

LORD GOURANG

OR

SALVATION FOR ALL.

BY

SHISHIR KUMAR GHOSE.

VOL II.

Published by
PIYUSH KANTI GHOSE,
"Patrika" Office, Calcutta.
1923

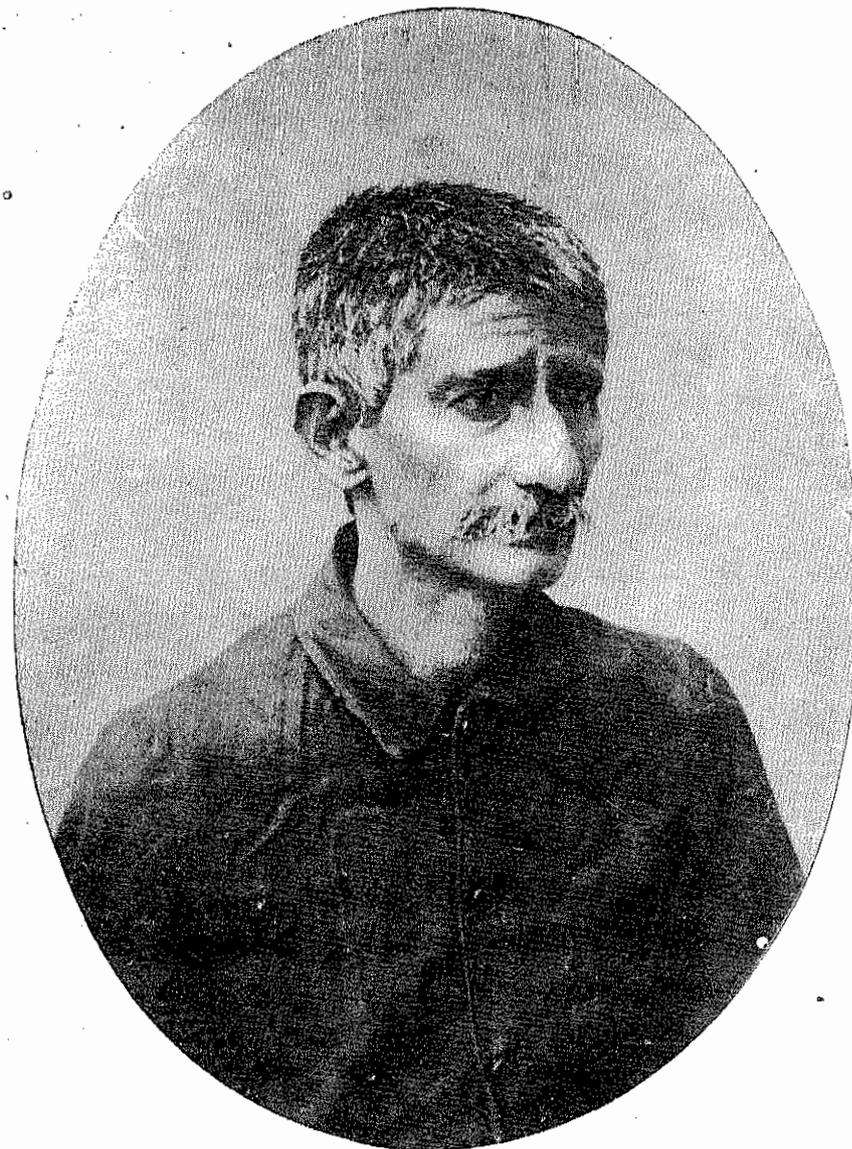
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Printer: S. C. MAJUMDAR
SRI GOURANGA PRESS
71/1, Mirzapur Street, Calcutta.

Available from:
Cultural Books, Inc.,
1, Park View Annexe,
Ajmal Khan Park, Karolbagh,
New Delhi 25, India.

1589/22.



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BORN August 1840—DIED 10th January 1911, 1-35 P.M.

PREFACE.

The first conception of God, by the Hindus, is to be found in their sacred writings, the holy Vedas, composed thousands of years ago. This is how they describe God :

“Perfect truth, perfect happiness, without equal, immortal, absolute unity whom neither speech can describe nor mind comprehend ; all-pervading ; all-transcending ; delighted with his own boundless intelligence ; not limited by space or time ; without feet, moving slowly ; without hands, grasping all worlds ; without eyes, all-surveying ; without ears, all-hearing ; without an intelligent guide, understanding all ; without cause, the first of all causes ; all-ruling ; all-powerful ; the creator, preserver, transformer of all things ; such is the great One.”

—*Sir W. Jones's Works*, Vol. VI.

As a description of the First Cause and the Creator of the Universe, it has never been equalled : it is as grand as the Object.

But the Being, described above, did not meet the natural requirements of the man who hankered after a friendly Protector, a Companion, and an Object of love. There is, in the heart of man, an ardent desire for a communion with God, more or less developed according to his constitution or training. The desire is universal, and is felt by almost

every one at one time of his life, for a closer intimacy with the mysterious Being Who had given him life. Generally, however, cares of the world get a preponderance in the heart, and eventually crush out this hankering after God.

This awakening, in the heart, of a desire for communion with God, is the beginning of Purva-rag. Those who can manage to keep the fire alive in the heart, find themselves slowly, though imperceptibly, attracted towards God.* But the God, as described in the Vedas, does not suit his limited capacity. The heart of such a man hankers after Him, but he finds that the grand Being, described in the Vedas, is beyond his reach. He feels that a companionship with the Being, described in the Vedas, is impossible for him. His heart seeks realization, but the God of the Vedas is unrealizable by the

* Every man in the world is restless and is striving after something,—what he does not know. He feels he is in want of something, the nature of which he does not precisely comprehend. He seeks, in the accomplishment of ambitious projects, the rest that he feels he is in need of. But he finds that worldly greatness, when secured, is delusion and a snare; he assuredly does not find happiness or peace in it. He marries; he begets children; in short, he gets all that he supposes would give him happiness. But yet he finds no rest. Pious men declare that this restlessness of every man,—this state of uncomfortableness, of being ill at ease with himself and his surroundings,—is solely due to the loss of the companionship of the Partner of his soul.

heart. And thus the Hindu saints, says a Hindu sacred book, finding the God of the Vedas as beyond reach, felt the necessity of giving definite shapes to the Deity, for the purposes of communion with Him. And thus Images came into existence, —Gods with definite shapes and human attributes.*

It was, of course, believed that God was something higher than man; so the Image representing

* It may pain the hearts of those who worship the Images of Gods to be told that their objects of worship were evolved out of pure imagination. Our own belief is otherwise. The saying in our Shastras, referred to above, is that, "the forms of the Gods were *imagined* for the benefit of the devotee," but we go further than that. These forms were, we believe, presented to the minds of the saints who longed to see Him. To long to see God is to ask Him to take a form. Those, who object to Image-worship and call it "idolatry", say that a communion is possible with a formless and all-pervading God. Yes, some sort of slight communion is possible, but not realization. This is, however, a matter of experience. The devotee who is satisfied with communion with an invisible God, does not know that more direct communion with Him is possible, and has been achieved. Communion with God is followed at least by eight symptoms, *viz.*, pulak, tears of joy, shivering, samadhi (death-like trance), etc., etc. Indeed, all these eight symptoms, enumerated in the sacred books, follow ecstasy by whatever cause produced. The communion with God produces ecstasy, hence the appearance of the symptoms. When, therefore, there is no ecstasy, *i.e.*, when there are no symptoms indicating it, the devotee can rest assured that there is no communion with God. Communion with God is not a myth, nor the ecstasy which follows it.

Him, naturally came to be presented to the devotee as somewhat different from Him. Thus we have Images with several hands and several heads ; Images representing the different attributes of God, —His power, His wisdom, and so forth. We are assured by the saints that these Images appeared to the ardent devotees, according to the constitution of their minds. Those who feared God, to them He appeared in a frightful shape. Those who worshipped Him as a Bounty-giver, to them He appeared as such. And hence different Images came to be worshipped in the world. And thus the sloka of the Geeta,—“I serve as I am served,” is considered one of the main pillars upon which religion itself is founded.

