

IN DEFENSE OF THE ADVAITA-VAMŚA

REFUTATIONS OF VARIOUS CHALLENGES OF THE SIDDHĀNTA AND SĀDHANA OF THE ADVAITA PARIVĀRA

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Advaita-parivāra does not believe in Caitanya Mahāprabhu?

In Bengal, some say about our Advaita parivāra - ওরা গৌরকে মানে না *orā gaur ke māne nā*. The Bengali root-verb *mānā* means to honour, respect, believe in, obey, or accept the authority of. In other words, they claim the Advaita parivāra does not honour, respect, believe in, obey, or accept Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. However, none of these translations of the Bengali accusation applies to us. Advaita Ācārya is known as *gour ānā thākur*, the Lord who invoked the advent of Gaurāṅga Mahāprabhu. If Gour is not Bhagavān then

what would be special about invoking Him? What would have been the need? Advaita Ācārya would then be an ordinary guy too. Why would we then worship the 13th direct descendant of an ordinary guy? How can Gour not be Bhagavān without Advaita Prabhu losing His divinity with it? Why are we fasting on Gaur Pūrṇimā if we don't believe in or respect Gaur? It is on our calendar. We start our day at 5 a.m by singing *maṅgala āroti gaura kiśora*, the traditional *maṅgala āraṭi*-song of Mahāprabhu, before we do Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa *maṅgala āraṭi*. Before a lecture is given we sing the song ‘*jaya jaya nityānandādvaita gaurāṅga*’, also according to Vaiṣṇava tradition, and in the evening we sing the traditional *sandhyā-āraṭi*-song about Mahāprabhu, ‘*bhālī goracānder āroti boni*’ – without Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu’s mercy, Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa cannot be attained. These songs are mentioned in our *paddhati*, or manual of daily worship, as shown below –



Furthermore the accusation is made against Sādhu Bābā personally that he would not accept *mahā-prasād* of Gaurāṅga Mahāprabhu. That cannot be true because Gaura is Kṛṣṇa and why would he not accept Kṛṣṇa-*prasāda*?

Can Advaita Prabhu bestow *mādhurya-rasa*?

From a web-forum -

Bhakta 1 - It is said that Nityānanda (Balarāma) Prabhu's *parivāra* gives *gopī-prema* rather than *sakhya prema* because of Jāhnavā devī's (Ananga Mañjarī) influence. Before she began initiating it was a *sakhyā*-line. What is the position of Śrī Advaita's (Mahaviṣṇu/Śiva) line? How does it give *gopī-prema*?

Advaitadas - All *pārṣadas* (associates) of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu have a *svarūpa* in *madhura rasa*. Advaita Prabhu is Viśākhā and Rati Mañjarī. All lines descending from Mahāprabhu's parshadas can bestow *gopī-bhāva* and *gopī-prema*. Though they may be famous as personalities in Vraja outside of *gopī-bhāva* (f.i. Nityānanda is Balarāma but also Ananga Mañjarī), they all have a place in *gopī-bhāva* as well. When Rūpa Gosvami had completed his recitation of his dramas to Mahāprabhu and His associates at Siddha Bokul in Puri, Mahāprabhu asked for the blessings of Nityānanda and Advaita Prabhu upon him, which They bestowed - *advaita nityānandādi sab bhaktagan; kṛpā kori rūpe sobe koilā ālingan* (CC Antya 1.207). That would have been pointless and powerless unless they themselves had the power of *gopī-bhāva* within them. Śrī Murāri Gupta eulogises Advaita Prabhu in the introduction of his Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Carita Mahā-kāvya (1.20):

śrī-yuktādvaita-varyaḥ parama-rasa-kalācārya īso vireje

“The most glorious Advaita is the Supreme Lord and the greatest teacher of the highest *rasa*, the divine amorous flavour.”

Bhakta 1- Where is the specific position of Śrī Advaita in Vraja-prema mentioned? I thought Rāmānanda was Viśākhā and Raghunātha dāsa was Rati Mañjarī. There seems to be differing opinions on who these *pārṣadas* of Gaurāṅga are in Vraja.

Advaitadas - Raghunātha dās Gosvāmī is the disciple of Yadunandanācārya, who was in turn the disciple of Advaita Prabhu. He offers homage to Yadunandana Prabhu in Vilāpa Kusumāñjali verse 4, and naturally in the sequence of respect the guru's guru comes before that. So in verse 3 he prays to Rati Mañjarī, that is naturally the Guru of his Guru, because the prayer comes in a preceding verse. Furthermore, if Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī prays to Rati Mañjarī, how can he himself be Rati Mañjarī? Who offers prayers to him/herself? About Viśākhā - in verse 99 of Vilāpa Kusumāñjali Raghunath dās Gosvāmī prays to Viśākhā, note that there is no prayer there to Lalitā. They are not equal to him, because Viśākhā is Advaita Prabhu, his *param guru*. Also, in chapter 4 of ‘Advaita-prakāśa’ Śrī Īśāna Nāgara describes how Advaita Prabhu worshipped a picture of Madana-gopāla which was drawn by Viśākhā (which was He Himself) in the previous *yuga*.

Viśākhā's *kuñja* at Rādhākuṇḍa is on the north-eastern corner, which is called *isāna*, after the presiding deity of that direction, Lord Śiva, who is again Advaita Prabhu.¹

Bhakta 2 - Who then is Raghunāth dās Goswāmī in Braj-līlā?

Advaita das: Tulasī Mañjarī. This is clear from the purports to Vilāpa Kusumāñjali by Śrīla Ānanda Gopāl Gosvāmī, which are confirmed by Śrī Ananta dās Bābājī, the *mahanta* of Śrī Rādhākuṇḍa.

Bhakta 2 - Isn't Tulasī Mañjarī another name for Rati? In any case, where did the concept of Raghunāth Dās Goswāmī being Rati Mañjarī originate?

Advaitadas - Some Vaiṣṇavas say that Tulasī and Rati are the same. Still that would not explain the prayer to Rati Mañjarī in verse 3. Who prays to him/herself? There are many different opinions about the *Mañjarī svarūpas* of the 6 Gosvāmīs, in different *paddhatīs* and *dīpikās*. Tulasī and Rūpa are also a tight team in Govinda Līlāmṛta. Fits - Rūpa Gosvāmī and Raghunāth dās Gosvāmī were similarly a tight team in the male *svārūpas*.

Bhakta 3 - Some opine that the third verse of Vilāpa Kusumāñjali are the words of Rūpa Mañjarī to Rati Mañjarī, a sort of blessing. Perhaps Dās Gosvāmī wishes to open his *siddha-āveśa* prayers remembering the kind words of his (her) dear *sakhī*. There may be differing opinions on *svārūpas*, but we must understand that in the realm of Vraja, multiple alternatives may be simultaneously true.

Advaitadas - But then there is, outside the context and sequence of Vilāpa Kusumāñjali's *maṅgalācaranam*, another verse in Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī's Stavāvalī (Prārthanāmṛta verse 1) - *śrī rūpa rati mañjaryor aṅghri sevaika ḡṛdhnuna* - "Eager to accept the foot service of Śrī Rūpa and Rati Mañjarī....."

Bhakta 3 - I suppose Rati Mañjarī is not an exclusive name, is it?

Advaitadas - Would Dās Gosvāmī bother to offer a separate prayer to another Rati Mañjarī than his most beloved and important one, though?

¹ The last 2 points about Viśākhā were added on March 11, 2018

January 28-29, 2004



Are Advaita Prabhu's descendants non-different from Him?

May 29 2004, from a web-forum -

Bhakta: "Most of the *parivāras* are not direct seminal descendants of their supposed founders, and even if they were, *ātma vai jāyate putraḥ* does not mean that a son is automatically as worshipable as an exalted father. For instance in Caitanya Caritāmṛta, Kṛṣṇadās Kavirāja Goswami rejected several sons of Advaita Ācārya as "useless."

Advaitadas:

*sajjana guṇam icchanti doṣam icchanti durjanah
makṣika braṇam icchanti madhu cecchanti ṣaṭ-padah*

"The saints look for virtues and glories while the wicked look for faults.
The flies look for sores and the bees look for honey."

People with a negative attitude look for the bad apples, people with a positive attitude look for the good ones. You stress the three bad sons - why not stress the three good sons, and what about all the great *ācāryas* spawned by the families of Advaita and Nityānanda?

Bhakta: "If *ātma vai jāyate putraḥ* were universally applicable, then all men would be as worshipable as Lord Brahmā."

Advaitadas: We are very very very distant descendants of Lord Brahmā. In Advaita Prakāśa (5.16), however, Mādhavendra Puripāda bestowed the following blessing upon Śrī Advaita Prabhu: *aparādha na loibo puruṣa caturdaśa* – 'I will not

take the offences to Madan Gopāl committed by the first fourteen generations of Your dynasty.” So there is a limit to non-difference from the arch father. Furthermore, the verse *ātmā vai jāyate putra* does not come from some *smṛti* scripture, it comes from Caitanya Caritāmṛta (Madhya 12.56) and is spoken by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu Himself. As A.C. Bhaktivedānta Swāmi presents it:

“*ātmā vai jāyate putraḥ*”—*ei śāstra-vāṇī*
putrera milane yena milibe āpani

SYNONYMS

ātmā vai jāyate putraḥ—his self appears as the son; *ei*—this; *śāstra-vāṇī*—the indication of revealed scriptures; *putrera milane*—by meeting the son; *yena*—as if; *milibe*—he will meet; *āpani*—personally.

