

Who Is He?

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's Assessment of Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī

As soon as Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu saw Sanātana Gosvāmī in the courtyard, He immediately went up to him with great haste. After embracing him, the Lord was overwhelmed with ecstatic love.

As soon as Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu touched Sanātana Gosvāmī, Sanātana was also overwhelmed with ecstatic love. In a faltering voice, he said, “O my Lord, do not touch me.”

Shoulder to shoulder, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and Sanātana Gosvāmī began to cry unlimitedly. Candraśekhara was very much astonished to see this.

Catching his hand, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu took Sanātana Gosvāmī inside and made him sit on an elevated place next to Him.

When Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu began cleansing Sanātana Gosvāmī's body with His own transcendental hand, Sanātana Gosvāmī said, “O my Lord, please do not touch me.”

The Lord replied, “I am touching you just to purify Myself, because by the force of your devotional service you can purify the whole universe.

Saints of your caliber are themselves places of pilgrimage. Because of their purity, they are constant companions of the Lord, and therefore they can purify even the places of pilgrimage.”

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu continued, “By seeing you, by touching you and by glorifying your transcendental qualities, one can perfect the purpose of all sense activity. This is the verdict of the revealed scriptures.

My dear Vaiṣṇava, seeing a person like you is the perfection of one's eyesight, touching your lotus feet is the perfection of the sense of touch, and glorifying your good qualities is the tongue's real activity, for in the material world it is very difficult to find a pure devotee of the Lord.”

— CC Madhya 20.51-57, 60-61, 97

Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī, the elder brother of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, was a most important minister in the government of Hussain Shah, the ruler of Bengal, and he was considered a most brilliant gem in that assembly. He possessed all the opulences of a royal position, but he gave up everything just to accept the youthful goddess of renunciation. Although he externally appeared to be a mendicant who had renounced everything, he was filled with the pleasure of devotional service within his heart. Thus he can be compared to a deep lake covered with moss. He was the object of pleasure for all the devotees who knew the science of devotional service.

— CC Madhya 24.348

Who Am I?

Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī's Self-Assessment

O Śrī Kṛṣṇa, I offer my repeated obeisances to the wonder of Your mercy. You took me – a fallen, wicked person, a cheater, always addicted to sinful ways – and lifted me from such depravity to an elevated state like that of Your saintly devotees. You took me from the terrible place where I lived and brought me to this most auspicious place, Mathurā-maṇḍala.

I was stained by my past bad company, so You gave me the company of Your most beloved Śrī Caitanyadeva in Nīlācala.

You gave me the delight of seeing Your blessed face as You sat on Your chariot. Then You brought me back to this Vṛndāvana, the place of so many of Your pastimes.

Here You returned to me the company of Your beloved devotee (Rūpa Gosvāmī), the only wealth of my life. I will always offer You my obeisances, over and over again.

Now You please make Your name appear from my mouth, and sometimes You allow me to remember Your lotus feet in my heart.

Even though my body is most lowly, please engage it in offering You obeisances. Please protect me from all dangers and give me the treasure of devotional service to You.

Your mercy is a great wonder, nondifferent from You. It is pure eternity, knowledge, and bliss. It can empower me to always remember and glorify You in pure love. It can obtain for me Your loving sidelong glance. It can enable me to see You absorbed in the company of the cows and the *gopas* and *gopikās*. **Thus for a helpless person like me it is the ultimate resort of all hopes.** Your wonderful mercy is ancient and eternal but also ever new and fresh. To Your mercy, again and again, I offer my obeisances forever.

– Śrī Kṛṣṇa-līlā-stava, Texts 418, 421, 422, 425, 426–430