

## Harmony of the Yogas: Sri Chaitanya

Apayantu mamangani vak pranas caksuh srotram atho balam indriyani ca sarvani. Sarvam brahmopanisadam ma'ham brahma nirakuryam ma ma brahma nirakarot anirakaranam astu anirakaranam me-stu. Tad atmani nirate ya upanisatsu dharman te mayi santu te mayi santu. Aum. Shanti. Shanti. Shanti.<sup>1</sup>  
[Kena Upanisad 1:1]

May the limbs of my body be strong. May my speech, vital energy, eyes, ears and all the senses be purified. All indeed is Brahman as taught in the Upanishads. May I never deny Brahman, nor Brahman, me. May there be unbroken communion between Brahman and myself. May all the virtues described in the Upanishads belong to me who am devoted to self-knowledge. Yea, may they all belong to me. Om. Peace, Peace, Peace.

The title of my lecture is: The Harmony of the Yogas. Today is the birthday of one of the great saints of India, Sri Chaitanya, who lived about half a century [five centuries] before Sri Ramakrishna. We shall be celebrating his birthday this evening with a program of worship, devotional songs, readings and prasada. This morning happened to be a Sunday. We could not get away from the Sunday service morning lecture. And the lecture title was decided long ago, before I knew that that would be Sri Chaitanya's birthday in the evening. So I thought and thought and thought: how to harmonize this lecture title with Sri Chaitanya.

Then there was a wonderful revelation to me. I thought, Sri Chaitanya is popularly known as the prophet of love, the prophet of bhakti, singing the name of the Lord, loudly, and going from place to place singing His Holy Name. He and his followers, that was their principal practice of religion: singing the name of God, the Holy Name of God. They did not know that in Sri Chaitanya's life there are other aspects too. There are other yogas too-- and particularly this yoga of jnana yoga what we call it, the yoga of unity, practice of unity at the back of everything. That Sri Chaitanya himself was a prophet of this yoga, very few people knew, or cared to know. They are satisfied with seeing the popular belief.

And so they... Sri Chaitanya is preached as the prophet of love, as the prophet of loud singing. True. But he was also a prophet of deep contemplation, of deep samadhi as we find in the life of Ramakrishna, the life of Sarada Devi. They were prophets of the harmony of the yogas. In Sri Chaitanya's life... we find we have a statue of Sri Chaitanya in our retreat. You must have seen that statue. Sri Chaitanya has not even entered inside the temple. The temple pillar outside, from there you can see the altar. The place is Puri, Jaganath and Sri Chaitanya is looking at that altar and he is in deep samadhi. He is not repeating the name of God. He is not singing. He is not dancing. He is standing quiet and still. His mind is [in] ultimate unity with the divine, with Jaganath. Jaganath means the Lord of the universe, the name of the deity there.

In that altar in Jaganath, there are three images. That is very strange. Sri Krishna [is on] one side, on the other side Sri Krishna's elder brother, Balaram,

and in the middle, their sister, Subhadra<sup>2</sup>, who was also the wife of Arjuna. Now brother, two brothers and sister, those are the images... images on the altar. Very strange. Nowhere in India, no other temple [is like this]. You can see Radha, Krishna, Siva, Gauri – the male principle, the female principle. Shakti. Brahma and Shakti you can see. But brother and sister, a brother, two brothers and sister?

So scholars have great debate on this. They said it must have been... this temple must have a Buddhist temple, standing for dharma, the Buddhist trinity, Dharma, Buddha, and Sangha. Buddha is the teacher and sangha is the congregation and dharma is the truth. So these three principles were represented by three figures and when Hinduism rose and the Buddhists were [gone], so overnight... it seemed that overnight they transformed that temple. But then also we have also the two brothers, Krishna and Balaram and Puksubhadra in the inside. But that temple is highly regarded as a place of great spiritual inspiration.