TRANSLATION

“It is indicated in the revealed scriptures that the son represents the father; therefore the son’s meeting with Me would be just as good as the King’s meeting with Me.”

PURPORT

In Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (10.78.36) it is said, *ātmā vai putra utpanna iti vedānuśāsanam*. The Vedas enjoin that one is born as his own son. The son is nondifferent from the father, and this is admitted in every revealed scripture. In Christian theology it is believed that Christ, the son of God, is also God, or in other words that they are identical. <End of Bhaktivedānta purport >

Advaitadas: Śrīmad-Bhāgavata 10.78.36 describes how, after Balarāma killed Romaharsana Suta with the tip of a Kuśa-grass, he installed his son on the *vyāsāsana* instead. *ātmā vai putra utpanna iti vedānuśāsanam* – The Vedas declare that one’s own self is reborn as the son. Therefore, in the place of Romaharsana, his son will expound the Purānas to you.” Furthermore, in the Bṛhad Āraṇyaka Upaniṣad (quoted by Viśvanātha Cakravartī in his comment on the above Bhāgavata-verse) it is said:

aṅgād aṅgāt sambhavasi hṛdayād abhijāyate
ātma vai putra nāmāsi sañjīva śaradaḥ śatam

“Your limbs come from my limbs. You are born from my heart. You are me because you are named my son. Live for 100 autumns.”

On April 17, 2008 a more submissive *bhakta* asked me: “Advaita dasji, is there any Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava scripture like Caitanya Caritāmṛta, Caitanya Bhāgavata etc. which supports Vaiṣṇava Paramparās like Nityānanda and Advaita? Kindly explain.....”

Advaitadas: No this is not in Caitanya Caritāmṛta or Caitanya Bhāgavata, because these books are solely about Mahāprabhu and do not diverge into the separate lives of Advaita and Nityānanda. However, in his commentary on Bṛhad Bhāgavatāmṛta, verse, 1.3.46, Sanātan Gosvāmī says - *vardhayantaś ca sad vaiṣṇava-santater mahā-vaibhava-vistāraṇāc ca* “The Vaikuṅṭha-residents also preach the great prowess of *bhakti* by increasing the Sacred families (*sad vaiṣṇava-santateḥ - santati* means 'line of descent')”, a clear reference to divine families like the Advaita Vaiṣṇava.



Does Advaita Prabhu have a beard?

Bhakta: “I see you depict Advaita Prabhu as a young man, but everywhere I see Him depicted as an old man, with a beard.”

Advaita Dās: “ Advaita Prabhu is God, Mahāviṣṇu and Sadāśiva combined. No scripture has described God as an old man. Old age is a sign of decay, and in God there can be no decay. In relation to the Lord’s appearance the scriptures only describe the first three stages of life – *kumāra* (0-5 years of age), *paugāṇḍa* (5-10 years of age) and *kiśora* (10-15 years of age), not *yauvana* (adulthood), *prauḍha* (middle age) and *vṛddha* (old age). It is described in Śrīmad Bhāgavata (10.55.26-29) that in Dvārakā Kṛṣṇa still appeared so young that His wives mistook His son Pradyumna for Him. *nava yauvanam ca* (Brahma Saṁhitā).”

Bhakta: “But in Caitanya Bhāgavata it is written:

In defense of the Advaita Vaiṣṇava

*tarje garje ācārya dāḍite diyā hāta;
bhrū-kuṭi koriyā nāce śāntipura nātha*

“Advaita Ācārya was overwhelmed with a surge of ecstasy and He began to dance, running His fingers through His flowing beard and raising His voice as loud as thunder. His eyebrows were drawn together in a frown.” (Caitanya Bhāgavata Madhya 16.99)

Advaita Dās: “The Bengali dictionary says that the word *dāḍi* means both ‘beard’ and ‘chin’. So this verse says that Advaita Prabhu held His chin during the dance. The commentators on Caitanya Bhāgavata confirm this. Other than this verse no text ever suggests that Advaita Prabhu had a beard.”

November 23, 2004



In defense of Advaita Prakāśa

(Advaita Prakāśa is a biographical book on Advaita Prabhu written by Īśān Nāgara)

Advaita Prakāśa - Kṛṣṇa Talk No. 37

‘Advaita Prakāśa’ reviewed by Swami B. V. Giri

(Disciple of Swāmi B. G. Narasingha)

Devotee: A book called Advaita Prakāśa was recently translated from Bengali into English. I was very inspired by it and it seemed to be bona-fide, but I recently heard that it is an unauthorized literature. Can you explain?

Answer (By Swami B.V. Giri): Advaita Prakāśa is a hagiography of Śrī Advaita Ācārya Prabhu which was written around 1560 and it **is claimed** that its author was Śrī Īśāna Nāgara, the servant of Advaita Ācārya.

Advaitadas: It IS written by Īśāna Nāgara – every single chapter is signed by him and he also speaks of his own role within the narration. Īśāna Nāgara was a direct disciple of Śrī Advaita Prabhu. He was born in 1493 and initially lived in Nava Grāma in the Lāuḍa-county of Śrī Haṭṭa district. When he was 5 years old his widowed mother took him along and took shelter of Advaita Prabhu's house. Advaita Prabhu educated him. Thus he is a reliable eye-witness to the pastimes of Śrī Advaita Ācārya. Apart from his personal testimonies, Advaita Prakāśa is also based on what Īśāna Nāgara heard from Advaita Prabhu's second son Kṛṣṇa Miśra Gosvāmī, Bhāgavata Ācārya Śyāma dāsa and Padmanābha Cakravartī, the father of Śrī Lokanātha Gosvāmī.

“However, considering the historical and philosophical inaccuracies in the book it cannot be considered bona-fide. **The pervading mood throughout the book is that Advaita Ācārya holds a much higher ontological position than that of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu since it was He that invoked the Lord and later requested the Lord to leave. In other words, in Advaita Prakāśa Mahāprabhu is treated simply as a functionary Deity, to be summoned and dismissed at will.**”

Advaitadas: *Nāṛār hunkāre more kore avatāra* (‘The roars of Advaita made Me descend’, Caitanya Bhāgavata) – Who said that? Īśāna Nāgara or Mahāprabhu Himself?? Who wrote the *prahelī* (riddle) to order Mahāprabhu to leave the manifest world? Advaita Prabhu or Īśāna Nāgara? Who is Yogamāyā in Gaura līlā? It is Sītā-devī, according to Gaur-Ganoddeśa dīpikā. Is not Yogamāyā directing Kṛṣṇa’s *līlā*? And who is Gaura other than Kṛṣṇa? After hearing Advaita Prabhu’s riddle from Jagadānanda Paṇḍit....

*tarajā śuni mahāprabhu iṣat hāsiyā; tāra yei ājñā – boli mauna dharilā
jāniyā svarūpa gosāi prabhure puchilo; ei tarjāra artha bujhite nārilo
prabhu kohen – ācārya hoy pūjak prabho; āgama śāstrera vidhi vidhāne kuśol
upāsana lāgi dever koren āvāhan; pūjā lāgi koto kāla koren nirodhan
pūjā nirvāhana hoile pāche koren visarjan; tarjār nā jāni artha kibā tār man*

(Caitanya Caritāmṛta Antya 19:23-27)

Hearing the riddle Mahāprabhu smiled slightly, said: **“Whatever He orders”** and fell silent. Svarūpa Dāmodara then asked the Lord: “I cannot understand the meaning of this riddle (please explain).” The Lord replied: “Advaita Ācārya is a powerful worshiper who knows the rules of Vedic ritual very well. **He invokes a certain deity and then, after the worship, sends Him away again.** I don’t know what He means with the riddle or what is on His mind.” **“The deity” of course refers to Śrīman Mahāprabhu Himself. Mahāprabhu literally confirms here that He was summoned and dismissed by Śrī Advaita Prabhu’s sweet will.**

“It is also implied in Advaita Prakāśa that the main branch of the Caitanya-tree is the seminal line of Advaita Ācārya, advaita-vamsa.”

Advaitadas: The above-proven authority of Īśāna Nāgara establishes this.

There are many defects in the book Advaita Prakāśa. For example, in chapter twelve it is stated that the son of Advaita Prabhu, Śrī Acyutananda, attended the tol (Sanskrit school) of Nimai Pandita. However, this statement is not in accordance with the authorized biographies of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, namely the Caitanya-bhagavata by Śrīla Vrndavana Dasa Thakura or the Caitanya-Caritāmṛta by Śrīla Kṛṣṇadasa Kaviraja Gosvami. This subject is elaborated upon by His Divine Grace Śrīla A.C. Bhaktivedanta Svami Prabhupada in his purport to Caitanya-Caritāmṛta, *Adi-līlā*, 12.17 as follows:

"Advaita Prabhu married in the beginning of the fifteenth century Sakabda (late fifteenth century A.D.). When Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu wanted to visit the village of Ramakeli while going from Jagannatha Puri to Vrndavana during the Sakabda years 1433 and 1434 (A.D. 1511 and 1512), Acyutananda was only five years old. The Caitanya-bhagavata, *Antya-khanda*, Fourth Chapter, describes Acyutananda at that time as *panca-varsa vayasa madhura digambara*, "only five years old and standing naked." Therefore it is to be concluded that Acyutananda was born sometime in the year 1428 (A.D. 1506). Before the birth of Acyutananda, Advaita Prabhu's wife, Sitadevi, came to see Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu at His birth. Thus it is not impossible that she had the other three sons by Advaita within the twenty-one years between 1407 and 1428 Sakabda (A.D. 1486 and 1507).