But some bhaktas, by earnest devotion, were at last able to realize that it was a libel on God to liken Him to a wilful and all-powerful sovereign. They came to realize that He was nothing of the kind, but only an object of love. Indeed, they felt an irresistible attraction for Him, and this because of their own character. Themselves pure and possessing a sacrificing and loving heart, and having acquired distaste of worldly pleasures, they hankered after love, and therefore at last realized that the greatest object of love to man was no other than God Himself. He was the superior Partner, and thus the nearest and dearest object of his soul. To a devotee who loves God, He therefore appears as

an object of love. Such a Being must be a man, —a man physically, intellectually, morally and spiritually perfect.

Thus the seeds of Vaishnavism were planted in the solitary human heart. But his fellows, not having his disinterested devotion, failed to realize this precious knowledge that God is dearer than all. And then Messiahs, and latterly Lord Gauranga, worshipped by his followers as an Incarnation of God Himself, came to bear witness to the truth. The devotee can attain to the highest truth by his own exertions ; but ordinary people need a Messiah to be able to realize and accept it. What Jesus taught was known beforehand, but he confirmed the principles known before, and then they were accepted by millions. What Lord Gauranga taught was likewise known to a few before his time, but he distributed it to millions. For a fuller discussion of this and other cognate subjects, the reader is referred to the Appendix.*

* Madame Blavatsky, in her Secret Doctrine, enumerates the names of Avatars such as Krishna, Buddha, Jesus, Gauranga, etc. The leelas of all Avatars are known to the world, except those of Gauranga, the last. The present book is an attempt to supply that want.

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LORD GOURANGA

Part II.

CHAPTER I.

TO SANTIPORE.

The Lord one morning suggested to Nitai that they should proceed together to Santipore, to pay a visit to Advaita who had, with Haridas, returned to his native town. Shachee was informed of the project, and persuaded to permit of its being carried into effect, and soon afterwards the two friends set forth on their journey. Santipore, as already explained, is situated some ten miles below Nadia, on the bank of the same river, the Bhagirathi. When they had accomplished half the way, they approached a village called Lalitpur, which has since been swallowed up by the river. Here, on the bank of the river, and a little apart from the main village, they came upon an isolated hut. "Whose hut may this be?" enquired the Lord. Nitai who had frequently travelled by this road and had some acquaintance with the owner, replied: "It is occupied by a Sannyasee and his wife." "A Sannyasee with a wife must be a strange creature," said the Lord, whose astonishment was natural, seeing that the term

Sannyasee is generally applied to one who has given up all his worldly goods, forsaken society, and become in a manner, dead to the things of this life. "Let us call upon the pious man," said the Lord ; and having said this, they advanced to the open door. Nitai being himself a Sannyasee, and wearing the garb of one, was immediately welcomed by the owner, who came forward to meet him as a brother, and asked them to remain and accept what hospitality he could offer. Nitai had never been in the habit of rejecting a meal, when offered to him, and on this occasion he accepted the invitation, though not with the cordial sanction of the Lord.

The Lord who had followed Nitai, now advanced to his side, and saluted the Sannyasee in the customary manner. The Sannyasee thereupon blessed him with these words: "May you be blessed with education, wealth, a dutiful wife and obedient children." To this blessing, the Lord replied, though in a submissive tone, that as a Sannyasee he should have offered him more substantial blessings. The Sannyasee, highly offended at that remark, looked the Lord full in the face. To him the Lord appeared simply as a young man of twenty-three, of handsome presence and guileless expression. Perhaps the most remarkable thing about the Lord was his honest guileless look, which convinced everyone who observed him that he had no guile in his mind, and no impurity in his heart. Sinful acts or even unworthy thoughts leave their impress on the face. A glance at the face of

the Lord always convinced even a stranger that no unworthy thought had agitated its owner.

The Sannyasee could perceive that the stranger, who had resented the blessings offered to him, was a young man who had nothing of the aggressive spirit in him ; so he replied more gently than he had intended: "Why do you object to the terms of my blessings? Have I not offered you the things that men most hanker after?" In reply the Lord said: "As we are here on earth only for a short period, merely earthly blessing can do no substantial good. I expected from a pious man like you the inexpressible blessing of bhakti to God." The Sannyasee now lost his temper and replied angrily: "I have travelled all over India ; visited most of its sacred shrines ; and you are only a stripling. Is it not impertinent on your part to come and tell me what my duties are?" Seeing the state of affairs, Nitai intervened and said ; "Why, brother, do you mind what this ignorant young man says? I know your worth!" The Sannyasee was mollified, and suspected that the Sannyasee before him (Nitai), after hypnotising the silly young man, (the belief in such powers being universal), was leading him away from home, for an unknown purpose of his own. So, without pursuing the discussion further, he retired in order to fetch some fruits, with which he soon returned. After placing them before his guests, the Sannyasee asked Nitai whether he would also fetch some *ananda* (joy). Just then his

wife called him aside, and the opportunity was taken by the Lord to ask Nitai what their host meant by *ananda*. Nitai smiled and said that he meant by *ananda* "spirituous liquor."

A Sannyasee is one who has forsaken society and who is prohibited from even seeing the face of a woman. But here we see a man calling himself a Sannyasee, who lives with a wife, in a comfortable hut, on the outskirts of a large village, like any ordinary mortal, and who is addicted to spirituous liquor. The fact is, he was only a *tantric* Sannyasee, or one holding *tantric* doctrines of the Veera class.

When the Lord heard that *ananda* meant liquor, he felt as if he had fallen into the clutches of an ogre. He hastily rose in alarm, leaving his tiffin unfinished, to depart, and beckoned Nityananda to follow him. One would have expected the Lord to make his way to the public road, but he did not venture to do so, and to avoid such a dreadful thing as the pursuit of a *tantric* Sannyasee with *ananda* in his hand, the Lord plunged straight into the Ganges, followed by Nityananda, and with a few strokes of their powerful arms they soon reached the middle of the broad and formidable Ganges.*

Santipore was ten miles from Nadia, they had

* According to the modern teetotaler the safest course is not to drink, taste, or smell liquor; but the Lord taught mankind by his own example, that, when one is tempted with an offer of drink, the safest course for him is to fly to some place inaccessible to pursuit.

come only half that way, and they now determined to perform the remainder of the journey by swimming, rather than trust themselves to the public road; and as both were possessed of great physical strength and endurance, and were first-class swimmers, the feat was in no way remarkable for them, especially as the current was in their favour. Alligators, it is true, infested that part of the river, which became dangerous then, it being the beginning of the rainy season. But Nitai* had no fear of alligators, and, of course, the Lord had not.

While Lord Gauranga and Nityananda were proceeding down the middle of the mighty Ganges, the latter heard the Lord muttering his threats against Advaita in these words: "So Advaita has resolved to forsake bhakti and teach gyan† as a means of salvation. I will to-day cure him of his folly." Now, hitherto Nitai had no idea why the Lord was going to Santipore so suddenly; he had accompanied the Lord only because he had been directed to do so. The few words threateningly muttered by the Lord, however, gave him an inkling of the object with which the Lord had undertaken the journey. On

* The writer of the Chaitanya Bhagabat, who was himself a disciple of Nitai, says that when Lord Nitai saw an alligator with his head above the surface of the stream, he used to swim out to catch it.

† It has been stated more than once that there are Dvaita Advaita *badies*, the latter depending for salvation upon their own resources, etc. (Vide Vol. I. pp. XLI.)

hearing the Lord speak, he turned his face towards him and saw, to his amazement, that the Lord was then in his divine state. Indeed, though His body was immersed and with little more than His head above water, still Nitai could see the light of "million sums" † playing around His body. Hitherto Nitai, as was usual with him, had been in a happy frame of mind, but the threatening words of his Master, uttered in his character of God Almighty, led him to think seriously of the fate in store for Advaita.

