

Chaitanya Mahaprabhau

1486 – 1534

Founder of Gaudiya (Bengali) Vaishnavism

Contemporary of Vallabhacharya



Life History (1)

- Birth: Mayapur in the town of Nadia (Bengal) on Feb 18, 1486 on lunar eclipse day under a Neem tree.
- Considered as dual incarnation of Radha and Krishna
- Names: - Visvambhara – given by his grandfather
 - Nimai – as he was born under a Neem tree
 - Gaur - Due to light skin complexion
 - Krisna Chaitanya – After Sannyasa at the age of 24
- Family: Father - Jagannatha Misra (passed away when he was 10)
 - Mother - Saci-devi
- Special event around Birth: Lunar eclipse day, people bathing in Ganga ji and chanting Bhagvan's names
- As an infant – used to stopping crying when people chanted “Haribol”. Ate clay. Miracles in infancy (directed thieves to bring him back to his own house).
- Education: started at the age of 5 and completed by the age of 10. Best scholar of 'nyaya' philosophy and Sanskrit grammar
- Married to [Laksmidevi](#), the daughter of Vallabhacharya at the age of 14-15. She died in the early years due to a snakebite.
- Earned good sums of money in his early years in East Bengal with his commanding knowledge and periodically taught Vaishnavism
- 2nd marriage to Vishnupriya (daughter of Rajapandit Sanatan Misra)

Life History (2)

- Defeated renowned Pandit Kesav Misra (from Kashmir) in debate in Nadia
- Spiritual initiation in Gaya at the age of 16-17 from [Isvara Puri](#), a Vaishnava 'sannyasi' and a disciple of the renowned [Madhavendra Puri](#). Became religious preacher of vaishnavism.
- Opened a nocturnal school of 'kirtana' in the compound of Srivasa Pandita with his sincere followers. There he preached, sang, and danced to express religious feelings. [Nityananda Prabhu](#) and many other vaishnav preachers joined him.
- Preached Bhakti and singing house to house in the town of Nadia.
- Converted Kazi who was opposed to him to join his Sankirtan group. Brahmans opposed him strongly for allowing converting the Kazi.
- Became Sannaysi at the age of 24, at the guidance of Keshav Bharti in Katwa
- Wanted to go to Vrindavan but at the request of mother he agreed to stay in Puri.
- Resided with great advaita scholar and Pandit Sarvabhauma and later on explained to him his interpretation of Brahm Sutras in a very simple way. Pandit Sarvabhauma was so impressed that he became his follower. Also hundreds of Pandits became his follower.
- Visited south India with his follower Krsnadasa Brahmana. Gained many followers.
- Went to prayag and Varanasi and converted many muslims to be Krishna Bhakta. These were known as Patahan Bhaktas
- Periodically showed supernatural powers

Life History (3)

- His first mission was to write theological works explaining scientifically pure 'bhakti' and 'prema'. The second mission was to revive the places where Krsnacandra had in the end of 'Dvapara-yuga' exhibited His spiritual 'lila' (pastimes). His disciple Rupa Goswami went to Vrindavan and he went to Varanasi to accomplish the mission. Converted followers of advaita to pure Bhakti.
- After this Mahaprabhu went to Puri again through the jungles with His disciple Balabhadra.
- From the age of 31- 48 he lived in Puri in the house of Kasi Misra. Disappeared at the age of 48 during Sankirtan in the temple of Totagopinatha.
- Slept very little and took no care of Himself
- His sentiments carried Him far and wide in the firmament of spirituality every day and night.
- Worshipped, communicated with His missionaries at Vrindavana, and conversed with those religious men who newly came to visit Him.
- Sang and danced in devotion to Krishna
- All who came to Him believed in Him as the all-beautiful God appearing in this world for the benefit of mankind.
- Loved His mother all along and sent her '[Mahaprasada](#)' periodically.
- Most amiable in nature, humility was personified in Him. His sweet appearance gave cheer to all who came in contact with Him.

Philosophy/Teachings

• Summarized as ten roots or maxims *dasa mula*:

Vedic scriptures such as Bhagavad-gita and Srimad Bhagavatam are the highest form of evidence by whose authority the following nine truths are established:

- Krishna is the supreme absolute truth.
- Krishna is endowed with all energies summarized as internal (transcendental), marginal (living entities), and external (material nature).
- Krishna is an ocean of rasa or experiential relational exchange.
- The living entities are Krishna's separated parts and parcels.
- Some living entities are in a conditioned state under the influence of the material energy.
- Other living entities are in a state of transcendence free from material conditioning.
- The living entities and the material nature are Achintya Bheda Abheda inconceivably one with and different from Krishna.
- Bhakti or pure devotion for Krishna is the nature of living entity and the only means of relief from material conditioning.
- Prema or love for Krishna is the highest goal.