Advaitadās: In chapter 11 of Advaita Prakāśa, Acyutānanda was listed as the first child of Sītā and Advaita. Concerning the controversy on Acyutānanda's age—

Although some doubt the accuracy of Īśāna Nāgara's Advaita Prakāśa in the birth years of Advaita Prabhu's sons, thinking they must have been born 12-13 years later, quoting this story in Śrī Caitanya Bhāgavata (and Caitanya Caritāmṛta Ādi 12,17), that Acyutānanda was just 5 years old when Mahāprabhu took *sannyāsa*, earlier in Caitanya Bhāgavata (Madhya 6) it is described that when Sītānātha revealed that Mahāprabhu is actually the Supreme Lord, Acyuta was also weeping of ecstasy. If he had really been 5 years old after Mahāprabhu had taken *sannyāsa*, he would have been just a baby of 0-1 year old at this stage, unable even to walk or talk. Advaita Prakāśa not only clearly states the year (1493, 7 years younger than Mahāprabhu), but even the precise *tithi* or lunar date of his birth. Such an exact date could not just have been concocted by an eye-witness to Advaita Prabhu's pastimes like Īśāna Nāgara? In chapter 12 of Advaita Prakāśa Śrī Acyutānanda is also said to have studied in Mahāprabhu's school. If Acyuta was really born in 1505, as some suggest, it would have taken Sītā and Advaita 20 years to conceive him (whereas Their other five sons were conceived at regular and short intervals), since They were married before Mahāprabhu appeared in the world in 1486. Acyuta would have been only 10 years old when he mystically travelled to be with Mahāprabhu in Vraja and in Kāśī, a pastime which is elaborately described in the sixteenth chapter of 'Advaita Prakāśa'. Therefore Caitanya Bhāgavata's statement that Acyutānanda was a 5-year old boy, dusty and naked, after Mahāprabhu took *sannyāsa*, must be a mere sign of love, as a loving parent treats even his grown up children as if they were still breast-milk-drinking toddlers.

In an unauthorized book of the name Sitadvaita-carita, published in Bengali in the **unauthorized** (By whom is it unauthorised? By Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī?) newspaper Nityānanda-dayini in 1792 Sakabda (A.D. 1870), it is mentioned that Acyutananda was a class friend of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. According to Caitanya-bhagavata, this statement is not at all valid. When Caitanya Mahāprabhu accepted the renounced order of sannyasa in the year 1431 Sakabda (A.D. 1509), He came to the house of Advaita Prabhu at Santipura. At that time, as stated in the Caitanya-bhagavata, Antya-khanda, Chapter One, Acyutānanda was only three years old. The Caitanya-bhagavata further states that the naked child, the son of Advaita Prabhu, immediately came and fell down at the lotus feet of Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu."

So, if indeed Śrī Īśāna Nāgara was the actual author of Advaita Prakāśa, it is most illogical that as Advaita's family servant that the age of his master's son would not be

known to him or that he would make such a mistake as to think that Acyutananda could have been Mahāprabhu's student when in fact Acyutananda had not yet been born.

Advaitadas: The birth-years and -tithis of all the 6 sons of Advaita are mentioned in Advaita Prakāśa.

Another glaring defect in Advaita Prakāśa is found in chapter seventeen when Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu meets Prabodhananda Sarasvati. According to Advaita Prakāśa, Prabodhananda was a Mayavadi sannyāsī living in Kasi. This is a common opinion expressed by many misinformed scholars and by the Sahajiya section who confuse Śrīla Prabodhananda Sarasvati, a Vaiṣṇava tridandi-sannyāsī, with Prakāśananda Sarasvati, an ekadandi-sannyāsī of the Shankar school of Vedanta. In his commentary to the Caitanya-bhagavata, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvati Thakura dismisses this opinion as follows:

prakāśānanda nāmaka eka jana kaivalyādvaitavādi adhyāpaka-yati vedera vyākhyā-kāle āmāra aprākṛta nitya aṅga-samūhake vikhaṇḍita kare. ei prakāśānandake keha keha anabhijñāta-vaśe kāveri-pravāsi vyenkaṭa bhāṭṭera anuja prabodhānandera sahita sama jñāna kare. bhaktamālā nāmaka sahaiyā-granthābhyaṅgare ei prakāra bhrama-doṣa praveśa karāya, adhunātana lekhaka-gaṇera madhye-o sei bhrama-doṣa nyūnādhika praveśa kariyāche.

"Prakāśananda was the name of a scholastic sannyāsī of the Kevala-advaita school of philosophy and through his explanations on the Vedas, he would cut the Lord's transcendental body into pieces. Some ignorant people consider that this Prakāśānanda is the same person as Vyenkata Bhatta's younger brother, Prabodhananda, who lived on the banks of the River Kaveri. This mistaken belief is found in the **Sahajiya book Bhaktamala**, and even in the works of many modern day scholars." (Caitanya-bhagavata, purport to Madhya-khanda, 3.37).

Advaitadas: This is an aparādha to Nābhā dāsī, the author of Bhaktamāl, who is respected by all 4 sampradāyas! If Lāl Dās, who made a Bengali edition of Bhaktamāl, is referred to, he should have specified this. Neither of the two are sahaiyās, however. Lāl Dās is a fifth generation descendant of Śrīnivāsācārya, also known as Kṛṣṇadās. Here are two nāmāparādhas - satam nindām, the first offence to the chanting of the holy name, to critique the saint, and śruti śāstra ninda, to critique the scriptures, which this entire article by Swami Giri is by the way.

That Śrīla Prabodhananda Sarasvati was a tridandi-sannyāsī originally in the line of the sampradaya of Ācārya Ramanuja is a topic that may warrant a separate article. However, it is sufficient to say here that those in the line of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvati Thakura do not entertain the idea that Prabodhānanda was formerly the Mayavadi sannyāsī known as Prakāśananda, as stated in Advaita Prakāśa.

Advaitadas: This may be OK for those who have implicit faith in Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī only.

“Furthermore, in chapter ten of Advaita Prakāśa, we find an incident wherein baby Nimai refuses Saci-devi's breast milk because she has not taken diksa from Śrī Advaita Ācārya. In order to please her child she then takes initiation from Advaita. However, **nowhere in the bona-fide biographies of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu do we find any mention of Śaci-mata taking initiation from Advaita Prabhu.**

Advaitadās: Where else should this initiation have to be mentioned? Who was Śaci-mātā's Guru then, if not Sītānātha?

This is merely a fabrication created by the **seminal gosvamis** of the Advaita-vamsa to show the importance of Advaita Ācārya over that of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

Advaitadas: This book was not written by a ‘seminal’ Gosvāmī of the Advaita Vaṁśa but by Īśāna Nāgara, the disciple of Advaita Prabhu. Mahāprabhu was reluctant to accept obeisances from Sītānāth. This is just *laukik līlā* or *nara līlā*, the Lord's human-like pastimes.

“In chapter twelve, Advaita instructs his son not to chant 'om gauraya namah' in worshipping the Deity of Gaurasundara, but rather to chant 'om Kṛṣṇaya namah'. Similarly, in chapter twenty, Gauridasa Pandita and Acyutananda approach Śrī Advaita Prabhu and request him to tell them which mantra to use in the worship of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. Advaita Ācārya replies, "I don't know whether you know, but Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself has descended in Nadia. He has covered His body with the bodily complexion of Śrīmatī Radharani, just as a person appears different by wearing different dresses. Therefore Mahāprabhu is worshiped by meditating on the ten-syllable Gopala mantra.

Worship Radha as the covering of Kṛṣṇa, and then your worship will undoubtedly be successful. By worshipping Nityānanda through the Narayana mantra, your worship will be successful and you will be happy."

Advaitadas: In Caitanya Bhāgavat Advaita Prabhu worshipped Mahāprabhu with the Kṛṣṇa Mantra *namo brahmanya devāya go brāhmaṇa hitāya ca*) This proves, from a source considered bonafide by Swāmi Giri, that He found Mahāprabhu should be worshipped with Kṛṣṇa mantra.

