other persons born in very respectable families did not in the least feel diffident to become his disciples.

Q: -- By what you are propagating, many people will be rid of their prejudices and the Vaishnava world may be much benefited thereby.

A: -- It is from the teaching of Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu that the world can derive true benefit, for they are not tinged with the colour of narrow sectarianism.

Q: -- I am fully convinced and much delighted at your scholarship and genius.

A: -- Nothing of all this is mine. I only reproduce what I have learnt from Shri Gurudeva. I have only recapitulated the eternal Truth that has come down through the media of Shri Brahma-Narada-Vyasa-Shuka, etc.