Once you go inside the temple you are really, you are really transformed. Such a spiritual atmosphere is in the temple. That is why Sri Ramakrishna did not want to visit that temple. He said, "If I go there, my body won't stay. My body will fall dead by seeing that image and by being in that temple." So, after his death, when Holy Mother went to visit that temple, she took a picture of Sri Ramakrishna within her upper garment. And there she opened that picture. "You did not come to this temple physically. Now you see it." [Audience laughs with him.]

But Sri Chaitanya himself was also, just as in the Bhagavad Gita [13:25] we read one verse, "Dhyānenatmani pasyanti kecid atmanam atmana." Jnana yoga, those raja yoga people, they emphasize meditation. In meditation they want to see the inner self. That is called jnana yoga, the yoga of meditation. That is the same as raja yoga. "Dhyānenatmani pasyanti kecid atmanam atmana." "By one's own self one sees the self by the practice of meditation." "Anye sankhyena yogena." "Some others try to reach truth through sankhya yoga." Sankhya yoga means jnana yoga, reasoning, the yoga of reasoning: This is eternal. This is temporary. This is waking. This is dream. They reason out everything, don't take anything for granted -- reason, "What is this? Why is this? How is this?" That is called reasoning. The mind is intensely active. That is called sankhya yoga. Jnana yoga simply we read in other places. "Karma-yogena capare."<sup>3</sup> "Others reach their truth by karma yoga" – unselfish action, which is a great theme of Bhagavad Gita.

[In the] Bhagavad Gita almost in every chapter, the teacher, Sri Krishna, speaks of karma. One cannot escape karma. When once you are in this world, you carry with you impressions, innumerable impressions of the past. And you are continuously creating new impressions. But you, if you want to be a yogi, if you want to have enlightenment, you try to remember this important truth, that all karma, all action, is coming from God. Don't say, "I have done this. I do this. I will do this." You forget your "I, I, I" and let the doer, the performer be God. If you can do this, that becomes yoga. Every action of yours becomes yoga. You are cooking. You are doing your office work. You are gardening. You are

driving a car. Eh? There is no end to our actions or our activities of life. But Sri Krishna says, all activities are really coming from the Great Operator, who is God. So they try to think this: At the back of any action you do, you forget your little self.

Say, “All the power of these actions is coming from God, the Divine. So then, that your karma, every action of yours, whether it is a menial action or an intellectual action or any kind of activity becomes yoga, becomes a means of communion with God. That is called karma yoga. And Gita primarily, in every chapter, he mentions... points out to that, because as we know, the Gita was taught in the battlefield. [A] battle was going on and [in] the midst of that Sri Krishna taught Arjuna this Gita, because Arjuna was – though he was a great fighter, and he had great enthusiasm for the fight – the fight was, the fight of the righteousness against the selfishness, the greed.

It was really a spiritual enterprise, but... Arjuna believed all this, but when he came to the battlefield, just the beginning of the battle, all his resolutions were lost. He told Sri Krishna, “I won’t fight. This is a great evil thing we are going [to do.] On the other side we see our... our brothers, our grandfather the great Bishma, and other heroes that are related to us. What is the use of fighting these and killing these. I won’t fight.” He put his great bow and arrow, his great weapon on the ground and Sri Krishna had to scold him, severely “You! What is this? Just a moment, just a few minutes ago, you are quite resolute that you are... will fighting and I know that you will be winning. And why this cowardice, this [cowardice] has come?” So he began to scold him. That is the teaching of Bhagavad Gita. “The fighting is not a impediment to your spiritual life, fighting for the right and knowing that all action is coming from God. That is karma yoga.”