However, what is inferred to in these passages is that Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu can only be worshipped with the ten-syllable Kṛṣṇa mantra (gopijana-vallahaya svaha). Śrīla Sarasvati Thakura has explained the following:

"Some people consider that worshipping and offering foodstuffs to Gaura is performed by chanting Gopala-mantra, and by chanting this mantra He accepts the offering. Up to the time when Deity worship of Śrī Gaurasundara was introduced in the world, He was worshipped through Kṛṣṇa mantras; but after the covered form of Kṛṣṇa, the origin of all incarnations, mercifully manifested His own form, Deity, and Name to His most confidential devotees, the Lord's devotees began to worship the Deity of Śrī Gaura by revealing the eternal Names and mantras related with Lord Gaura. Those who are bereft of receiving the mercy of the covered incarnation simply make a show of worshipping the Deity form of Śrī Gaurasundara with Kṛṣṇa mantras, but Śrī Gaura is not worshipped in this way. Such people are cheated out of Kṛṣṇa's mercy, because they do not realize that Gaura's pastimes are eternal." (Caitanya-bhagavata, purport to Adi khanda 5, 126)

Advaitadas:

1) Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī contradicts the very same Caitanya Bhāgavata which describes how Advaita Prabhu worshipped Mahāprabhu with the Kṛṣṇa-mantra *namo brahmanya devāya* etc., see above. Caitanya Bhāgavat Adi 5,126 says *mora mantra*. This of course is *Kṛṣṇa mantra*. Mahāprabhu was accepting the offerings as Kṛṣṇa, the *vipra* offered the food to Kṛṣṇa, after all.

2] Why would this make Gaura līlā non-eternal?

Advaita Prakāśa also advises that one should worship Śrīmatī Radharani separately as the 'covering' of Kṛṣṇa, and that Lord Nityānanda should be worshipped by the Narayana

mantra (om namo narayana). However, this system of worship **has not been mentioned in any of the bona-fide *arcana-paddhatīs* of the Gaudiya *sampradāya*.**

Advaitadas: Which ones? These *paddhatīs* are all later writings.

Also, in chapter twenty of Advaita Prakāśa there is a reference encouraging the worship of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu in the *bhāva* (mood) of a *nāgarī* (enjoyer). (p. 151, AP: “Narahari Sarakara Thakur, the resident of Śrīkhanda, is a reservoir of loving devotion.”) Such worship is known as Gaura-nagari-bhava. However, this conception of Gaura-nagari-bhava has been rejected by Śrīla Vrndavana Dasa Thakura in Caitanya-bhagavata as follows:

*ei mata capalya karena saba sane; sabe stri matra na dekhena drstikane
stri 'hena na prabhu ei avatare; sravane o na karila-vidita samsare
ataeva sata yata maha mahima sakale; 'gauranga-nagara' hena stava nahi bale*

"The Lord was apt to indulge in indiscriminate, merciful behavior towards all, except that he never looked at a woman, even by a sidelong glance. It is known to all the world that He did not even allow the name of a woman to enter His ear. Those who are His real devotees, therefore, never address Śrī Gauranga as 'Gauranga-nagari' or the enjoyer of women. Although all forms of praise are applicable to the Lord, the wise only sing that which is in accordance with His nature." (Caitanya-bhagavata 15.28-31)

Advaitadas:

1. Where is this reference to Gaura Nāgarī bhāva at this or any other place within the Advaita Prakāśa?
2. If Advaita Prakāśa is a Gaura Nāgarī bhāva book simply for mentioning Narahari, then so is Caitanya Caritāmṛta, which also mentions him....

In chapter fourteen of Advaita Prakāśa Lord Nityānanda is referred to as 'The crest-jewel of sannyāsīs'. However, this too has been rejected by our ācāryas. The revered Guardian of Devotion Om Visnupada Śrīmad Bhakti Raksaka Śrīdhara Deva Goswami Maharaja has commented on this topic thus:

"Nityānanda was not a sannyāsī, but he was a brahmacari. But He performed Vyasa-puja in Śrīvasa-angana. There some say that He was a sannyāsī, but there He had

no special garment either for sannyāsī or brahmacari. He was very independent spirit." (Conversation 81.09.23)

"That Nityānanda was a sannyāsī, it is not a proved fact. The Nityānanda, this is Ananda, this indicates the affix added to brahmacari. Ananda, Svarupa, Prakāśa, all these types of brahmacari. Ananda, a name also in the sannyāsī we find, but no other title. Ananda is a part of the name but title, no title of Nityānanda. And also no mention who was the sannyasa-guru of Nityānanda.

Advaitadās: In Caitanya Bhāgavata it is said that Haridās Ṭhākura and Nityānanda went out preaching, dressed like sannyāsīs (dohān sannyāsī-veśa – yān yār ghare, Caitanya Bhāgavat Madhya 13.19). That does not mean they wore saffron cloth and daṇḍas, whatever, but it shows that this sannyāsa mentioned in Advaita Prakāśa is mentioned in other authoritative scriptures too.

But *dīkṣā-guru* of Nityānanda is Madhavendra Puri, it is known.

Advaitadas: No it isn't. It is Lakṣmīpati Tīrtha according to Bhakti Ratnākara.

Avadhuta does not mean who is sannyāsī. Avadhuta means who is not very particular of his external practices and sometimes commits something wrong which should not be committed, should not be practiced. When lower practices are seen in connection with the high-leveled person then they are considered as avadhuta. He is above that but his practices are of lower nature. Ava means lower; dhuta - that also he can either remove or he can purify." (Conversation 82.02.06)

There are many philosophical defects (*apasiddhānta*) in Advaita Prakāśa which render the book useless for those desiring to advance in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Thakur in his introduction of Śrī Caitanya-Caritāmṛta by has written as follows:

Anyanya katipaya adhunika va paravartikale likhita granthagulike (yatha, jayananda caitanya-mangala, govinda daser kadaca, vamsi-siksa, advaita-prakāśa, Nityānanda-vamsa-vistara). Pracina' baliya nirdeśa karate amadera pravṛtti haya na, visesatah, tahader tattva va siddhānta-viparyaya abhisandhi-mule sankirnata pratipadana karibar prayasa o siksara abhava prabhṛti laksya kariya, śrī caitanya-caritamṛter 'ākara-grantha' baliya ei apa-granthagulike keho svikara karen na.

"There are several other new books or books that were written a little later (such as Jayananda's Caitanya-mangala, Govinda Dasa's kadaca, Vamsi-siksa, **Advaita Prakāśa**,

and Nityānanda-vamsa-vistara). Although it is said that these books are old, we have no interest in them. They are distinct in the way that they are **incorrect in their philosophical truths and conclusions. Their narrow-minded, evil intentions** are obvious and highly noticeable due to the **absence of any effort and proper teachings** in them. **The Caitanya-Caritāmṛta is said to be the original book** and these *apa-granthas* (bogus books) are not recognized."

Advaitadas:

1. **Caitanya-Caritāmṛta is 40-50 years younger than Advaita Prakāśa and is thus not 'the original book'. Many narrations in Caitanya Caritāmṛta, which is anyway an anthology of all preceding books, must have been taken directly from Advaita Prakāśa. *caudda śata navati śakābda parimāṇe; līlā grantha sāṅga koinu śrī lāuḍa dhāma* – “In the year 1490 Śakābda (1568 AD) I compiled this *līlā-grantha* in the abode of Śrī Lāuḍa.” (Advaita Prakāśa, chapter 22)**
2. **Caitanya-Caritāmṛta is a comprehensive book about Gaura, but there is not a complete biography of Sītānātha in there. And that is only Advaita Prakāśa.**
3. **What are the narrow minded ('evil' is not mentioned in the Bengali text) intentions of Advaita Prakāśa?**
4. **What is incorrect in its philosophical truths and conclusions?**

Nowadays, some devotees are known to use little or no discretion in reading or in publishing various books without fully being aware of their origins or contents. It is not a good sign when devotees are translating and publishing literatures whose contents clearly contradict the bona fide Gauḍīya-siddhānta and which have been rejected by our previous **ācāryas**.

Advaitadas: You refer to your own cult's previous ācāryas only. And there are no contradictions with the bonafide Gauḍīya siddhānta in Advaita Prakāśa whatsoever.

Some persons, in the name of presenting the Vaiṣṇava community with new and 'nectarian' literatures, are unwittingly administering apasiddhānta (poison). By digesting such poison, the innocent devotee becomes prone to accepting more and more apasiddhānta as the real conclusions of the previous ācāryas - such acceptance of *apa-*

siddhānta cripples the spiritual advancement of an aspiring devotee. The Supreme Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu has warned:

*bahu-śāstre bahu vākye cite bhrama hoy
sādhyā sādhana śreṣṭha na hoy niścoy*

"If one reads too many books and accepts the opinions of too many people, doubt will arise in the heart. One will not be able to ascertain what the supreme goal of life is." (Cc. Adi. 16.11)

Advaitadas: Revered Swāmijī should study the context of this verse. Mahāprabhu spoke this verse to Tapan Mīśra before He Himself ordered the Gosvāmīs like Rūpa and Sanātan to write huge books on the science of *bhakti*. Certainly such books must be studied. The ‘many books’ mentioned here by Mahāprabhu refers to non-devotional, non Gaudiya Vaiṣṇava books, certainly not to the most comprehensive biography of His dearest Advaita Prabhu.

Out of their great compassion, our spiritual guardians have written and recommended many scriptures for us to study, yet regrettably we quickly become tired of reading them and desire to read something new - something that we have not heard of before. **This is typical of our modern consumer mentality.**

Advaitadas: All these books have been written by Mahāprabhu’s *pārṣadas* (eternal associates). There is no other such a comprehensive biography of Advaita Prabhu. Nor is it not stopping us from re-reading the other main granthas. Swāmijī is trying to keep people dumb with such a warning, so that he and his faith-fellows can freely condemn the Advaita Vaṁśa.

