



The Chaitanya Vaishnava Vedanta of Jiva Gosvami: When Knowledge Meets Devotion (Routledge Hindu Studies Series)

Ravi M. Gupta

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The Chaitanya Vaishnava tradition is famous for its depth of devotion to Krishna, the blue-hued Deity. Chaitanya Vaishnavas are known for having refined the practice and aesthetics of devotion into a sophisticated science. This imposing devotional edifice was constructed upon a solid foundation of philosophical argument and understanding. In this book, Ravi Gupta sheds new light on the contribution of Chaitanya Vaishnavism to the realm of Indian philosophy. He explores the hermeneutical tools employed, the historical resources harnessed, the structure of the arguments made, and the relative success of the endeavor. For most schools of Vaishnavism, the supporting foundation consists of the philosophical resources provided by Vedanta. The Chaitanya tradition is remarkable in its ability to engage in Vedantic discourse and at the same time practice an ecstatic form of devotion to Krishna. The prime architect of this balance was the scholar-devotee Jiva Gosvami (ca. 1517 - 1608). This book analyses Jiva Gosvami's writing concerning the philosophy of the Vedanta tradition. It concludes that Jiva's writing crosses 'disciplinary boundaries', for he brought into dialogue four powerful streams of classical Hinduism: the various systems of Vedanta, the ecstatic bhakti movements, the Puranic commentarial tradition, and the aesthetic rasa theory of Sanskrit poetics. With training in and commitments to all of these traditions, Jiva Gosvami produced a distinctly Chaitanya Vaishnava system of theology.

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