And Gita primarily, principally he is a book of teaching karma yoga to Arjuna by the teacher, Sri Krishna. Then [it] says, “Anye tv evam ajanantah srutvanyebhya upasate. Te pi catitaranty eva mrtyum sruti-parayanah.”<sup>4</sup> [Gita 13:26] “There are others also who cannot do karma yoga.” Keeping the mind that God is doing all is too high, because when you do any action, your mind is occupied in the action. You have no place to think of God, and jnana yoga is also difficult – to reason. The mind is tamasic; the mind is idle. [For] the mind to be brilliant and to reason out, “Why? What is this multiplicity?” it is very difficult. And bhakti yoga [is much easier]... “So others without the... not being able to follow these yogas, they hear about God from others” that God is great. God is this... God is that. And they adopt the easy means: sing the name of God. Sing his Divine Name. See? That is... that is easy. Everybody can say, “Oh Jesus. Oh Jesus. Oh Krishna. Oh Krishna.” [To] say that, that is easy. And practice love. Love is very natural with you. Every man loves something or somebody. Now turn this love God-wards. That is easy. That is called bhakti yoga.

So Sri Krishna says in this verse, “Te pi catitaranty eva” “They also, those people, who adopt this simple means” – apparently simple – singing the name of God and dancing. It was very usual with the Vaishnavas, two hands raised, dance in the Name of God. They used to do that from place to place, they would go, and there was an element of conversion. Those who were worshippers of Kali, in those, and in his time, Bengal was a land of the tantras. They were

worshippers of Shakti. So they would go to these Shaktis, “For one...once you sing the name of Krishna, say Krishna, O Krishna.” They said, “Why we shall say, Krishna? We are worshipping Kali.” So they will fight. [He chuckles.] But they would not mind and in the life, or biography of Sri Chaitanya we read that there was a very aggressive man. He hated the Vaishnavas singing aloud and at dead of night when they are enjoying a deep sleep and they would say, “Hare Krishna. Hare Krishna. Hare Krishna.” And they would sing and dance and... so they hated these... these Vaishnavas.

So once... Sri Chaitanya had a spiritual brother. His name was Nityananda. Sri Chaitanya, Nityananda... they are mentioned together in... So they came and [there was] this great ruffian like person, strong. They, they are also two brothers: Jagai and Madhai.<sup>5</sup> They came, “Oh you want to preach Krishna to us, I will show you.” And they threw a sharp piece of stone and he was bleeding. Then still, Sri Nityananda said, “Oh brother. Embrace me,” he said, “Sing the name of Krishna.” All these incidents we find in the life of Sri Chaitanya and they are very popular. People know; everybody knows that. But apart from this, Sri Chaitanya had another life, another spiritual life, another yoga. He was a karma yogi also. From to place to place, all over India he walks. Karma. [Probably “karma” – though the word is covered by a cough from the audience]. He meets his opponents, those who were... stand for other philosophies, reasoning and want to counter arguments against his Hari nam.

So Sri Chaitanya was like Ramakrishna. Ramakrishna was not an idle sage in the temple and thinking. He was a great worker. He had to come and travel in Calcutta, door to door and see where are the people – young people who are eager to... to realize God. So, as Sri Ramakrishna was also a karma yogi, great karma yogi, so Sri Chaitanya also was a karma yogi. He... but he was also as I already said, a jnana yogi. He was at times, even in the small place, a cottage [where] he used to live in Puri, he sometimes in the night there was no diksa, no singing. But he was in deep meditation. That was, see, he was a jnani. He was in deep meditation with God.

So in Sri Chaitanya’s life we have a harmony of the yogas. Essentially, of course, popularly, he was a bhakta. He was... he would sing the Divine Name and dance, and offer food, and after the offering eat food, eat that prasada. They would not call [it] food, they would call [it] prasada. And they would eat prasada to heart’s content. And they would take a little rest and again they would get up and sing and dance. People, his critics would say, “Why do you know why they are dancing? To digest their food.” [Audience laughs with him.] Anyway, Sri Chaitanya cannot be called one sided, just a bhakti yogi.