Our paramguru, Śrīla Prabhupada, did not approve of this mentality:

"I may say that this practical devotional service is the secret to understanding the sastras. My Guru Maharaja used to say that for one who is not engaged in devotional service, reading all the books is simply like licking the outside of the honey jar. One who thinks that the books are the thing, is content in this way. But we should learn the secret to open the jar and taste the honey. In this way, if we simply understand one book, or one sloka, the perfection is there. Lord Caitanya warned about reading too many books,

although I see in America this is very popular to get volumes and volumes of books and not understand one. Anyway, by sincerely working by carefully executing the instruction of the spiritual master, you will be all successful by Kṛṣṇa's Grace." (Letter to Pradyumna Dasa 17 Feb.1968)

The unauthorized tendency to read many books does not only pertain to reading so-called devotional literature. Such books also include books on the lives of famous Sahajiya and Mayavadi gurus, Christian mysticism, Tantra, UFOs, mundane novels, Tibetan Buddhist meditation techniques and the prophecies of Nostradamus to name but a few.

Advaitadas: Such topics have been sold by Śrīdhara Mahārāja's disciples like Tripurari Swami themselves to fund their errant publications in the 1980s and 1990s. UFO-books are lumped in with the eye-witness of Sītānātha's whole adult life? This is another count of the offence to the chanting of the holy name called *śruti-śāstra nindā*, critique of the scriptures.

Such mundane books are known as *asat-sastresu* and fall under the category of *prajalpa* since they are full of topics unrelated to pure devotional service.

Advaitadas: The comprehensive biography of Advaita Prabhu is *prajalpa* or mundane?

Such books are useless for our advancement in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. The great Vaiṣṇava saint Śrī Madhvācārya has advised that one who is serious about attaining the lotus feet of Lord Hari should become callous towards such worthless books (*na codasinah sastrani*).

Advaitadas: Pray tell, where does Śrī Madhvācārya mention the Advaita Prakāśa in his writings?

To read many books, for whatever the reason, can be the cause of ruination for a sadhaka if it is done without the guidance of a senior Vaiṣṇava. Śrīla Śrīdhara Deva Gosvami Maharaja has commented that even the reading of the Bhagavatam without the permission of a senior devotee cannot be considered as pure devotional service. We may attain some knowledge by such study, but we will not attain bhakti. Reading on our own initiative is only knowledge seeking which does not promote pure devotion, suddha-

bhakti. The bewildered mind may dictate to us that by reading many books (such as Advaita Prakāśa) that we will obtain a greater understanding of the Supreme Lord or that we will obtain a greater knowledge of the scriptures, but this is doubtful. Unfortunately, by studying unauthorized books or even by hearing too many opinions one runs the risk of spoiling his advancement in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. **One should therefore not read, translate, or publish those books that are not recommended by Śrī Guru and the previous ācāryas.**

Concluding, Swami B.V. Giri depends entirely on the view of those whom he considers authority and has no other way to back up his claims. That makes his objections very shaky and questionable indeed. Before those who do not accept the authority of Bhaktisiddhānta and his followers Swāmijī will remain empty handed.

June 26, 2004.



From a webforum May 29, 2005-

Inquiring bhakta: Haribol!

Pranam & dandavat.

I would like to know if there is any Vaiṣṇava group (from the past) that was chanting other mantras (exemple: Gauranga) on beads. On another forum, it was written that Vaiṣṇavas from the past did indeed practice this form of japa. I cannot find the information again and am wondering if anyone can help me here. I remember reading about an historical controversy regarding this topic and if I am not mistaken, the Vaiṣṇava community was very divided. I am a former BR Sadhu Swami (a.k.a Gaurangapada) disciple and I miss chanting regularly these Names. Is it something that can be done if we have a special attraction for a specific Form of the Divine? Thank you very much for any help! I am posting something translated by BRSS. I have no idea if the translation is correct.

Śrī Advaita Prakasha by Śrīla Īśāna Thakura

Chapter 10 Verses 40-52

Verse 40

para dina mora prabhu pratah kritya sari,
jagannatha mishra grihe gela tvara kari.

"The next day my Lord Advaita Acharya hurriedly went to the home of Śrī Jagannatha Mishra after completing His morning duties."

Verse 41

prabhura agamana dekhi mishra dvija vara,
dante trina kari gela tahana gochara.

"Seeing the arrival of Lord Advaita Acharya, the best of the brahmanas Śrī Jagannatha Mishra went in front of the Acharya very humbly with straw in his mouth."

Verse 42

dandavata kari dila vasite asana,
padya arga diya tane karila pujana.

"Śrī Jagannatha Miśra offered prostrated obeisances to Lord Advaita Ācārya and offered Him a raised seat. Then he washed His lotus feet with scented water and worshiped Him appropriately."

Verse 43

tabe shachidevi asi karila pranati,
prabhu kahe vancha tumi hau putravati.

"At that time, Śrīmatī Shachidevi came and offered her obeisances to Lord Advaita Acharya. Lord Advaita gave her the benediction, 'May your desire to have a son be fulfilled!'"

Verse 44

shuni mahanande kahe mishra dvija raja,
jahe tuya vakya rahe kara sei kaja.

"Hearing this Śrī Jagannatha Mishra becomes overwhelmed with intense happiness and said to Lord Advaita, 'Now please do something that will make your words come true.'"

Verse 45

prabhu kahe eka mantra painu svapane,
bhakti kari sei mantra laha dunhu jane.

"Lord Advaita Acharya said, 'I have received a Mantra in my dream. Please accept this Mantra from me with great faith and devotion.'"

Verse 46

sarva amangala tabe avaśya khandibe,
parama pandita divya tanaya labhibe.

"By receiving this Mantra and chanting It, all inauspiciousness will be totally destroyed and you both will receive a divine son who will become a very great devotional scholar."

Verse 47

agya śuni aila donhe karila sinane,
tabe prabhu yatha vidhi puji narayane.

"Hearing the order of Lord Advaita, both of them took bath and came back to the Lord. At that time, Lord Advaita Acharya worshiped Lord Narayana with the proper rites."

Verse 48

donhakare mantra dila śrī advaita chandra,
CATUR-AKSHARA ŚRĪ GAURA GOPALA MAHAMANTRA.

"Then the moon-like Lord Advaita Chandra imparted the 4-Syllable Gaura Gopala Mahamantra to both of them."

Verse 49

mantra pana donhakare haila bhavodgama,
prabhura pranami kare sa dainya stavana.

"Of receiving the Gaura Gopala Mahamantra, the pure ecstatic transcendental love of Shachimata and Jagannatha Mishra was awakened and they offered their obeisances to Lord Advaita Acharya and offered prayers unto Him with great humility."

Verse 50

"Kṛṣṇa matir astu" bali prabhu vara dila,
bhojana kariya tabe nija sthane gela.

"Lord Advaita Acharya offered them the benediction 'May your consciousness always remain in Lord Kṛṣṇa!' and after honoring prasadam He returned to His home."

Verse 51

dina kata pare śachira haila garbhadhana,
tahe prakatila visvarupa guna dhama.

"Some days after receiving the Gaura Gopala Mantra, Shimati Shachimata became pregnant and the Supreme Personality of Servitor Godhead Lord Nityānanda partially manifested in her womb as Śrī Vishvarupa."

Verse 52

*mahasankarshana bali prabhu jare kaya,
tahana mahima caturbhuja na janaya.*

"Lord Advaita Ācārya would always call Lord Viśvarupa as Maha Sankarṣana and he would say that even the 4-handed Viṣṇu Tattvas did not understand the full glories of Lord Śrī Viśvarupa."

Advaitadas: The context of this story is crystal clear - Advaita Prabhu gave Śaci-mātā and Jagannātha Miśra a *mantra* for the specific purpose of getting a baby, most particularly the baby Nimāi and for this reason he gave them in particular this *mantra*. It is not meant for anyone else. If Advaita Prabhu had given this

mantra to the people at large I would have received it at the time of *dikṣā* (since I am in His discipal succession), and I didn't.....

Have you noticed, by the way, that Advaita Prabhu offered them the blessing '*kṛṣṇe matir astu*' "May you become Kṛṣṇa-conscious" as a result of chanting this *mantra*, not "May you become Gaura-conscious"?



Footnote 25 to an article by Jan K. Brzezinski (Jagadananda Das) about Prabhānanda Sarasvatī:

<http://jagat.wisewisdoms.com/articles/showarticle.php?id=30> (currently offline)

25. A rather unreliable source, Advaita-prakash, also mention that Chaitanya met a Prabhānanda Sarasvatī in Kāshī. Its author **paraphrases** the CC account with some **anachronistic** additions.

Advaitadas: Merriam Webster explains 'paraphrase' as "a restatement of a text, passage, or work giving the meaning in another form" However, Caitanya Caritāmṛta is 40-50 years younger than Advaita Prakāśa, which was completed in 1568. So Caitanya Caritāmṛta is a restatement of Advaita Prakāśa instead of vice versa.