Well, in good time they reached the bathing-ghat of Advaita, where they left the water, and proceeded to his house which stood, a short distance off, on the bank. As they advanced from the ghat, a figure as of gold, enveloped in a subdued light, with Nitai behind him, could be seen making his way hurriedly towards Advaita's house. The Lord entered through the open door and at once confronted his host, who was seated inside, surrounded by his disciples, the chief of whom was Haridas. On the arrival of the visitors, Advaita rose to greet them, but the Lord, without waiting for his salutation, looked at him with threatening eyes. He addressed Advaita thus: "Tell me, which do you prefer as a means of salvation,—bhakti or gyan?"

To make clear the cause of this action on the part of the Lord we must go back a little, in order to relate the events which led Advaita to quit Nadia

† Chaitanya Bhagabat.

and return to his native town. When the dramatic representation, an account of which will be given in the next chapter, was over, Advaita recovered his ordinary senses. So completely had he been taken possession of by the influences, exercised on him during the performance, that when he returned to consciousness, he was unable to remember anything he had done and said during the progress of the play. He asked others for information with regard to these, and when he heard what had happened he felt very much humiliated.

Says the book "Chaitanya Chandrodaya": "Advaita thus communed with himself: We have heard of men being possessed, that is what appears to have occurred to me on the day the dramatic performance was held. I remember nothing that I said or did; but gather from those who were present, that I had acted in an extraordinary manner. I owe it all to Bishwambhar (the Lord Nimai) who is gifted with marvellous, even supernatural, powers. Of this there can be no doubt. On the occasion in question I became a puppet in his hands, and he made me do whatever he liked."*

Advaita naturally felt that he had been made a fool of, and had become a laughing-stock to all his

* In chronological order, an account of the dramatic representation, described in the succeeding chapter, ought to have been given first. But for reasons which need not be enumerated here, I have chosen to make the present arrangement, i.e. to give it in the next chapter.

comeers. He was seventy-six years of age, and had hitherto pursued a strict, well-defined course in religious matters. He had worshipped God with *Tulsee* leaves and flowers, and chanted well-established orthodox hymns and mantras. But on that occasion he had been led to abandon all his previous practices, and, carried away by his feelings, to dance and sing like a drunken man. Would it be prudent, he thought, for him now, towards the last days of his life, to change all his previous opinions and methods, and adopt others? Bhakti is good, but gyan is good also, and all the most respectable saints say, that it is better than its rival. As a matter of fact, the bhakti, which Bishwambhar is teaching, has made his followers act like mad men: dancing wildly with uplifted arms, while musical anklets jingle on the feet! Arguing thus, Advaita determined to have nothing further to do with the Lord's doctrines and practices.

But there was a difficulty. He had often made the same resolve, and had been compelled to break it. He had made his resolutions in the absence of the Lord. But in his presence he had always failed to stick to them. He was afraid that Bishwambhar would again try to entangle him. But was he not a man who had devoted fifty years of his life to spiritual culture? If Bishwambhar again came to meddle with his belief, he (Advaita) would defy him and resist him. With this resolve he had left Nadia and returned to Santipore.

So Advaita was teaching his disciples, including Haridas, that there was no religious philosophy equal to that of gyan, despite the contrary opinion of Bishwambhar. It would be suicidal, he urged, to sacrifice gyan in order that they might sing and dance and otherwise behave like lunatics. Some of his disciples took him at his word and arrayed themselves against the Lord, though, as was to be expected, Haridas remained staunch in his adherence to the doctrines preached by his young master. He was, at the same time, much concerned to understand what had led Advaita apparently to oppose the sweet Lord. Well, the Lord Nimai was aware of these things, and, being accompanied by Nitai, had journeyed to Santipore in order to draw Advaita again into his fold. This time the Lord was, however, in an angry mood. The Lord, no doubt, felt that Advaita was carrying his unbelief rather to an unreasonable extent. So, what the Lord did, was to come to Santipore, force himself abruptly into the presence of Advaita and ask him to explain, in the midst of his disciples, which was the better as a means of salvation,—bhakti or gyan?

Now, this question was asked by Nimai when he was not in his ordinary, but in his divine, state. Everything in him betokened it. The divine light that surrounded him, his countenance which showed irresistible will and power, and the authoritative tone of his voice, led everyone to quail before the Figure. But Advaita had made a firm resolve to resist the

influence, and being a saint of great power, he succeeded in resisting the Lord for the moment. Said he, "Of course, gyan is superior to bhakti."

The Lord replied: "Yes, I know that that is your present opinion, but I have come here to cure you of your folly," saying which he fell upon Advaita, and began to chastise him.

Now, the Lord was a young man of twenty-three, of immense physical strength, whereas Advaita was a small man of seventy-six. Those present, therefore, namely, Advaita's disciples, might have been expected to attempt to protect the old man from this unprovoked assault of the younger upon the stronger. But they did not, for they could not. Advaita's wife, however, rushed forward to her husband's assistance. She had herself been blessed by the Lord as scarcely any woman was ever blessed before. The Lord had sent for the couple, and brought them to Nadia against their will, for the purpose of revealing Himself to them. The Lord usually addressed Seeta, the wife of Advaita, as "mother," and she had come to regard him, not only as the Lord God, but also as an inexpressibly dear object. But when her husband was being assulted, all her previous regard vanished from her mind; her bhakti for the Lord, her love for Him, nay, her knowledge of the fact that Nirnai was Sree Krishna Himself, left her for the moment, and the woman got the upper hand of the devotee. She rushed forward wildly and shouted for help, in the anguish of her soul. Said she, addressing the

Lord: "Why do you beat him? What has he done to you? Are you not ashamed to beat a Brahmin and an old man? Forbear in the name of everything sacred. He will die, and you will have to answer for his death."

Seeing that her words were making no impression on the Lord, she turned to Advaita's followers, and said: "What cowards you are that will not move a finger to save the old man, your preceptor? What a shame! Don't you see that he is killing the old man?" It was in this manner that the old lady, in her distraction, addressed the Lord and the disciples of her husband.

The Lord had felled Advaita to the floor and was administering to him blow after blow. Those who were present as spectators, were doing nothing to protect Advaita from the blows. This seemed strange to Seeta, his wife. But the old man's pupils saw a stranger spectacle which kept them enthralled.

What they saw was that Advaita himself was not only not moving a finger to defend himself, but was not even uttering a groan or even a protest. He was passively submitting to the blows, as if he were urgently in need of them, and they were, therefore, exceedingly welcome to him. Nay more; it seemed to them that Advaita was not only not suffering any pain from the blows, but was actually drawing infinite pleasure from their application; his beaming face shewed this unmistakably. In this belief they were confirmed by the short ejaculations of Advaita.

himself. For he now and then gave vent to his feelings by words like these: "Ah! delightful!" "These are blessings indeed!" "Ah, my Lord! now I feel how good and merciful you are!" Almost every blow delivered by the Lord was followed by some such expression from Advaita. It seemed very evident to the by-standers that every blow inflicted upon the saint meant in effect the infusion of ecstasy into his person! Indeed, this ecstasy at length so overpowered Advaita that he could no longer remain in a passive state. And when he showed that he had had enough of chastisement and was desirous of rising to his feet the Lord left him.

The saint rose, and began to dance with uplifted hands, exclaiming: "This is mercy, indeed! Come, the dwellers of Heaven and of Earth, and witness the mercy of my Lord. Though I forsook him, nevertheless he has not forsaken me. I forsook him and he has come even to my house to win me back again. Where is there so much mercy as in the All-merciful Lord?"

