

Chaitanya Charitamrita: The Biography Of The Golden Avatar

The Chaitanya Charitamrita is one of the three main biographies detailing the pastimes of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, the incarnation of Krishna as a devotee, and reviver of the Gaudiya Vaishnava culture. It was composed by Srila Krishna Das Kaviraja Goswami (1496), in Bengali language, but also includes some Sanskrit verses within the composition. Twining together with the pastimes of Mahaprabhu's life are deep philosophical teachings detailing the process of Bhakti Yoga, with focus given to the chanting of Krishna's names, mainly the Hare Krishna mahamantra. It is accepted as a holy scripture by practitioners of Gaudiya Vaishnavism.

In composing this great poetry-form literature, Srila Krishna Dasa Kaviraj Goswami also got many details from the diaries of Murari Gupta and Swarupa Damodara, both of whom were personal associates of Lord Chaitanya. The words chaitanya-charitamrta may be translated as "the character of the living force in immortality."

Sri Caitanya inaugurated a great social and spiritual movement in Bengal, Puri and in other places while He traveled South India after taking to the renounced order of life over five hundred years ago, which today the Hare Krishnas continue to spread throughout the world. While man in the West was sending shuttles outward in the physical universe, in India Sri Krishna Caitanya was diving inward, exhibiting unparalleled spiritual potency, and teaching the truths of about consciousness and transcendental reality. As a young boy he defeated renowned scholars and establishing his own school at the age of sixteen. Within his lifetime, Sri Caitanya transformed India in four respects: philosophically, by defeating the greatest philosophers of his day who were against vaishnava philosophy; socially, by opposing the blindly rigid caste system devoid of devotion; politically, by organizing India's first civil disobedience movement against repression by the Muslim government; and spiritually, by distributing to everyone nonsectarian pure love of God. Sri Caitanya-charitamrta presents Sri Caitanya as the Golden Avatar, the incarnation of Krishna in this age as a devotee.

Lord Caitanya instructed the mass of people in the philosophy of acintya-bhedabheda-tattva, which explains that everything is simultaneously one and different. Lord Caitanya taught this philosophy through the chanting of the holy name of the Lord. He taught that the holy name of the Lord is the sound incarnation of Krishna in this age and that since the Lord is the absolute truth, there is no difference between His name, form, qualities and pastimes. Thus by chanting the holy name of the Lord one can directly associate with the Supreme Lord through the Hare Krishna Mahamantra. As one practices this sound vibration, one progresses through three stages of spiritual development: the offensive stage, the clearing stage and the transcendental stage. In the offensive stage one may still want different types of material happiness and in the second stage one becomes purified of all material contamination. But when one is situated on the transcendental platform, one attains the most exalted position--the stage of pure love of God. Lord Caitanya taught that this is the highest perfection of life.

In the 1970's His Divine Grace Srila A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada translated and published a deluxe 17-volume English edition of the work through the Bhaktivedanta Book Trust with his own commentary which is in line with those of the previous spiritual masters of the Gaudiya parampara. This edition has been distributed in mass worldwide by ISKCON and is arguably the best-known and most influential English-language edition of Chaitanya Charitamrita today.

About the Author

Victor Epan is an expert consultant for Krishna art, religious gifts from India, and Hare Krishna books. You can find the best marketplace for Krishna art, religious gifts from India, and Hare Krishna books at these sites for [used Chaitanya Charitamrita](#), [Chaitanya Charitamrita](#), and [Caitanya Caritamrita books](#).

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