Merriam Webster explains 'anachronistic' as "1: an error in chronology; *especially:* a chronological misplacing of persons, events, objects, or customs in regard to each other. 2: a person or a thing that is chronologically out of place; *especially:* one from a former age that is incongruous in the present."

Please do explain where any of this applies to Advaita Prakāśa.

This work is **ascribed to** Advaita's servant, Īśāna Nāgara.

Advaitadās: It IS written by Īśāna Nāgara – every single chapter is signed by him and he also speaks of his own role within the narration.

(ed.) Mrinala Kanti Ghosh, (Calcutta, Ananda Bazar Patrika Office, 2nd edition, 1929), 77. This is another book whose credibility has been placed in doubt by (Professor B.B.) Majumdar, op.cit., 424-35.

Advaitadas: With due respect, how did Professor Majumdar reach this conclusion? Through intellectual prowess or through divine revelation?

Speaking of Prof. Majumdar, the following opinions on Advaita Prakāśa are attributed to him on a webforum, from his 1935 book 'Caitanya Cariter Upādān' –

To indicate important dates is a virtue of a biography-writer. Unfortunately, Īśāna's virtue has been his vice on occasions. There is some discrepancy between the account given in "Caitanya Bhagavata" and that occurring in the "Advaita Prakasa" concerning Acyuta's age when Śrī Caitanya visited Santipura after his adoption of monkhood. Śrī Caitanya was 24, and hence by Īśāna's yardstick of the Lord being 6 years and 2 months Acyuta's senior, the latter should be about 18. Vrindavan das Thakur considers Acyuta tiny child who has nothing on his wear. This implies the child is not much above 2 or 3 years of age, while Īśāna would make it 18 or thereabouts.

Advaitadas: See refutation on page 9 of this file.

Īśāna states that Vasudeva Dutta is Advaita's disciple .But in "Caitanya Caritamṛta" he is placed in the Caitanya's order .

Advaitadās: That is absurd. We all know that Śrī Caitanya had no personal disciples. By making such bizarre statements Prof. Majumdar undermines his credibility.

“Both Īśāna and Murari have referred to Visvarupa's birth as the fruition of the ninth pregnancy of Saci. While Īśāna speaks of eight cases of abortion or miscarriage preceding Saci giving birth to Visvarupa, both Murari and Kavikarnapura refer to eight daughters being born successively, none of whom survived long.”

“Kavikarnapura's play points out that Caitanya was an unknown personage to Sarvabhauma, who is made out to be Visvambhara's teacher of logic for a continuous period of two years. Dr-Majumdar asks, "Can one fail to remember a pupil whom one had taught when the pupil was between 14 and 16 in course of a mere 8 year period of time?"

Advaitadas: These may be the only odd narrations within the Advaita Prakāśa. However we must remember that the Lord's pastimes are transcendental and inconceivable (*acintya khalu ye bhāvā na tams tarkena yojayet*), and mundane dates or compatibility of personalities just do not count in it. In Kṛṣṇa līlā we see also significant differences between the Vraja-līlā in the Śrīmad Bhāgavata and that in the Brahma-Vaivarta- or Viṣṇu Purāṇa. We know, for instance, that different personalities in Kṛṣṇa līlā have different, multiple counter-personalities in Gaur līlā, and that in Dvārakā one single Kṛṣṇa had different sports with as many as 16.108 queens all at the same time!

Īśāna's records Nityānanda's birth as a thing of 1395 sh ,while Vrindavan Das Thākura's report in "Caitanya Bhagavata" is consistent with the date of birth being sometime four years later.

Advaitadas: In Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava Abhidhāna the birth date is also said to be 1395 Śaka. This is unanimously accepted as Nityānanda's birthdate, 1474 AD. I have not been able to find any mentioning of Nityānanda's birthdate in Caitanya Bhāgavata.

Moreover, Nityānanda's outfit when he came to Navadvīpa, was one of an anchorite according to Vrindāvan Dās Thākura. Īśāna has described him as a Vaisnava even in dress, when he first arrived at Navadvīpa.

Advaitadās: The Caitanya Bhāgavata (Madhya 3.125) just describes Nityānanda as being dressed as a great *avadhūta* (*mahā avadhūta veśa*). Does that exclude the possibility of Him being dressed as a Vaiṣṇava? The Advaita Prakāśa only says he wore *tilak* and Tulasī-neckbeads and appeared as the crest jewel of *sannyāsīs*. If that is so much different from *mahā avadhūta veśa*, Nityānanda may even have changed His appearance straight after moving into Nandanācārya's house.

Īśāna reports that Rādhākuṇḍa was full of water, while Kṛṣṇadasa Kaviraja speaks of shallow waters of Rādhākuṇḍa.

Advaitadās: That may be just due to monsoon rains.

Another discrepancy of Īśāna is his report of Advaita's encounter with Vidyapati, which, according to him, took place at Mithila. Quoting reputed authors like Haraprasad sastri and Vasanta Chatterjee, Dr. Majumdar points out that Advaita reached Mithila some five years after Vidyāpati had died in 1448 A.D.

Advaitadās: It would be wise to place one's faith in a lifelong Vaiṣṇava servant of Advaita Prabhu before placing one's faith in two unknown scholars. The Vaiṣṇava scholar Pandit Ananta Dās writes in his booklet 'Śrī Rādhākuṇḍer Mahimā O Aitihya', page 68 (Bengali edition) that Śrī Advaita Prabhu came to Vṛndāvana in 1455 and he met the old poet Vidyāpati on His way back home.

If Īśāna's declaration of the date of composition of "Advaita Prakasa" be true, it comes to 1568 A.D. That implies its temporal priority over Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja's "C. Caritamṛta". How is it that Īśāna's diction is reminiscent of that of a later work?

Advaitadās: Caitanya-Caritāmṛta is 40-50 years younger than Advaita Prakāśa. Many narrations in Caitanya Caritāmṛta, which is anyway an anthology of all preceding books, must have been taken directly from Advaita Prakāśa. The stories of Mādhavendra Puri (ch. 5), Haridās Thākura delivering the prostitute (ch. 9), Mahāprabhu coming to Advaita Prabhu's house after taking *sannyāsa* (ch. 16), meeting Rūpa and Sanātana in Rāmakeli (ch. 16), making the animals in Jharikhaṇḍa forest chant (ch. 16), meeting Rūpa Gosvāmī in Prayāga (ch. 17), the dog of Śivānanda Sena (ch. 18), the banishment of Chota Haridās (ch. 18), Rūpa Gosvāmī reading his dramas to the Lord (ch. 19), Sanātan Gosvāmī coming to Puri with the sores (ch. 19) and the passing away of Haridās Thākura (ch. 19) are the same, though the Advaita Prakāśa versions are admittedly much more concise.

BB Majumdar, Śrī Caitanya Caritā Upādāna, page 463 –
kayekaṭi lekhāra asaṅgati yathā (1) bālyā-līlā-sūtra – yā nāki śrī caitanyera janmera dui batsara mātra pare likhite bale prakāśa - "Some contradictory issues are: (1) "The Advaita Balyalila Sutra was said to be written and published just 2 years after Śrī Caitanya's birth."

Advaitadās: In his Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava Abhidhāna, Haridās Dās confirms that it is written in 1409 Śaka, or 2 years after Mahāprabhu's birth. Since this text only deals with Advaita Prabhu's childhood pastimes, then that is completely feasible, since Mahāprabhu took birth 52 years after Advaita Prabhu.

On the same page Prof. Majumdar says:

"If Mahāprabhu's avatara was really predicted in the Ananta Samhita as is described in Advaita Prakash chapter 4, then why were Jiva Gosvami, Kavikarnapur, Krishnadas Kaviraja and Baladeva Vidyabhusana satisfied with just proving it from the Bhagavata and the Mahabharata?"

Advaitadās: They might have thought that the Śrīmad Bhāgavat and Mahābhārata were stronger evidence, or they simply didn't have access to the Ananta Samhita when they wrote their books. In 'Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava Abhidhāna', p.1436, the Ananta Samhita is accepted as bearing evidence for Śrī Caitanya's descent without casting any doubt on the authenticity of the book. It says parts of the manuscript are held by the Rajshahi Varendra Research committee and by the Calcutta Sanskrit Sahitya Parishad.

Acyuta Maitra, "Advaita Prabhu", p.43-44 (Kolkata, 1983) -

"Advaita Balyalila Sutra is written by king Divyasingha, a contemporary of Advaita Prabhu's father, Advaita Prakash by Advaita's foster son Ishan Nagara, Sita Carita by Lokanath, the Guru of Narottama, who was older than Mahāprabhu Himself, Sita Guna Kadamba by Vishnu Das, who arranged Sita's marriage and Advaita Mangal by Haricharan, a disciple of Advaita, on the order of Acyutananda. All of these are eyewitnesses who were personally blessed by Sitadvaita. If the abovementioned books were really written by them then they wouldn't contradict the narrations of Kavi Karnapur, Vrindavan Das and Murari Gupta. How could they rhyme with the story that Sacimata and Jagannath Mishra took mantra from Advaita Prabhu, Visvambhara studied the Bhagavat with Advaita Prabhu, Visvambhara made Acyuta his student and Acyuta performed so many miracles?"

