

Associates of Śrī Caitanya - Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu

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We need a constant guidance of the living guru and such guru must be self-realized

Only those who are cognizant of the true nature of Śrī Kṛṣṇa are fit to instruct others in the knowledge of Him. The divine paraphernalia are the gurus of all individual souls. In this sense, the six categories described previously are identical with the guru. It can be so because of the fact that on the plane of the Absolute, there is no separative difference. On that perfectly wholesome plane, there is distinction without difference. But, the guru's function must be considered as distinct from that of any of the other categories, although it is simultaneously non-different from those categories.

One who neglects to seek the special favour of the guru while trying to enter into the relation of discipleship with the spiritual guide will miss entry to the spiritual plane. Śrī Nityānanda is the primary, manifest constituent of Divinity. Śrī Nityānanda alone possesses the distinctive function of the guru, for in Śrī Nityānanda, that function is embodied. Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu is the servant of God. He serves Śrī Gaurasundara by the distinctive method of reverential service. He is identical with Śrī Balarāma of kṛṣṇa-līlā.

Śrī Balarāma is not just Kṛṣṇa's friend, but also His respected elder brother. It is an intimate relationship characterized by reserve from the senior and respectful deference from the junior. Individual souls are under the direction of Śrī Nityānanda. They receive their appointment of service to Śrī Gaurasundara, who is none other than Śrī Kṛṣṇa, from Śrī Nityānanda's hands. Śrī Nityānanda is not a jīva. He is the Divinity. He is the ultimate source of the jīva. The jīva is a potency of Śrī Nityānanda. No jīva can be the medium of another jīva's service to the Absolute. The Absolute alone may communicate service to Himself to the separable constituents of Himself. This is the real nature of the function of the guru.

But all jīvas are not liable to be eclipsed by the deluding potency. Those who are liable are, again, distinct from the eternally free jīvas. The eternally free jīvas are inseparable associates of Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu. They are integrated parts and parcels of Himself. They never fall into the clutches of māyā. When Śrī Nityānanda manifests His appearance on the mundane plane, His inseparable constituents also appear in His company.

They sometimes manifest their function on this lower plane in a visible form when Śrī Nityānanda sends them on errands. These personalities are Vaiṣṇavas whose subordination to Śrī Nityānanda is natural and ingrained in their nature. It is not necessary for such souls to undergo the process of enlightenment meant to restore the jīva to the spiritual plane. Unless the conditioned soul bears this fact in mind, he may be tempted to undervalue the constant guidance of the guru and plea hypocritically that he is following in the footsteps of the eternally free, pure devotees on his own. Those, therefore, who suppose that deliverance from

the bondage of this world should be practicable without the constant guidance of the spiritual preceptor, confound the conditioned state with the free.

The guidance of the guru is not curtailment of one's spiritual freedom. Those who are eternally free also follow his guidance by the spontaneous, undeviating impulse of their perfectly pure nature. The guidance of the guru is the only divine guidance. Only atheists who are, by their own choice, opposed to serving Godhead can be constituent opponents of the obligation to serve the guru in the same unconditional way as one should be prepared to serve Godhead Himself. There is no difference between the two functions. If the claim of one is denied, it necessarily involves the denial of the claim of the other. Nityānanda and His companions form one of the five groups of the associates of Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya, whose distinctive function is that of the guru.

But Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu does not directly instruct in confidential service to Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Śrīmatī Rādhikā is the guru of the inner circle of the servants of Kṛṣṇa. Śrīmatī Rādhikā, however, only accepts the offer of service from souls who are specially favoured by Śrī Nityānanda and are deemed by Him to be fit to serve Her. There is, therefore, a most intimate relationship between the function of Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu and that of Śrīmatī Rādhikā, which is at once supplementary and inclusive of the former.

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