

# Chaitanya Mahaprabhu

February 19, 2021

## Chaitanya Mahaprabhu

- Chaitanya Mahaprabhu was a 15th century Vedic spiritual leader, who is considered an avatar of Lord Krishna by his followers. Chaitanya founded Gaudiya Vaishnavism, which is a religious movement that promotes Vaishnavism or worship of Lord Vishnu as the Supreme Soul.
- Gaudiya Vaishnavism teaches the acceptance of Bhakti yoga as a method to realize the ultimate truth.
- Chaitanya Mahaprabhu is credited with popularizing the 'Maha Mantra' or 'Hare Krishna Mantra.'
- He is also known for composing in Sanskrit a prayer of eight verses, known as 'Siksastakam.' Said to have been born with features similar to that of Lord Krishna, Chaitanya Mahaprabhu was a child prodigy, and became a scholar at a very young age.
- He even opened a school and had thousands of followers very early in his life. Though not much about his sudden and mysterious disappearance or demise is known, a few scholars and researchers believe that he might have died of epilepsy.
- However, this conclusion is still debatable as there are other accounts that suggest various other theories, including a theory of murder and magical disappearance.

## The Tour

- For many years, Chaitanya travelled the length and breadth of India, advocating Bhakti yoga.
- Chanting the name of Krishna, Chaitanya would travel on foot to various places in a state of absolute bliss or ecstasy. In 1515, Chaitanya visited Vrindavan, believed to be the birth place of Lord Krishna.
- The main objective of Chaitanya's visit was later said

to be 'reinvention,' as Chaitanya wanted to identify important places associated with Lord Krishna, in Vrindavan.

- After traveling for years, Chaitanya settled down in Puri, Odisha, where he stayed for the final 24 years of his life. Prataprudra Dev, a Gajapati ruler, became one of his most enthusiastic patrons and a devotee of his 'sankirtan' gatherings.

## Teachings

- 'Siksastakam,' a 16th century prayer of eight verses, is the only written record of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's teachings.
- The teachings and philosophy of Gaudiya Vaishnavism are based on this Sanskrit text.
- Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's teachings are divided into 10 points and are centered on the glorification of Lord Krishna.
- Below mentioned are the 10 teachings of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu.
  - Krishna is the absolute truth
  - Krishna possesses all energies
  - Lord Krishna is the source of everything
  - Atman (soul) is a part of the Lord
  - Souls are influenced by matter in physical form
  - Souls are not influenced by matter in liberated state
  - The Atman is different and identical to the Paramatman
  - Atman practices pure devotion
  - Attaining Krishna's love is the ultimate goal
  - Lord Krishna is the only blessing to be received

## Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's Philosophy

- Though initiated into the Madhvacharya tradition, Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's philosophy is considered slightly

different from that of other followers and teachers of Madhvacharya tradition.

- According to historians and scholars, Chaitanya Mahaprabhu did not pen down any written text. However, his words were recorded by one of his followers, which came to be known as 'Siksastakam' (eight verses).
- These eight verses are believed to house the philosophy of Gaudiya Vaishnavism.
- Though Chaitanya Mahaprabhu did not write down his teachings and philosophy, he did request a few of his followers (Six Goswamis of Vrindavan) to systematically present his teachings in their own writings.