

# Gaudiya-Sampradaya-Tattva

The Nature of the Succession  
in Gaudiya Vaishnavism

Svami Sadananda Dasa to Vamandas  
notebook Mayapur 1950

Into English, within square brackets  
and footnotes and © Kid Samuelsson and Katrin Stamm

Last modified 03.02.2020

What Prabhupad<sup>1</sup> pointed out, but could not change, was the fact that the official Caitanya movement actually has nothing to do with Caitanya, and that a true follower of Caitanya is something else than a sentimental, muddled and immoral person, and that a true adherent of Mahaprabhu should be able to profess himself as such without feeling ashamed of himself and fearing that he will be thrown in the same category as those who wrap the mantle of the learned, the bhakta and the cult around their own social, intellectual, spiritual and moral inferiority, and as those who in the name of Mahaprabhu and His cult justify themselves while dealing with more or less shady activities.

Soon after Mahaprabhu everything lies in ruins.

Shankara tried to squeeze the Absolute into an intellectual, narrow bed. God had to comply with the laws of human logic, and like every system this violates God's nature. Formlessness is just one of the forms of the manifold forms of the Absolute.

Mahaprabhu did not create any new system, nor did Jiva Gosvami. Acintya-bhedabheda<sup>2</sup> is an inference, a conclusion, a siddhanta, a conclusion drawn when one considers the Word Revelation as a whole, i.e. when the

---

<sup>1</sup> Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakur.

<sup>2</sup> Acintya-bheda-abheda. Inconceivable simultaneous distinction and non-distinction. Bheda = distinction, abheda = non-distinction. Acintya = Only cognizable through the realization of the unrestricted import of the Shastram-s. (Shridhara in Vishnu-Purana-tika I,3,2)

Upanishads talk about unity and duality, distinction and non-distinction, and with this double statement want to make a statement about God's nature, it follows that God simultaneously is form and not form, one and manifold etc.

This may be contrary to the laws of human logic, but God and His nature are in no way confined to obey mundane, human laws of thinking.

The term *acintya-bhedabheda-vada*<sup>3</sup> appears much later. Mahaprabhu and His contemporaries had no intention whatsoever to form a new system in contrast to the existing dissimilar monistic and dualistic systems, but wanted to show that one does violate the Absolute when one tries to squeeze it either into the monistic or dualistic system, and instead of accepting the double statements of the Revelation only accept *one*.

Bheda: non-identity of two things regarding their substance and attributes. Bheda is true in the relation between God and the world. The world is not, consequently only God remains. On the other hand, there is variety within God Himself.<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>3</sup> Vada = teachings.

<sup>4</sup> The statement that only God remains as the only reality, because the world *is* not, is an expression of a *monistic* view. In contrast, the next sentence states a *pluralism* within God. Both statements regarding God, the monistic and the pluralistic, are true. One must take into consideration, however, that the first statement refers to the relationship between *God (Vishnu) and the world*, the second to the *inner* life of God in His fullness (Bhagavan). Accordingly, these two statements are not comparable, because they concern different aspects of God and His attributes, and therefore they are not contradictory.

The first statement in itself, however, seems to be problematic. At first sight, it contradicts the statement of the Shastram-s, that God, the jiva-s and the world are eternally coexistent, like the sun, the sunrays and the opposite of light, darkness. The contradiction is dissolved, however, when one takes into consideration that one statement is made from *one* perspective, the other from *another* perspective, while both refer to *the same object*. One is from the view of God, the other from the view of the world. From God's point of view there is only *one* shakti, from the point of view of the world there are *three*: svarupa-shakti, tatastha-shakti and maya-shakti. This division does not exist from God's point of view. And strictly speaking, it is only

Mahaprabhu brought the people into the stream of kirtana and singing of the Name, where each and everyone then evolved in accordance with his own nature. He led the people to Krishna-bhakti, some to Radha-Krishna, others to Rama, others to Narasinha, but added that all these (other) forms are not svayam rupa<sup>5</sup>.

Emphatically, He drew attention to the fact that svayam rupa is Krishna or Svayam Bhagavan Vrajendra-Nandana<sup>6</sup>. Consequently, at the same time, He wanted to lead the genuine bhakti of every group of jiva-atma-s to the different forms of HIMSELF, *and* lead those, who in accordance with the nature of their atma (svarup) belong to the bhakti to Vrajendra-Nandana in anugatyā gopi-bhava<sup>7</sup>, to this form of bhakti, and out of them especially lead those who are qualified to appreciate it, into the greater intensity of the separation (viraha<sup>8</sup>) between Radha and Krishna, and the service of Them in Their efforts to overcome this separation.