This morning, I was listening to the radio and the preacher was saying, “Christ. Jesus Christ, the only way...the only way. Oh Lord, Jesus Christ.” That is good. That is bhakti yoga, but that is dogmatism also. There are millions of others who are also worshipping God in other ways. Are they wrong? What is the use of converting... conversion? Not necessary! Let people go. Let every people go their own way. Let some people worship. We also worship, we are not Christians, but we see we worship... Every day, we worship Christ, remember Christ and respect Christ. We respect all religions and Sri Chaitanya

did that, though popularly it is not known. Popularly he is known as the Prophet of Love, and the Prophet of Kirtana – as the Prophet of the Divine Name. That is true, but on deeper study you can find another picture of Sri Chaitanya -- just like Sri Ramakrishna. You could not say Sri Ramakrishna was just a Kali worshipper. He was a worshipper of Kali. He was a worshipper of Krishna. And he was a great yogi. In meditation he goes to, stands before a shrine, and a few minutes he stands, he salutes and then he is in deep samadhi. He is in utter union with God. That is jnana yoga.

So just as [with Sri Chaitanya] there was harmony of yogas in the lives of Sri Ramakrishna and Holy Mother also. Holy Mother also, while she was intensely active, but at the same time her mind was always in God. And at times she was also in samadhi. Those close associates, the ladies who used to be with her, they have described this, how at dead of night, like Ramakrishna, she was stilled in meditation. See?

So here in this verse of the Gita it is said, if you cannot practice this jnana yoga or raja yoga or karma yoga take the simple way: bhakti yoga. Sing the name of God. Dance in the name of God and go to place to place and try to... they did not use the word convert, but it was a sort of conversion, you see? Take people, they are really worshipping false gods like Kali and all -- tantras. Take... tell them to take the name of Krishna, the holy name of Krishna. That we find. That is the popular, that is popular reading of Sri Chaitanya's life.

But [in] Sri Chaitanya's life, few can also see that Sri Chaitanya was not merely a bhakta, not merely a preacher of divine name, but he was a great yogi, jnani yogi, of what we call advaita, the communion with God, unity with God, unity with everything. Sri Chaitanya showed that in his life, but very few people could understand that. Few people... Mostly people in the name of Chaitanya, they think that he was a Prophet of Love. He came to preach Divine Love. That was all right, but don't be dogmatic.

Don't be dogmatic. That is why Sri Ramakrishna has emphasized Sri Chaitanya. Sri Ramakrishna was a great admirer of Sri Chaitanya. In... in... when in the Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna we read how he is singing the name of Sri Chaitanya, paying his adoration to him and he was a great admirer and you could say, he's singing song after song of Sri Chaitanya. But at the same time we should not forget that Sri Ramakrishna was also [free from dogmatic outlook]... Some Muslim comes and Sri Ramakrishna was equally respectful to the Muslim. And the Muslim is also transformed. The Muslim thinks, "What a man is this? We hate them. We hate the Hindus, but he does not hate us. He salutes our mosque." Same thing.

And if we can... if we can study deeply the life of Sri Chaitanya there we find that he was also a great yogi and a great jnana yogi. Then his life becomes really complete, and we... we become free from, we become free from any kind of dogmatic outlook. In India, Vaishnavas are always called dogmatic, and those who, who are profound thinkers, they admire his personality, his character, his purity of life, his great love for God. They are all things they admire. At the same they say, "His followers are dogmatic." They would not... In one place there was a temple where is one side on the altar there was Shiva and another side,

Krishna. And this man was a Vaishnava. He went to that temple and he looked this way to Krishna; he would not look at Shiva. [He laughs.] So dogmatic!

But the leader, Sri Chaitanya, Sri Chaitanya he publicly he did not preach [this]. Those who really understand deeply, [who] have studied his life, will find that he really had harmonized these different paths in his life. He was a bhakta. He was a jnani. He was a yogi and that is why he was so great and he was so sweet. Even now, after all five hundred years, in the villages of Bengal, in the villages of Assam and in other places, you find hundreds of followers of Sri Chaitanya. They are practicing his popular religion, namely singing the name of God. Singing the name of God, and offer worship, like this bhakti yoga, the different, the different practices of bhakti yoga they are doing. And Sri Chaitanya is encouraging them. You are fit for that. You are ready for that. You are not ready for other higher things. So people will come after five hundred years, when I come again as Ramakrishna. Then you will see that there are other paths and each path is important. And through each path you can progress. There is no need of quarrel[ing]. There is no need of dissension.