Advaitadās: First of all, Sītā Carita is written by Lokanātha Dās, not Lokanāth Gosvāmī. Both were disciples of Advaita Prabhu, in any case. Apart from Haricaran's Advaita Maṅgal there is really no problem with any of the above

mentioned books, to my knowledge. The fact that Śacī-mātā and Jagannātha Mīśra's taking of *mantra* from Advaita is not mentioned in the other books does not mean it didn't happen. After all, the other books have Mahāprabhu as the central topic, so naturally they won't elaborate on the details about Advaita's life. And if Advaita Prabhu is not the Guru of Śacī-mātā and Jagannātha Mīśra, then who is? Since that is nowhere mentioned there is no contradiction with the narration of Īśāna Nāgar. Regarding the other pastimes that may or may not 'contradict' the other books about Mahāprabhu-*līlā*, we cannot really limit these divine pastimes to a single version or a single vision. God is unlimited and can perform unlimited different pastimes, all at the same time if He so wishes. He lovingly reciprocates with the subjective visions of His various devotees, as He has said in the Bhagavad Gītā (4.11) *ye yathā māṁ prapadyante tams tathaiiva bhajāmyaham* - "As I am worshipped so I will worship (reciprocate with My devotees) in return."

Refutations compiled throughout 2005

A more submissive bhakta asked me on April 17, 2008: "But some people says there were two Ishana Nagaras at that time and the one was the Servant of Jagannatha Mishra and Disciple of Advaita prabhu but another was different and also it is unsure that who has written this Advaita prakasha, what you say about this? Kindly answer....."

Advaitadās: I don't know of any other Īśāna Nāgara than the disciple of Advaita Prabhu. He narrates his personal relationship with Advaita Prabhu and Sītā Devī in chapters 18 (twice) and 21 of Advaita Prakāśa. In Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava Abhidhāna, which lists all the associates of Mahāprabhu, there is just one Īśāna Nāgara mentioned:

শ্রীঅদ্বৈতপ্রভুর শাখা, ব্রাহ্মণবংশে ১৪১৪ শকে জন্ম । আদি নিবাস - শ্রীহট্ট জেলার লাউড় পরগণাস্তর্গত নবগ্রাম । পাঁচ বৎসর বয়ঃক্রমকালে ইঁহার বিধবা মাতা ইশানকে লইয়া শ্রীঅদ্বৈতপ্রভুর গৃহে আশ্রয় লন । ঈশানের শিক্ষা ব্যবস্থা শ্রীঅদ্বৈত প্রভুই করেন । অদ্বৈতপত্নী সীতাদেবীর আজ্ঞায় ৭০ বৎসর বয়ঃক্রমকালে ইনি সংসারী হইয়া বিবাহ করিয়াছিলেন । ঈশান অতীব তেজস্বী ছিলেন । এক দিবস মহাপ্রভুর পদধৌত করিবার জন্য অগ্রসর হইলে - মহাপ্রভু ঈশানের উপবীত দেখিয়া তাঁহাকে ব্রাহ্মণ জানিয়া নিষেধ করিলে ঈশান তদগোঁই উপবীত ছিঁড়িয় ফেলিলেনঈশান নাগর ১৪৯০ শকে শ্রীলাউড়ধামে 'অদ্বৈতপ্রকাশ' গ্রন্থ রচনা করেন - 'চৌদশত নবতি শকাব্দ পরিমাণে । লীলাগ্রন্থ সাক্ষ কইনু শ্রীলাউড় ধামে' ।

“A member of Śrī Advaita Prabhu's branch, born in a Brahmin family in 1414 Śaka (1492). His ancestral home was Lāuḍa, Navagrāma in the district of Śrī Haṭṭa (the same ancestral home as Advaita Prabhu's). His widowed mother took shelter of Śrī

Advaita Prabhu's home when he was 5 years old, where he was educated by Advaita Prabhu Himself. On Sītādevī's order he married at the age of 70. He was very powerful. One day he came forward to wash Mahāprabhu's lotus-feet, but when Mahāprabhu saw his Brahmin-thread he did not want accept service from him. Īśāna then punished his *brāhmaṇa*-thread by breaking it. Īśāna Nāgara composed the book 'Advaita Prakāśa' in 1490 Śaka (1568) in Lāuḍa Dhāma – *caudda-śata navati śakābda parimāṇe; līlā-grantha sāṅga koinu śrī lāuḍa dhāme*. The Īśāna who served Jagannāth Miśra was not surnamed Nāgara. He was just named Īśāna and did not write any books to my knowledge.

Discussion on April 4, 2011 -

Bhakta: "Some say Advaita Prakāśh was written only in the 19th century?"

Advaitadās: The fact that Advaita Prakāśa was found in a library in 1896 does not mean it was written then. There were no printing presses before the British came and books were copied by hand, but that does not mean the texts did not exist before. The hand-copying could indeed have resulted into interpolation, it is hard to verify. Caitanya Caritāmṛta contains material from Advaita Prakāśa because Caitanya Caritāmṛta is anyway a collection of older works, not an original work. It is like an anthology of Gaur līlā and Kṛṣṇa tattva. It is clearly written in the colophon of the Advaita Prakāśa that is written in 1568, (*caudda śata navati śakābda*) 40 years before the Caitanya Caritāmṛta.

Bhakta: "Then how did Krishnadas Kaviraj Goswami get the information from the Advaita Prakāśh in Rādhākuṇḍa?"

Advaitadas: "He might have taken the Advaita Prakāśa with him when he first came to Vraja, or others may have brought it to Rādhākuṇḍa from Bengal, on Kṛṣṇadās Kavirāj Gosvāmi's request. You see, we were not there and both opponents and proponents of the Advaita Prakāśa can only guess what happened back then.



Why did Advaita Prabhu preach *jñāna*?

In his essay 'Keeping faith with the Kheturi festival' Jagadānanda Dās (J.K. Brzezinski PhD) writes about Advaita Prabhu preaching *jñāna*:

“Prema-vilasa, written by Nityānanda Das, a disciple of Jahnava Mata, also writes negatively about Advaita Prabhu and his penchant for reading and lecturing from the Yoga-vasistha. Vrindavan Das tells us that Mahāprabhu criticized Advaita for this practice when he was in Nabadwip, but Nityānanda Das indicates that he continued doing so even after Mahāprabhu had gone to live in Puri and that many Vaishnavas were puzzled by this behavior and complained. The author of that work further emphasizes that this was one of the impetuses that led to the advent of Śrīnivasa Acharya and Narottam Das.”

Advaitadās: Jagadānanda Dās wrongly took Advaita Prabhu's preaching of *jñāna-vāda* seriously. It is clear from Caitanya Bhāgavata, Prema-vilāsa and Advaita Prakāśa that Advaita Prabhu did so to draw the Lord's attention, not because He actually believed that *jñāna* was superior to *bhakti*. It was an act of devotion, like all others. In Caitanya Bhāgavata, Madhya 19.124 for instance, it is said:

*bhakti-yoga prabhāve advaita mahābol,
bujhilen citte mora hoibek saphal*

"On the strength of His *bhakti yoga* Advaita understood that He would be successful (in drawing Mahāprabhu towards Him)." After getting the Lord's *daṇḍa prasāda* (merciful punishment) Advaita floated in the ocean of *prema* (*śuniyā advaita prema sindhu mājhe bhāse*, verse 151) He was in ecstasy –

*ihāte se prabhu bhṛtye citte bol pāy,
boliya ānande nāce śāntipura rāy.
ānande advaita nāce sakala angane.*

“This merciful punishment invigorates your devotees!”, Advaita, the Lord of Śāntipura said and danced in ecstasy all over the courtyard.” (verses 155-6)

Then He submitted to the Lord's feet: *kothā gelo ebe more tomār se stuti?* (verse 157) "What happened now with Your reverential praises of Me?" In other words, Advaita lured Mahāprabhu to Śāntipura to 'punish' Him just to get a sweet relationship with Him, free from the awe and reverence Mahāprabhu otherwise offered Him due to Him being an elder. In chapter 20 of Advaita Prakāśa, when Advaita Prabhu was explaining *jñāna* for the second time, Mahāprabhu said: *more dekhibāre dilo jñāna-yoga śikṣā....*"You explained *jñāna* in order to see Me..." (20.119)

In chapter 24 of Prema Vilāsa, it is said:

*mahāprabhu advaitere kore guru-bhakti;
advaitera caraṇa dhūli loy niti niti
ihāte duḥkhī boḍo śāntipura nātha
sarvadā viṣaṇṇa mana nā pāy sowāth
advaita bole āmi bhaktira virodhe colibo
yogāvaśiṣṭhādi vyākhyā sarvadā koribo
ebe jñānavāda āmi koribo pracāra
yāhāte prabhur hoy krodhera sañcāra*

"Mahāprabhu treated Advaita as a superior and constantly took Advaita's foot-dust. This made the Lord of Śāntipura very unhappy, so He said: "I will deviate from devotion and will start explaining books like Yogāvaśiṣṭha. I will now start preaching *jñāna*, so that the Lord will get angry with me and come to Śāntipura to punish Me single-handedly!"