---

maya-*shakti*, from which the worlds emanate, that is eternal; the perpetually emanating, changing and dissolving worlds *are not*.

The statement in question refers to the view of God and the advanced bhakta, and is illustrated by the following comment by Sadananda to a verse in *Krishna-Karnamritam*: “This implies, among other things, that anything, being not centred around You [Krishna] or being separated from You, is *nothing*. All true being is rooted in You, lives through You, originates from You and flows back to You. Who does not let himself be captured by the fascination for the objects and ideas, so easily alluring those who are turned away from Krishna, and which they take so seriously, knows, that these things are not worth being. And – regarding them dispassionately – *they are in the true sense of the word not real*, they just seem to be so, because they have no meaning.” (Italics by the publishers).

<sup>5</sup> God Himself, as He is in Himself.

<sup>6</sup> The Son of Nanda, the chief of Vraja.

<sup>7</sup> To serve under the gopi-s, to serve in the same spirit (bhava), with the same purity as they do, with the exclusive wish to give joy to Krishna, without even the slightest wish to experience any kind of joy of one’s own.

<sup>8</sup> The intensity of prema is greater in separation than in union.

Mahaprabhu's most intimate and direct disciples are thus those who in their service (anugatyā) of Him want to attain the service (anugatyā) of the nitya-gopi-s, in their efforts to end the separation between Radha and Krishna.

In the historical development of Mahaprabhu's group of disciples, after His tirobhava [disappearance], we thus find only those who lead to the seva of Vrajendra-Nandana in anugatyā of His parishada-s<sup>9</sup>.

And even though there are also those among them, who in accordance with their nature, in anugatyā of the different parishada-s, belong to Vrajendra-Nandana in the form of the Child, the Companion and Friend, or the Lord (and they all have their own lila-literature and anugatyā-seva), practically the whole sampradaya, in its esoteric form, is dedicated to Radha-Krishna-sadhana, i.e. Vrajendra-Nandana-Kishori [Krishna, the Youth], in anugatyā of Radha's parishada-s. And consequently, as Radha, ontologically speaking, to Him is more close and dear than Himself, and the One who constitutes the complete fullness of seva of the Beloved, in intensity and extensity, the aim and goal of the esoteric sadhana of practically the whole Gaudiya sampradaya is *dasyam of Shri Radha in anugatyā of the nitya-parishada-s, Her eternal companions in the form of Her female playmates and friends, companions and maid servants*, excluding not only all interest for seva of other forms of Krishna, as Rama, Dvaraka-Krishna etc., but also the inner and personal interest for seva in anugatyā of svayam rupa Vrajendra-Nandana in the form of the Child, the Companion or the Lord, and even more, excluding the will to directly serve Krishna as Kishora-Krishna and finally even the direct will to directly serve Shri Radha.

Mahaprabhu has expressed the ideal of this form of [subordinated] seva as: gopi-bhartur pada-kamalayor dasa-dasanudasa<sup>10</sup>.

But just as Mahaprabhu's nature as Radha and Krishna is kept secret by Mahaprabhu and His parishadas-s, the deep, inner interest of the members of the sampradaya for the inner, confidential seva – which only the self [the atma] can participate in – is also a rigorously preserved secret, which only a few, two

---

<sup>9</sup> God's eternal co-players, associates.

<sup>10</sup> I am a servant of the servant of the servants of the lotus feet of Krishna, Who is the most Beloved of the gopi-s. (C.C. Madhya 13.80)

or more – and this also only rarely, who themselves, in full awareness, take part in this seva – can exchange well-preserved secretive thoughts about.

To reveal this secret to others, who themselves are not awakened, and to those who themselves do not belong to the same level or group of anugatya, is in itself inconceivable – and when this is spoken of or written about in public, this is an indication that the person in question lacks the most elementary conditions for God’s Mercy. Otherwise, the power (shakti) of Mercy, which bestows wisdom and true knowledge, would have given the insight that these things are confidential and must remain confidential, just as Mahaprabhu carefully preserved the secret of His Own being as Radha and Krishna, and viraha-bhava<sup>11</sup>, and – where it was revealed – quickly and carefully concealed it again.

---

<sup>11</sup> The bhava of separation.