That was Sri Chaitanya's life and we shall have the... it is [the] full moon. Sri Chaitanya was born on a full moon day and in the evening we won't have any, any opportunity of speaking about Sri Chaitanya's life. We shall have simple worship and singing also, "Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna." They will sing "Hare Krishna" and other, some other songs. And there will be prasada and so I thought in the morning we shall, though the subject was announced earlier, and the subject evidently had no relation [to] the life of Sri Chaitanya, but I found, in thinking... A little thinking is necessary. Then I found, "Oh, there is a very profound relation of this subject." Sri Chaitanya was indeed a prophet of harmony, though people, normally people did not understand this. People said, "Oh, he is dancing and singing and all." And... But if you have time and if you have liking you can attend the evening puja. Sri Chaitanya's... we shall decorate a picture of Sri Chaitanya which was made from a [margosa]<sup>6</sup> tree, wood which Sri Chaitanya liked. His wife was a great admirer. She spent her whole life after Sri Chaitanya's death, she spent her whole life in a quiet place where there was this statue built from that tree. And...[Is a small part missing? Recording now goes directly to the closing chant.]

Om. Madhu vātā ṛtāyate madhu kṣaranti sindhavaḥ |  
 mādhvīrṇaḥ santvoṣadhīḥ ||  
 madhu naktamutoṣaso madhumat pāṛthivaṃ rajaḥ |  
 madhu dyaurastu naḥ pitā ||  
 madhumān no vanaspatirmadhumānastu sūryaḥ |  
 mādhvīrghāvo bhavantu naḥ || Om madhu, madhu, madhu.<sup>7</sup>  
 [Rg Veda 1:90, 6-7]

Sweet blow the winds and the very oceans give forth blessedness. May the herbs and plants bring us health and happiness. Sweet unto us be the nights and dawns. May every particle of mother earth be charged with blessing and may the heavens shower us with benediction. Sweet unto us be the noble forest

trees. Sweet unto us be the shining sun. Sweet unto us be all living creation.  
Om. Sweetness, Harmony, Peace.

1. Kena Upanisad [1:1] in The Principal Upanisads, ed. by S. Radhakrishnan. New York: Harper & Brothers, c. 1953, p. 580. And from Nine Principal Upanishads, text, transliteration, translation and notes from the teachings of Swami Satyananda Saraswati. Bihar School of Yoga: Munger, Bihar, India. C. 1975, 2004, p. 37. [Stayed with the transliteration from the Principal Upanisads, which has been used in prior transcriptions, though it didn't include the repetitions of words in two places -- words Swami recited and which appear in the Nine Principal Upanishads version. I added the repeated words.]

2. "Subhadra." in Wikipedia. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Subhadra> Accessed November 22, 2014.

3. Bhagavad Gita [13:25] Bhagavad Gita Trust, c. 1998-2009. -- <http://www.bhagavad-gita.org/Gita/verse-13-19.html> accessed November 24, 2014. [Number in hyperlink varies.]

4. Bhagavad Gita [13:26] Bhagavad Gita Trust, c. 1998-2009. <http://www.bhagavad-gita.org/Gita/verse-13-20.html> accessed November 24, 2014. [Number in hyperlink varies.]

5. Kaviraj, Krishna-das. Chaitanya's Life and Teachings: A Short Life of Chaitanya. 1922. <http://www.wisdomlib.org/hinduism/book/chaitanyas-life-and-teachings/d/doc62942.html> as published by The Wisdom Library, accessed November 25, 2014.

6. "Margosa Tree" in Gaudiya History. Vishnupriya Biography. <http://gaudiyahistory.com/vishnupriya-devi-biography/> accessed December 1, 2014.

7. Transliteration of Rg Veda verse is taken from <http://www.sacred-texts.com/hin/rvsan/rv01090.htm> accessed July 5, 2014.