The attitude of Advaita quieted his wife at once. She stood speechless, like the others, watching the extraordinary scene enacted before them—the doings and sayings not only of Advaita but also of the Lord. The Lord, as we have said, did not object when Advaita made an attempt to rise. He left him and went out and sat on the veranda, as if tired. Every one could see that the Lord was in His divine state. He sat down and muttered to Himself, in a voice,

which however every one heard, Advaita included: "If you must resort to gyan for your salvation, you had no business to pray for an Avatar."* Advaita heard what the Lord muttered and he came forward to acknowledge his obligations. He caught hold of the feet of the Lord and touched them with his head. Just at this moment, Nimai recovered his normal state and saw what the old saint was doing. He never permitted Advaita to salute him when he was in his human state; on the other hand, he always revered the old saint almost as if he were his father or spiritual Guru. But here Advaita was not only saluting him, but doing it in a manner which only the

* Those who believe in an impersonal God cite the Geeta for their authority. The Geeta contains the lectures which the Lord Sree Krishna delivered to Arjoon. Now, this very fact of God speaking in human shape as Sree Krishna to Arjoon, is conclusive proof of God being personal even according to the Geeta. The manner in which God has been described in the Bible proves the same thing. Jehovah speaks with the angels and with Jesus: He sends his son to save mankind, and these facts also go to prove that God is personal God, that is to say, is a distinct entity. Christians object to idolatry. But the Christians believe in a personal God, which shows that in their heart of hearts they believe that He has a spiritual form. The Vaishnavas likewise say that His form is spiritual. The Vaishnavas go further and declare that there are men who have not the capacity of conceiving and worshipping the spiritual Image of the God-head, and who ought, therefore, to begin by worshipping Him through an Image of the Creator made of a material substance. Advaita-badism is incompatible with Avatar.

meanest servant is permitted to do to the highest master. Indeed, no sooner had the Lord regained his normal state, than the faintly visible light which had surrounded his person disappeared, and his countenance, which had until then worn a commanding expression, assumed its natural meekness. He saluted Advaita with humility and implored him never again to pain him by showing him such extraordinary honour!

Advaita perceived that the Lord had assumed his human state, and thereupon hastily let go his feet. The Lord, as if awakened from a dream, looked in the face of the saint, to enquire what the matter was. But every one remained silent. The Lord, however, had a faint recollection of what he had said and done, so having cast an imploring look at the saint, he besought him to tell him frankly whether he had, in any way, acted in an improper manner. "Tell me, Acharya," said he, "I beseech you, if I have in any way offended you." Advaita and Nitai exchanged glances and both smiled. In reply Advaita assured the Lord that he had done nothing improper. The Lord, however, was not quite satisfied with the explanation,—perhaps he had noticed the glances that had passed between Nitai and Advaita; so he again addressed the latter with folded hands and in the humblest terms possible. "My Lord Acharya," said he, "do not make any difference between me and Achyoot, your son. Consider me as a son, ignorant and uncultured. You must teach me my

duties; and if I in any way offend you, you must reprove me for it, and in all things concerning me do as a parent would do in regard to an ignorant child."

Advaita assumed the tone of an elder, and said: "Of course, of course; but you seem to have besmeared yourself with mud. Is it not proper that you should bathe? I think it is time that we should all go to the Ganges and bathe." The Lord examined his own person to find that what Advaita said was true, he having, in his struggle with the saint in his wet clothes, actually covered himself with mud. He rose to go to bathe, and saw before him Seeta who was watching him. He immediately addressed her thus: "Mother, I must confess, I am very hungry. Be quick in making your offerings to Krishna. I must have *Prasad** immediately."

The lady, delighted at the address, ran to prepare the offerings, that is to say, to cook the meal. A few moments before she had forgotten all her past experiences and feelings in regard to the Lord. She had used harsh expressions to him, but now she was again all love. As for the Lord himself, he had no knowledge whatever that a few moments before he had assaulted her husband.

A short recapitulation of the incidents related above may be necessary here. The way, in which

* As the Christians offer grace before taking food, so a good Hindu never takes anything which has not been first offered to God. The food which has been offered to God is *prasad*.

Advaita had been made to act during the dramatic performance, an account of which, as I said before, would be found in Chapter II., had given him alarm. He found to his dismay that he was forgetting all he had learnt before, that he was being made to do what willingly he would never have done before, nay, he was almost being made to lose his identity. So he resolved to make a final struggle to release himself from the spell which the young son of Jagannath had thrown over him. He had observed that the presence of the Lord always cowed him, so he had resolved to defy him boldly even in his presence. With this resolve he was preaching anti-bhakti doctrines to his followers. His doctrines, when summarized, would stand thus: He (Advaita) has drained the contents of all the *Shastras* (sacred books) and has found that, from the beginning to the end they have all given preference to gyan. To go against these doctrines in his old age would, on his part, be an act of extreme imprudence. As for an Avatara the sacred books do not predict any. Of course, Nimai possesses enormous occult powers. In proof of this he recounted how he had been made a fool of on the night the dramatic performance was held. But it would be folly in him to take Nimai for an Incarnation of God on such slender grounds. He had no doubt been hypnotized.

When the Lord came and asked Advaita to state which was the better—gyan or bhakti, Advaita found to his dismay that he was again losing his self-control.

But with gigantic efforts he managed to stammer out a half-uttered protest against bhakti. And then followed the scene, which I have described above. For the Lord Gauranga, the personification of meekness and gentleness, to commit an assault upon an old man of seventy-six, would have been an outrageous act, if it had been really an assault at all, in the usual acceptation of the term. If it had been such an assault the Lord would have known it, but he knew nothing of it, for on coming to his human state he earnestly inquired whether he had in any way spoken or acted improperly. And again, had it been an ordinary assault, Advaita would have felt the effects of the blows, and would have resented the insult, as they were administered in the presence of his most important disciples, his children and his wife. But Advaita suffered no pain; but, on the contrary, the blows, as already stated, only infused ecstasy into his heart. Of course, Seeta, for the moment, forgetting past experiences, had put the incident down as an outrage, but she soon came to feel ashamed of her own weakness; and when the Lord bade her to prepare the meal, she ran to prepare the choicest available dishes for her dear guest.

The explanation of the above phenomenon, however, I can give in my own way. I have already said that the Lord had the power of imparting bhakti at his will, and he did not adopt the same manner of accomplishing his object in every case. Sometimes

a look, sometimes a mere act of the will, sometimes a word was enough to fill his subject with the holy influence. In the case of the Kazi, it has been stated, that the Lord quietly touched one of his fingers when speaking to him, whereupon he was overpowered by the strength of his emotions, which led him to fall prostrate before the master. In the case of Advaita, a hard thinker, an intellectual man, who had already given settled forms to all his ideas, something more than a touch was perhaps necessary to expel all contrary humours, as the physicians might say, in his heart. Advaita, before the assault, doubted the existence of a Personal God ; but when he rose to his feet after the assault, he was a perfect believer !

The Lord, accompanied by Nitai, Advaita and Haridas, plunged into the Ganges and spent some time sporting in the water, and pelting each other with handfuls from the sacred stream in the excess of their joy. On their way back the Lord entered the temple where the Image Radha-Krishna was enshrined, owing to which fact, this temple and its Image have ever since been objects of especial reverence to all Vaishnavas. There, the Lord prostrated himself before the Image, and seeing this, Advaita also prostrated himself and in such a manner that his head almost touched the feet of the Lord. Haridas, in the same manner, fell prostrate immediately behind Advaita. Nitai, who came in after the others, on seeing this spectacle, remarked,

“Here is a bridge by which to reach Brindaban.” The remark led the Lord and his two companions to rise, and the former was shocked to see Advaita at his feet, and said so in tones of protest.

I must here explain an often-used metaphor of the Hindus. The death of men is likened to a turbulent river and the world itself to a temporary market-place, where men sell and purchase, whose permanent home is on the other side of the said turbulent river. Suppose a man after selling his wares and making his purchases in a market-place has to cross a dangerous river in order to get to his home on the other bank ; the state of man in this world is likened to his. The market-place is the world, the river is death, and the man's home is his salvation. Here is a song of the Vaishnavas, in which Sree Krishna is addressed as the Great Pilot who ferries over all men to the other bank of the river, which separates the living from the dead :—

Ferry us over to the other bank, oh beautiful Pilot !
We have come to your ghat (ferry place) for that purpose.

We are poor and therefore cannot pay the ferry-toll.
And wherefore do we come to your ghat ?
Because we have been assured, you are merciful.
Here is another song, in which Nitai is made to address all mankind :

Come, come, who want to be ferried to the other bank.

Our Lord Gauranga has opened a new ghat for the weary market-men.