Brzezinski: "Vrindavan Das tells us that Mahāprabhu criticized Advaita for this practice when he was in Nabadwip, but Nityānanda Das indicates that he continued doing so even after Mahāprabhu had gone to live in Puri and that many Vaishnavas were puzzled by this behavior and complained."

Advaitadās: This is how Advaita Prakāśa (20.95-101) begins to narrate Advaita Prabhu's second sermon on *jñāna*:

hethā śrī advaita prabhu gaurāṅga vicchede;

*kāhā prāṇanātha boli phukāriyā kānde
krame gaura-prema-sindhura taraṅga bāḍhilo;
bhakta kalpavṛkṣa sītānāthe ḍubāilo
tin din pore prabhu bhāsiyā uṭhilā;
gaurāṅga dekhite mone yukti sthira koilā
hā gaurāṅga tuwā cira-viccheda anale;
bhakta mana prāṇa poḍāili avahale
bhakti bilāite tora hoilo prakāṭane;
jñāna prakāśiyā tāpa dimu tora mane
eka bāra jñāna vyākhyā kori pāinu tore;
punaḥ śuṣka jñāna śikṣāimu sabhākāre
dekhimu ihāte koro kibā vyavahāra;
nā pān caraṇa yadi nāśimu saṁsāra*

“One day Śrī Advaita Prabhu felt so much separation from Gaurāṅga that He cried out loudly: "Where is the Lord of My life?" Gradually the ocean of love for Gaura surged and inundated Prabhu Sītānātha, the wish-yielding tree of the devotees. Only three days later Prabhu Sītānātha emerged from this inundation of ecstatic swoon and He decided that He had to see Gaurāṅga. "O Gaurāṅga! You easily burn the hearts and minds of Your devotees with the fire of constant separation from You! You have appeared to distribute devotion, so I will give pain to Your heart by preaching *jñāna*. I have attained You once before by preaching *jñāna*, now I will once again preach such dry speculations to everyone. I have to see how You will react to that. If I don't attain Your lotus feet then I will destroy the world."

This makes clear what Advaita Prabhu's motives were for preaching *jñāna*.

February 14, 2005



**Nandinī and Jangalī
do not set a precedent for cross-dressing.**

From: *Reconstructing Tradition: Advaita Ācārya and Gaudiya Vaisnavism at the Cusp of the Twentieth Century*, by Rebecca Manring:

“The author of the *Advaita Mangala* even describes the first feast Advaita Acharya held after his marriage, to introduce his disciples to his new wife. The texts in fact state that Sita treated these boys and young men as if they were her own sons. And so it would not have been much of a stretch for these students to take the next leap of faith, once their guru had departed, to align themselves with the person who was closest to that guru in some clearly visible ways—his widow. That is apparently exactly what happened: Her husband’s students, her foster sons, in a sense, shifted her into the position of authority recently vacated by her husband..... What seems to have bothered the Gaudiyas is the possibility of her conferring initiation upon male devotees. Initiation—the conferring of sectarian mantras and practices— is the vehicle for the continuity of the lineage, and has historically been the domain of male gurus. “According to Lokanatha Dasa’s *Sita Charitra*, her problems (with having male disciples) begin when two male seekers—Yajñeshvara and Nandarama—approach her for instruction, and she is obligated to refuse them on gender grounds. Their story is rich in clues to Sita’s theological identity and the ways her movement chose to accommodate and contain that identity. Nandarama is a brahman, and his friend Yajñeshvara is a shudra (the fourth major caste group) from a farming family. Both are great devotees of Krishna, and have decided to seek out a suitable guru. Nandarama remembers having been given a mantra some time previously by Sita, in Shantipur, so the pair set out in search of her. Sita greets them warmly, but tells them that she can only teach other women. Nevertheless she gives them the Radha mantra and some rudimentary advice: to worship Radha and Krishna, visualizing themselves as attendants in the divine couple’s trysting place.The two disappear, only to reappear a short time later dressed as *gopis*, the young cowherd women of Vraja who were Krishna’s close friends and lovers, complete with braided hair, anklets, bangles, skirts and bodices. They announce that the practice of repeating Radha’s mantra has effected a sex change in them. This is an amazing claim! We have no reports of others who use Radha’s mantra experiencing similar transformations. We must conclude then that this change has come about through the pair’s deep faith and their firm conviction that Sita is the proper guru for them. Not satisfied simply to take their word that the two men are now women, Sita examines the evidence, Lokanatha writes, and then agrees that she can now instruct them. And from this time on Nandarama and Yajñeshvara are known as Nandini and Jangali,

and live out the remainders of their lives as women. So great was their devotion and their desire to learn from Sita rather than from any other guru that these two were willing to relinquish their very maleness to do so.”.....

Advaitadās: I have not yet learned how reliable and genuine this book *Sītā Charitra* is, but I want to make this preliminary commentary: Normally devotees in the Advaita Parivāra do not receive Rādhā-mantra, only Kṛṣṇa-mantra, as is clear from Advaita Prakāśa, chapter 20, wherein Advaita Prabhu instructs his son Acyutānanda to install Gauridāsa Paṇḍit’s Gaura-Nitāi deities with Kṛṣṇa-mantras, in Prema Vilāsa, chapter 19, where Jāhnavā Devi tells Śrīnivāsācārya the same thing, and in chapter 24 of the same book, where Mādhavācārya is described as taking Gopāl-mantra and Kāma-gāyatrī from Advaita Prabhu. Sītā-devī must have given this *mantra* as part of a special pastime of hers.

“The author of the Sita Charitra, writing at a time when the sakhi bhavas were coming under sectarian assault, used Sita’s hagiographical image to define the sakhi bhavas as women and then to connect their sect to a venerable branch of the greater Gaudiya Vaishnava community.”

Advaitadās: With *sakhī-bhāvas* the author means *sakhī-bhekhīs*, men who dress like *gopīs*. Nandinī and Jaṅgalī are not *sakhī-bhekhīs*, because they actually had a gender change. *sakhī-bhekhīs* are physically men, though some go as far as castration, but they never mystically change gender. The author mentioned in the previous paragraph: “Sītā-devī examines the evidence”, which means that an actual gender change took place, and this must have been a mystical sex change caused by their practice of the Rādhā-mantra, because in those days no surgeon would have had the know-how or the instruments to perform such an operation on them.

Concluding statement: The members of the Advaita Parivāra are not cross-dressers - the above pastime is a special *līlā* performed by Sītā-devī and her disciples, it does not stand as a general rule. Sādhu Bābā, a 13th generation direct descendant of Advaita Prabhu, strongly condemned cross-dressing practises by Vaiṣṇavas.

Originally posted on madangopal.blog, December 20, 2005.

<http://madangopal.blogspot.nl/2005/12/sita-charitra-and-nandini-jangali.html>



Advaita Prabhu's family and eggplants

Bhakta:

Hare Kṛṣṇa, prabhu!

I have a question to you if you researched it about eggplants. In Hari Bhakti Vilasa there are 3 slokas given about that eggplants should not be taken or offered. From Kurma Purana, from Yamala and from Skanda Purana. But in Caitanya Caritamrita we can see what food was offered to Lord Caitanya and there are different places mentioned about fried eggplants and eggplants mixed with nimbu etc. So, it's not clear.”

Advaitadās:

“Thank you for reminding me of Prabhu Sītānāth's sweet *līlā* (CC Madhya 3.47) and in extension also Sādhu Baba's *anugamana* (allegiance). I was under fire over this issue on Gaudiya Discussions some 8 years ago, but until now I have not researched this eggplant issue in Caitanya Caritāmṛta. It gives a clear endorsement from Svayam Prabhu Sītānātha - কোমল নিম্বুপত্র সহ ভাজা বাঁগুনী *komala nimbu patra saha bhājā vārtākī* – “He offered the Lord soft neem leaves along with fried eggplant.” Following in his family- and spiritual succession, Sādhu Bābā too was fond of *bhājā vārtākī* [fried aubergines]. The secret about this is that Haribhakti Vilāsa is a collection of material and spiritual rules. Only a bona fide Guru can sort out which rule is to be followed and which one is not. It cannot be sorted out by oneself. In other words, whatever Guru decides is essential of the rules of Haribhakti Vilāsa, these rules apply.”

(August 7, 2011)



The Advaita Vaṁśa worships Advaita Prabhu instead of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu?

Often it is said in Bengal that the *ācāryas* of Advaita Vaṁśa worship Advaita Prabhu instead of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. It is only natural that if one is a direct descendant of such a pivotal Personality of Godhead that one gives special emphasis to that Personality of Godhead. Even Vṛndāvana dāsa Ṭhākura, who was himself not a direct descendant of Nityānanda Prabhu, had such a special love for Lord Nityānanda that he called Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu '*āmāra prabhur prabhu*', the master of my master (Nityānanda Prabhu) in Śrī Caitanya Bhāgavata (Ādi-khaṇḍa 17.153).

There is already so much glorification of Śrī-Śrī Gaur-Nitāi - should glorification of Advaita Ācārya, without whose mercy Śrīman Mahāprabhu would not have appeared in this world, not be added to this by at least one Vaiṣṇava-branch?