Teachings

- Krishna and Radha are inseparable.
- Express devotion through singing and dancing
- Famous Mantra



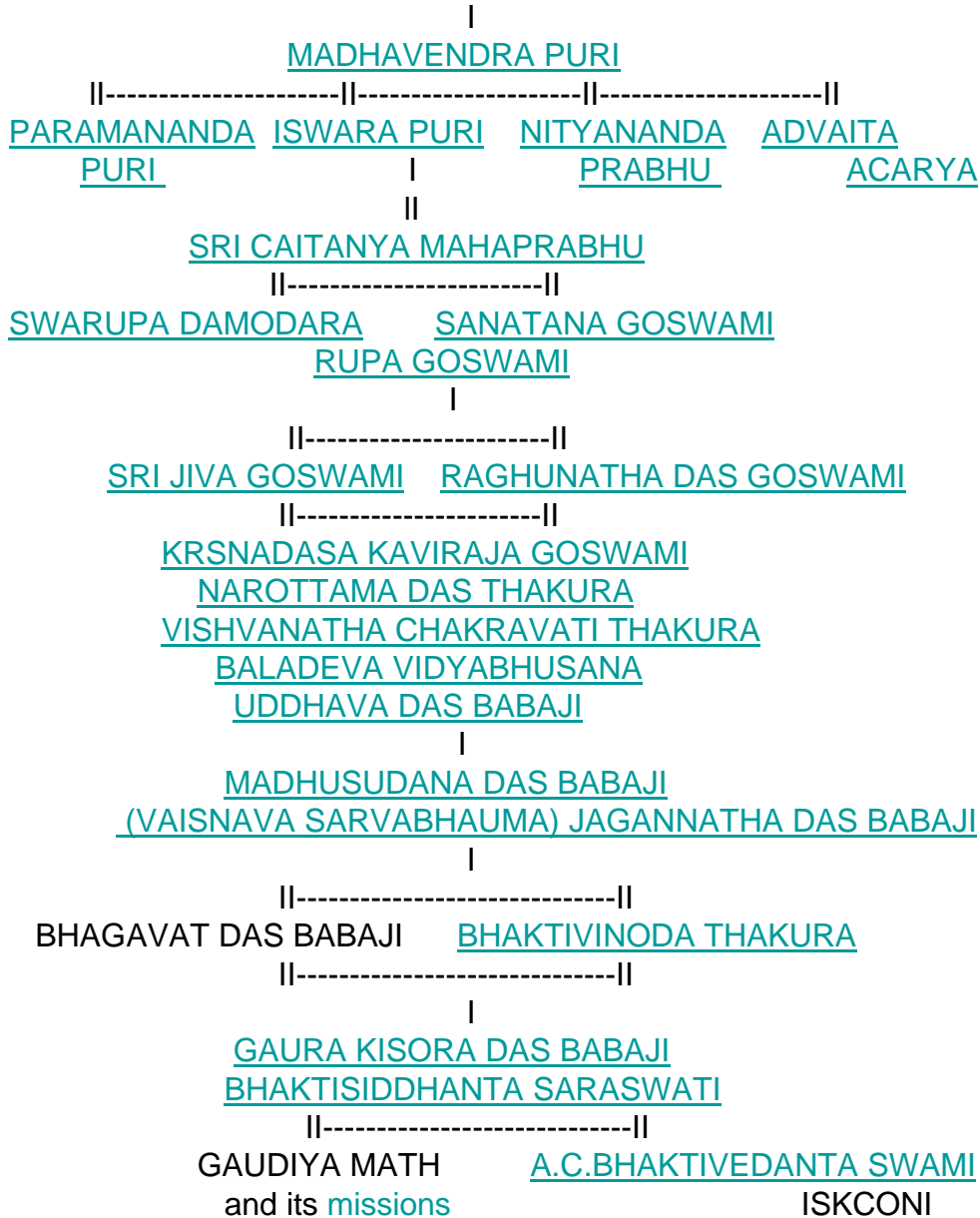
- His influence still extends through various groups including the ISKCON (Hare Krishna) movement.

Lineage of Sampraday

- Origin from Madhavacharya Sampraday

- LAXMIPATI TIRTHA

(the unsung hero Vishu dasa - Vishnu Puri)



Disciples

- [Svarupa Damodara](#) - from Varanasi, accepted service as His secretary.
 - Raya Ramananda was His second mate. Both he and Svarupa would sing while Mahaprabhu expressed His sentiments on a certain point of worship.
 - [Paramananda Puri](#) was His minister in matters of religion.
 - Appointed [Nityananda](#) Prabhu (Nitai) as the missionary in charge of Bengal. Inseparable
 - Dispatched six disciples (Goswamis, including Junior Haridas) to Vrindavana to preach love
 - [Raghunatha dasa Goswami](#) – example of proper instructions in life
 - [Haridasa](#) (senior)- example of how Mahaprabhu loved spiritual men and how defied caste distinction in spiritual brotherhood.
- Among them are: Sri Nityananda Prabhu, Jahnvi devi, Sri Advaita Prabhu, Svarup Damodar, Ray Ramananda, as well as Gadadhar Pandit in Navadvip; Vakreshvar Pandit and Prabhodananda Sarasvati in South India and Vrindavan; the six Goswamis in Vrindavan; Syamananda Pandit in Orissa; Narottam das Thakur in Manipur and many other places; Srinivas Acharya in Bihar and other areas.

References for further Reading

- <http://www.salagram.net/parishad43.htm#life%20and%20precepts%20BVT>
- <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chaitanya>