At my Gauranga's ghat, no toll is demanded.

The sinner, the uninitiated are piloted free.

The reader, we hope, will now understand what Nitai meant by the salvation-bridge referred to above. Let a man gain the favour of Haridas, and he will be led to Advaita ; Advaita will lead him to Gauranga, and Gauranga to Radha-Krishna, which is the highest object that man can attain.

From Santipore the Lord came back to Nadia, of course, bringing Advaita a prisoner, though now a willing one. But we are very much tempted to mention one incident which happened while the Lord was at Santipore. One day he suddenly appeared before Pandit Gauridas, a learned man and a saint of the first class, who, after leaving society, though not formally, was living on the other bank of the river in the town of Kalna, (a town which exists to this day) engaged in spiritual culture. Gauridas had heard of the advent of the Avartar, but had never taken the trouble to visit him or in any way to test his credentials. What he now saw before him was the sudden appearance of a beautiful youth with a noble countenance. The sight staggered him, as well it might do ; but what appeared most remarkable to him was that this young man, who looked more like a celestial Being than a man, was carrying an oar on his shoulders !

The Lord arrived, and without ceremony ad-

dressed Gauridas thus : "I am coming from Santipore and have brought this oar for you." "What for?" asked Gauridas. "So that you may row men across to the other bank," replied the Lord. Saying this the Lord wanted to hand over the oar to him, but Gauridas hesitated to accept it. He gazed at the figure before him with diverse feelings, and slowly addressed him thus : "To accept the oar is to accept serious responsibility. I must have the means to do the work entrusted to me." "That, of course," said the Lord. Gauridas pondered a moment : "Who is he that is so bold as to speak thus?" And then enquired slowly. "Who may you be, pray, that issues such a peremptory command?" The Lord replied that he was Nimai Pandit of Nadia. Gauridas bowed, took the oar, and accepted Gauranga as the Lord of his life. The Images of Lord Gauranga and Nitai, set up by Gauridas at Kalna, exist to this day, and thither pilgrims flock from all parts of India to pay homage to them. From that day Gauridas became one of the most celebrated of the Lord's worshippers. It may be mentioned here that the oar yet exists in the temple at Kalna. Gauridas performed the task imposed upon him with credit, for a large part of Orissa was converted by him and his followers.

Thus this young man of twenty-three never forgot that he had a mission to mankind. But more, he had the power to perform it with as much ease as a man drinks water. A pious man, who has the

power of leading a sceptic or a sinner to piety, is likened to a touch-stone ; he makes gold out of iron, a bhakta of a sinner. But the Lord Gauranga not only led sinners to piety, but he did more. He created touch-stones out of sinners, that is to say, pious men of sinners with irresistible power for the conversion of other sinners !

The loathsome moral leper rises a sound man at the look of the Lord, and then he commands him to go and reclaim sinners, and he actually does so, by hundreds and thousands !

To make a conversion is beyond the power of man. A Napoleon cannot do so, nor a Newton. If the work of conversion is beyond the power of an ordinary man, the conversion of loathsome moral lepers and learned and wise atheists is more difficult still. But the Lord converted them by a touch or a look, nay, converted them not into good and pious men, but into touch-stones, themselves competent to convert others ! No one that had not received authority from above could do this. The irresistible power shewed by the Lord, while travelling in the south, was miraculous. Passing through a village, he embraced an inhabitant who thereupon was not only converted himself, but was charged with the power of converting others.

A vivid description of this power, possessed by the Lord, will be found in "Chaitanya Charitamrita."

CHAPTER II.*

A DRAMATIC REPRESENTATION.

One day the Lord suddenly addressed his bhaktas in these words : "Let us have a dramatic representation of Lord Krishna's Leela." His companions at first could not understand what the Lord actually meant. The Hindus were familiar with the drama from time immemorial. The dramatic works which were popular in the country, were the creation of poets who had flourished in ancient times, but who had not meddled with Sree Krishna. No drama representing the Krishna Leela† was then extant, at least so far as was known. The bhaktas, therefore, eagerly asked the Lord to explain the meaning of his proposal. In reply, the Lord said that, for the purpose of appreciating fully the Krishna Leela, a dramatic performance by representing it, would be an excellent means. By such representation one might

* This chapter contains a description of the drama, the representation of which led Advaita to leave Nadia in a huff, noticed in the previous chapter.

† The Srimat Bhagabat leaves in doubt whether the Leelas of Krishna were performed in Brindaban on this earth or in that of the spiritual world. The Vaishnava has the choice of placing his Brindaban here or in the next world.

secure the indirect company of Him, the Lord Krishna, and thus not only secure the coveted spiritual ecstasy, but the purification of his soul.

It was then arranged that Budhimanta Khan, the Kayastha Zeminder, and Sadashiv Kabiraj, of whom mention has been made before, should be entrusted with the duty of making the necessary preparations. It was further settled that the performance should be held at the house of the maternal uncle of the Lord, Chandra Shekhar.

The bhaktas were, however, very curious to know what part of the Leela of Sree Krishna would be represented, and who were to take part in the performance. Their idea was that a play divided into Acts and Scenes, ought first to be composed and properly rehearsed by the bhaktas, before spectators were allowed to witness it. The bhaktas, therefore, were naturally eager to know all particulars. They requested that the Lord should assign to each the part he was to act. In reply the Lord said that this would not be necessary. When the time came, every one would know the part he would be required to play.

"But is it not a fact," they enquired, "that in such matters a thorough and previous training is necessary? Should not the actors be instructed in the words that they must speak, as also in regard to the conduct of the play generally?"

The Lord replied that when the time arrived, every one would not only know what part he would be required to play, but what to say and how to act.

"In short, friends," said the Lord, smiling, "you will be like puppets in the hands of a magician; some one else will make you do whatever is necessary, and you will not have to make any mental effort whatsoever."

The bhaktas still pressed for, at least, some definite idea on the subject, and the Lord replied: "Well, I think, I shall be Radha. Gadadhar will act the part of Lalita. The respected Nityananda will represent Radha's other attendant lady, Barai. Haridas will come on the stage as the Kotwal (City constable) of Goloke, and Sreebash will act the part of Narada, the saint."

By way of explanation, we may say that Lalita is the chief maid of Radha; Barai is another attendant,—a relative and the oldest of all her maids. Narada is a saint, devoted to Sree Krishna,—a jovial, good man, fond of inciting people to quarrel for the purpose of shewing them, in this indirect manner, the folly of losing their temper—a man of unblemished character and the most ardent friend of the weak, the sinner, and mankind in general.*

* I fear it will be a little difficult for those, not thoroughly initiated in the mysteries of the Krishna Leela, to realize fully the purport of this dramatic representation. Later on I shall try to give some explanation of the matter. Radha has eight principal attendant maids, who guard the eight doors of the secret bower where Radha and Krishna meet. Lalita is the principal. She represents poetry, music, and painting. The entire Leela of Krishna has an esoteric significance. But to

Sree Advaita inquired with folded hands, if he would be required to take a part. The Lord replied, again smiling ; "You? It will be your duty to make every one do what is needed of him. You will have to be Sree Krishna Himself!" Seeing that the bhaktas were yet exceedingly curious to know all about the matter and that they were not at all satisfied with the explanations given to them regarding the drama, the Lord, in a mood of pleasantry, tried to mystify them still more. So he said that he, as Radha, would, of course, have to put on female attire. And then looking at Advaita with a wicked smile, he said : "I intend to appear as the most captivating damsel the world has ever seen, and, therefore, dear Lord Advaita, beware! for, I assure you, that none but those who have been able to bring their passions under absolute control, can then gaze upon me and not go stark mad."

Advaita took the remark seriously. He said that he never prided himself on his strength of mind ; he knew that he had not been able to bring his passions under absolute subjection. "It seems, therefore," said he mournfully, "that I had better not witness the representation."*

the devotee everything in the end becomes real, and he enjoys supreme felicity in the company of those who take part in the sports of Krishna and Radha in Brindaban. The reader is referred to the Krishna Leela, described in Vol I.

* Advaita died at the old age of one hundred and twenty-six.

Sreebash immediately came forward and said, "I, too, must decline to be present, for, I, like Advaita, have not succeeded in subjugating my passions."

The Lord was somewhat discomfited. He replied jocularly : "Never mind. I shall give you the requisite strength of mind to resist my charms successfully."

Preparations were immediately made for the performance. The necessary paraphernalia were procured, including false moustachés, false hair, artificial trees, shrubs, creepers, flowers, and numberless other requisites. The big court-yard of Chandra Shekhar was converted into a stage. A green-room was prepared, The yard was covered with a huge canopy, and carpets were spread for the audience to sit upon. Of course, only those had permission to attend the performance who were bhaktas of the Lord. They came with their female relations. Thus Shachee and Vishnupriya came, as also Malinee (the wife of Sreebash), and her three sisters-in-law, accompanied by the wife of Murari. The ladies had a separate place in the inner part of the enclosure assigned to them. The bhaktas came in due course, and at the appointed time, the entrance to the theatre was closed. At the door stood Gangadas on guard, who was enjoined not to open it under any circumstance whatever. Vashudev Acharjya was entrusted with the duty of dressing the actors. Pundarik Vidyanidhi, Chandra Shekhar Acharjya, Sreebash and his three brothers were to sing on the occasion. All those who were required to act, including the Lord,

entered the green-room to put on their respective dresses. The singers and the instrument-players and the audience remained in the theatre.

The performance began with the playing of the instruments. This was the orchestra. The party then invoked Sree Radha-Krishna to bless all mankind and grace the performance by their august presence, and also the presence of all their worshippers in Goloke. The song evoked profound feelings of bhakti, and this was expressed by joyous peals of Haribole, repeated one after the other.

Just then Haridas appeared as the Kotwal (City Constable) of Goloke. He had put on a pair of huge moustachés, which gave him a martial appearance, and this effect was heightened by a big club resting on his shoulder. He came, and the first thing he did was to kneel and worship the stage with flowers in both his hands. He invoked the blessings of Sree Krishna, so that the stage might be converted into a real Brindaban. Thus, a dramatic performance, considered only as an object of amusement in other parts of the world, is, in India, generally utilized for the purpose of cultivating the celestial feeling of bhakti. Indeed, in India, the custom is never to go through any ceremony or work without first consecrating it to the Deity. While Haridas offered up his prayers, tears of joy bathed his cheeks. The audience was similarly moved. No one had gone there to amuse himself, but to cultivate his spiritual nature.

Haridas then addressed the audience. He

announced himself as the Kotwal of Goloke, and said his duty was to awaken those who were sleeping in indolence, forgetful of his obligations to the Lord Krishna. "I have come here," said he, "to do my duty. Arise, awake, my friends! The Lord is good, the demand that he makes of you is small. Awake! life is short. No worldly possessions will accompany you to the grave, neither riches, nor worldly honour. Think of Krishna, talk of Krishna, worship Krishna, and live in Krishna."

When Haridas had made his passionate appeal, every one was very much affected and led to respond to it by loud shouts of Haribole.*

The worship of the stage being over, Haridas appeared in a new character, that of stage manager. He addressed the audience again in these words: "I went this day to god Brahma, and found the respected saint Narada with him. When I had bowed to Brahma, Narada requested me to shew him the Leela of Sree Krishna in the form of a drama. The saint said that for a long time he had desired to see such a representation. I am now thinking how best to carry out his wish." So saying, he raised his head and saw Mukunda, his

* We wish Haridas were here for the purpose of awakening in us a sense of our own duty. The world has almost forgotten God; the appearance of a saint creates no stir; but the discovery of a gold-field convulses the universe. Yet gold can neither give us happiness here nor follow us to the other world.

assistant manager, by his side. Haridas addressed Mukunda thus: "You have just heard what I have been ordered by Narada to do. Now make the necessary arrangements."

Mukunda.—Your request surprises me. Narada is the foremost Muni (saint) in the world. The Munis, by austerity and yoga, unite their souls with the Great Soul, and they enjoy spiritual ecstasy. How is it then that Narada, the greatest amongst them, could find pleasure in the Leela of Sree Krishna which He has performed in Brindaban, by taking a human form? Inferior people, it is true, cannot worship Sree Krishna, as the Great Soul of souls—as the Invisible Being Who permeates the universe,—Who is both in and out of everything,—they have therefore to contemplate Him in His human form, for, they cannot do it otherwise. But why should the great saint adopt the practice of the ignorant?

Haridas.—Do you not know what our great book, the Srimat Bhagabat, says in this connection? It is that even great Munis, who have by yoga and austerity succeeded in effecting a union of their souls with the Fountain of all good, and are thereby in the enjoyment of continual ecstasy, do yet hanker after the joys that proceed from the sight or contemplation of the human Leela of Sree Krishna. They attain to His lotus feet sooner by contemplating His Leelas, as a man, than by meditating Him as an

Abstraction, or an Energy, or a Light, or the Creator of this universe.*

Here one word of explanation is necessary. It has been stated before that the worshippers of God in India are divided into two classes, *viz.*, the Advaitabadis and Dvaitabadis. The former take their stand on the affirmation, "He and I are the same," and the latter on the fact that the devotee has a separate existence from that of God. The former, by austerities, purify their souls and at last succeed in making themselves *en rapport* with God as the Central Soul of the universe, and thus enjoy Brahmananda, *i.e.*, the *ananda* (ecstasy) that proceeds from a soul-to-soul union with the Great-Brahma, the original Soul of the universe.

The latter or the Dvaitabadis, on the other hand, give God a most beautiful form in order to realize Him; and they, in their mind, approach Him

* According to popular notions, there are many gods, each presiding over an interest. Thus, Saraswatee is the goddess of wisdom and knowledge. When the Hindus pray for knowledge, they pray to Saraswatee, and for wealth to Lakshmee, the goddess of wealth. But these gods and goddesses represent only the different energies of God Almighty. God Almighty who is Sree Krishna, ought not to be approached for favours, but only for salvation. In other words, one who wants a favour, may go to the gods and goddesses, but he that wishes for higher blessings, must go to the Supreme Head, who is Sree Krishna. The Gopees in Brindaban worship god Siva for favours, but they love Sree Krishna; so Him, properly speaking, they do not worship.

by His Leelas or works on earth. By this method, they try to create an ardent feeling in the heart, and eventually are able to say truly that, "Thou art mine and I am Thine," and to love Him accordingly. The latter derive Premananda (ecstasy derived from love), as distinguished from Brahmananda, by this process. The Dvaitabadis allege that the ecstasy that proceeds from Prem or love of God is infinite times superior to that which proceeds from Brahmananda, which is earned by austerities and yoga. Narada, though himself the greatest of yogis is also a bhakta who had, by that means, acquired love for God. In the above, he is made to give preference to the doctrine of the Dvaitabadis.*

The Dvaitabadis say, on the other hand, that God is, no doubt, limitless but for the worshipper. He has a form which is called Sacchidananda-bigraha, that is, a beautiful form of "wisdom, spirit,

* It has been said before that there is a ceaseless dispute between the Dvaitabadis and the Advaitabadis in India. The Advaitabadis say that God is boundless as space, so that He can have no form ; that the soul of man is a spark from God, the Great Soul, wherein it merges after due purification, and that this purification is effected generally after the soul has gone through many births. They have no great faith in bhakti. "To whom shall I do bhakti?" say they. "For, are not He and I the same?" There are less rigid Advaitabadis who seek a compromise in this way. They say that bhakti in the beginning is necessary, but when the soul has passed through the bhakti stage, then the worshipper ascends to the position of a yogi. All Advaitabadis agree that the way eventually to attain to Him is by wisdom (gyan) and not bhakti.

and ecstasy." And that it is impossible to feel any tender feeling for the Lord unless He is contemplated in the human form. They say that the affirmation "He and I are the same" is quite correct, but not in the way the Advaitabadis understand it. It is easy to make the affirmation, but it is simply impossible for a man to feel or realize that he and God Almighty are the same. If it had been possible, nature would have given him the power to realize it. But he cannot realize in his mind that he and God are the same ; he only utters the phrase with his lips. For a man to say he is the self-same with God is blasphemy. "He and I are the same" is only so far true that when a man has been able to create bhakti, that is to say, create an attraction for Him, he can at last really attain the position of being almost the same with Him. A bhakta who has been able to create in himself such an attraction for God as can withstand all earthly attraction, has no fear of returning to earth again after death. The bhakta never loses his individuality, that is to say, is never born again into this world after death, but has the privilege of enjoying immortal life, and of making onward progress towards God. The bhaktas admit that there is such a thing as Brahmananda, but they contend that a man has to destroy all his human feelings by yoga to obtain it. The *ananda* is derived by emasculating ones self, and therefore, it can never be natural. That process is only natural which keeps a man as he is ; and worshipping God by

Premananda, does this. If it were the intention of God that a man should ultimately merge in Him, He would have never given him a separate existence, &c. &c. But to proceed with the drama.

Haridas.—My daughters who have to perform the Leela have gone to Brindaban. They are so young and inexperienced, and Brindaban is so full of danger that I am anxious about their safety.

Mukunda.—Why, they are under the protection of Barai.*

Haridas.—Barai? She is too old to be of any assistance.

(Narad appears just then with a veena.†)

Sreebash represented Narad, and he came accompanied by a servant, who was no other than Suklambar. The actual play commenced from here, and it began with something like a miracle. The audience had come to witness a dramatic performance. It was begun with the invocation of Sree Krishna and Radha, and a fervid prayer. This created a holy feeling in the minds of the audience. The feeling increased in intensity, degree by degree,

* Barai is a relation of Radha and her guardian, privy to the Leelas of Radha-Krishna.

† A veena is considered to be the most perfect and difficult of musical instruments in the world. Be it noted here, that the Indians carried the art of music to great perfection. The Europeans, in this respect, are much behind the Hindus. Italian music most nearly resembles the Hindu music, but the former has yet to be developed much to attain to the perfection of the latter.

till the audience forgot that it was a dramatic performance at all. They felt that they were witnessing a real Leela of Sree Krishna. They had prayed that the stage might be converted into a Brindaban. The Lord, in fact, had listened to their prayer, and presented the living scenes of Brindaban to their view.

When the bhaktas asked the Lord to train the actors in the part that each would be required to act, he was pleased to tell them that they would need no rehearsal, and that all those divine figures, who performed the Leela in Brindaban, would themselves come to their assistance. Narad, the great Muni, as described in sacred books, and Sreebash, agreed in character. And thus Sreebash was taken entire possession of by Narad. When Sreebash appeared as Narad, the audience had yet some consciousness of their surroundings; for, Sachee, suspecting that it was no real Narad but Sreebash, asked Malinee, who was sitting by, whether or not her husband was acting the part of the saint. She in reply said, "it must be so, for, they say it is he, but you can see, it is simply impossible for any one to recognize him in his present character as my husband." Gradually both actors and audience became transported, and felt as if they were really in Brindaban. If Sreebash forgot himself and fancied that he was no other than Narad, others also forgot that he was Sreebash and took him for no other than Narad himself. The fact is, as has been stated above, Sreebash forgot

himself entirely and personated Narad in every way, though the body was his.

Narad (addressing his attendant Suklambar).—I came to see Krishna Leela dramatized, but I do not see any acting here.

Just then enter some Gopees. Seeing them, Narad asks: 'Who are you, maidens?'

Gopees.—We belong to Braja, and are going to worship Shiva. May we enquire what holy saint we are addressing?

Narad.—I am an humble servant of Sree Krishna, by name Narad. (The damsels humbly bow to the saint.)

The chief of these maids, who was no other than Gadadhar and who looked more beautiful than the full moon when rising, not only saluted Narad, but burst into tears. He sobbed and prayed to Narad to grant him a favour. He said: "If you are that great Saint Narad, you can surely earn for me the lotus feet of Sree Krishna, who is now flourishing in Nadia as the son of Sachee."

Narad.—Thy desire shall be fulfilled by my blessing. Thou shalt obtain Him. But, beautiful ladies, you belong to Braja, the home of my dear Sree Krishna; you must know how to dance. Will you oblige me by showing me one of your dances?

Gadadhar, as a Gopee of Brindaban, was agreeable, especially as he was then beside himself with joy, and he began to dance to the music of khole and cymbal. While Gadadhar danced gracefully,

Haridas, with his cudgel in his hand, went round and round the courtyard in leaps and bounds, wildly crying, "worship Krishna, talk of Krishna, think of Krishna; time flies; Krishna is all love; &c. &c." The admonitions of Haridas went home to the heart of the audience, as they saw before them the dancing Gadadhar in a state of ecstasy,—a specimen of those divine beings who have secured the bhakti of the Lord Krishna.

The other attendant of the Gopees reminded the maiden, who was represented by Gadadhar, that it was getting late and that she should proceed on her way to Brindaban, which she did, dancing.

Suklambar (to Narad).—Let us follow them to Brindaban, and see the Krishna Leela.

Narad.—Why, is not this Brindaban?

Suklambar.—Thakur! you have gone mad, that is all. What leads you to fancy that this is Brindaban?

Narad.—You are right. My Lord Krishna makes His people mad, mad with joy. Let us proceed to Brindaban. Help me please, for I cannot see my way.

The fact was, Narad was actually blinded by his tears, and was feeling his way like a blind man. Narad (Sreebash) then looked sublime!

Suklambar (angrily).—At this rate we shall never reach Brindaban.

Narad.—Why? What is the matter?

Suklambar.—If you dance for an hour after

every step forward you take, it will be long before we arrive at that sacred place.

Narad, in truth, was making very slow progress, and that on account of his incessant dancing.

Narad.—You see, my good man, I am going to Brindaban where Sree Krishna dwells. I cannot resist the joy that overtakes me. In Brindaban He is visible to the Gopees who acquire Him by their love ; while ascetics, by hundreds of years of austere yoga, cannot have even a glimpse of His lotus feet. Such is Brindaban and I am going there. How can I then help dancing, now and then?

Just then Sree Krishna played on his universal bewitching flute from a distance.

The sound, suddenly reaching their ears, when in an ecstatic state, enthralled, as it were, all those present.

Narad.—There! The flute of my Lord pours forth its delicious music. Sree Krishna is no doubt coming, for, the fragrance of His body has preceded him, and is delighting my heart. If I come across Him, I will not be in a condition to see any of his Leelas. Already I feel I am losing my consciousness. Let us go to a little distance and observe everything from a hiding-place.

As Narad leaves, enters Sree Krishna, accompanied by his cow-boy friends.

He has a flute in his hand and is dressed just like Sree Krishna. He is represented by Advaita, who was then seventy-six years old! But Krishna, as

the Lover of the Gopees, is always represented as a tender youth. Sree Krishna Himself having entered into the body of Advaita, the result was that the entire features of Advaita had undergone a complete change. The old man of seventy-six looked like a youth, and what is more, his personal attractions enthralled all the spectators. Having forgotten themselves,—some partially, some entirely,—the appearance of Krishna did not seem to them as an artificial representation, but almost a reality ; so they felt as if Sree Krishna Himself had appeared in their midst. His appearance was a signal for successive peals of Haribole from the male spectators, and “ulu” from the ladies. They then all began to observe critically the infinite grace of his feature, his limbs, his gestures, and movements. It was true that the body was that of Advaita, but the audience enjoyed almost all the advantages of a real visit from lovely Sree Krishna Himself.

Sree Krishna (to Sreedam, a cow-boy).—Of all places in the universe, this Brindaban delights me most. Just see how all things combine to make one delirious with joy. The flowers bewitch the eye by their beauty and madden the nose by their fragrance ; the birds delight the ears by their sweet music, and the bracing air soothes the body. Besides, there is no discord here ; all is peace and harmony. Nay, it is the very abode of love!

Sreedam.—Yes, Brindaban is sweet, but methinks, Thou and Thy sports are sweeter.

Sree Krishna.—But where is Madhu Mangal? I don't see him here?

Madhu Mangal, a young Brahmin, is the "clown" who enlivens Sree Krishna by his drolleries.

(Enters Madhu Mangal.)

Madhu Mangal (who is seen to be gasping for breath).—Friend, (addressing Sree Krishna) congratulate me! This Brahmin (meaning himself) would have been murdered, but by virtue of your meritorious acts this terrible calamity has been averted. Just listen I saw an extremely old woman leading a number of exquisitely beautiful milk-maids to Brindaban. That the old hag is a witch, every one could see. She was no doubt in search of a Brahmin youth for sacrificial purpose. I thought that if she only succeeded in catching me, she would offer me as a sacrifice at the shrine of Shiva. And what did I do? I left the hag behind by running, and here I am!

Sree Krishna (to Subal, another cow-boy).—what and whom does the fool mean?

Subal.—Perhaps. Sree Radha, accompanied by her maids, is coming this way.

Madhu.—Is that so? If Srimati Radha be coming here, she will no doubt fall into the clutches of my friend Krishna.

(Enter Sree Radha and other maids).

The Lord Gouranga himself represented Radha, Nitai represented Barai, the old hag, referred to by Madhu Mangal, Gadadhar and others represented

other maids. The Lord had told Advaita, in a jocular tone, that he would appear in the figure of such a beautiful woman as would lead him (Advaita) completely to lose his senses. As a matter of fact, the *debut* of the Lord created a feeling of wonder, and threw the entire audience into a state of indescribable ecstasy. He then looked like a woman of divine beauty; there was no trace of Nimai Pundit in his person, or of his being a man; his voice had lost its masculine character and became feminine, and exquisitely sweet.

Some thing here remains to be said, that is, what took place while the Lord was in the green-room. We have said before, that man acquires salvation by three methods, *viz.*, pious acts, gyan or wisdom, and prem and bhakti.* We have also said that in the region of prem and bhakti, which is called Brindaban, Sree Krishna loves and is loved in return. In the region of gyan, that is Mathura, Sree Krishna is a bounty-giver and rules there as a King. In the region of work, Dwarka, Sree Krishna is a householder. Sree Krishna was at first in Brindaban; from there he proceeded to Mathura, from Mathura to Dwarka. That is to say, He, step by step, materialized Himself to suit the capacity of His creatures. At Dwarka He had sixteen thousand

* Thus the worshippers are divided into three classes, *viz.*, those who attain to Him by bhakti and love, those who purify themselves by gyan (wisdom), and those who acquire virtue by meritorious acts.

wives.* The foremost was Rukminee, the daughter of a King. Her brother wanted to marry her to Sisupal, an infidel King, but Rukminee had given herself up entirely to Sree Krishna.

What she (Rukminee) did, therefore, was to send a love-letter to Sree Krishna through a Brahmin messenger, promising the latter rich gifts if he would deliver the message to her lover. The Brahmin took that letter to Sree Krishna, who thereupon came and forcibly carried Rukminee away.

In the Srimat Bhagabat, where we find the above account, we also find the context of the letter of Rukminee to Sree Krishna, in seven couplets. Lord Nimai was in the green-room, utterly ignorant of what they were doing on the stage. Vashudev Acharjya was putting on him the garments and ornaments of female, when, lo! the Lord Gauranga was converted into Rukminee! This came to be known to those present by his sayings and doings. What those present saw, was that he was writing, with his finger-nails, on the bare ground, with bent head, the very same seven couplets, which

* This shows that the number of those who seek salvation by meritorious work exceeds those who seek it by wisdom, or prem-bhakti. These many thousand consorts also show that the works are many, each consort or worshipper of Krishna, representing a variety of good work. Sree Krishna of Dwarka bestows earthly gifts, removes poverty, heals diseases &c. &c. Sree Krishna of Mathura grants supernatural powers. Sree Krishna of Brindaban only loves and can be acquired by love.

Rukminee, according to the Bhagabat, had addressed to Krishna. While he was writing the lines, he was also addressing the Brahmin who had carried Rukminee's letter, and who, he fancied, stood before him. Of course, no Brahmin was there. Let us give a summary of the seven couplets which Rukminee addressed to Krishna.

Rukminee writes: "It is unbecoming of a girl like me to address you in the manner I am doing. Forgive my immodesty. But is there a maid in the universe who can resist Thy charms? Grant me this prayer, that I may lay my head at Thy lotus feet and thus secure the goal of human life." Lord Nimai was writing the above couplets with a profusion of tears. Nay his tears washed away the writing, and he had to write the lines again and again. While writing, he was also addressing the imaginary Brahmin, who, he thought, was waiting to carry his letter to Sree Krishna, in these words:—"Go, Brahmin," says the Lord as "Rukminee did to her Brahmin messenger, "Go, and tell Him all. You see my condition. I cannot write every thing in the compass of a short letter. Besides, I am a girl; it is difficult for me to overcome my natural modesty and unburthen my heart.

"But tell Him that I am dying; and that if what our sacred books say be true, that it is His nature to give protection to whomsoever seeks it at His lotus feet, then let Him come to take me away."

While the Lord was thus "raving," to use his own

expression, as Rukminee in love with Sree Krishna, and Vashudev was dressing him in female attire, the flute which Advaita as Sree Krishna, played, reached his ears. The result was immediate. The mood of the Lord changed, and he ceased to be Rukminee and was converted into Radha, pure and simple,—a thorough, complete, entire Radha.

The reader is here referred to the sport of Sree Krishna with Radha in Brindaban. Sree Krishna plays his flute from a secret bower in Brindaban and summons Radha there by name. None hears this sound except Radha ; and she, with her maids, hastens to meet the Lord. When, therefore, Advaita as Sree Krishna played the flute, Lord Gauranga as Radha immediately responded to it. He said, addressing those who were with him and whom he, as Radha, fancied to be the maids of Radha : "There ! there ! listen to the bewitching flute of Sree Krishna : He is beckoning me. Hasten, friends, and follow me, such of you as care for the lotus feet of Sree Krishna. I have no choice in the matter—I am drawn to Him by an irresistible force. I must start, and cannot wait for any of you." Seeing that her maids were either indolent or not quite prepared to follow her with alacrity, she continued, this time with impatience : "But are you going or not ? Leave your household or worldly duties for a moment, please ; for, it is the Lord who calls us. Why hesitate ? Are you afraid of scandal ? Let, however, nobody follow me who is afraid of conventionalism

and public opinion. Sree Krishna does not accept her, who is not prepared to rise superior to, and defy, public opinion, and forsake everything, however dear, for Him. How unreasonable of them ! They will not undergo any sacrifice for my Lord Sree Krishna, and yet they expect He will be theirs !"

Saying this, Radha, as represented by Sree Gauranga, began her Abhishar, (*vide* Krishna Leela, Vol. I, page XXV) or progress towards Sree Krishna in Brindaban . Gadadhar as Lalita, her chief maid, stood on her left, and Nitai as Barai stood on her right. Sreeman Pandit, of whom we have spoken before, held the light before him. Other maids also accompanied the procession, which was led by Sree Gauranga, who thus entered upon the stage.

Sree Gauranga's appearance on the stage dazzled the audience. The procession seemed to be made up of celestial beings. All the maids looked surpassingly beautiful, Gadadhar surpassing them all. But the Lord had promised to be the Mohinee, that is, "the enchantress," and he had really become so. His beauty bewitched both men and women.

For a time the audience was, as if spell-bound, hushed into silence. But when men and women had recovered their self-possession they raised a joyous shout of welcome. Radha, as a Consort of Sree Krishna, represents the negative principle* in the God-head.

* The expression "negative principle" does not adequately explain Radha. She may be described as the living embodi-

The Lord stood, therefore, representing Radha as adorned with all the noble virtues of womanhood in a supreme degree,—bashful, loving, guileless, divine, just as the Consort of Sree Krishna ought to be.

As soon as Radha and her attendants were seen to approach, Madhu Mangal suggested that they should all keep themselves concealed, and see what the damsels would do. This advice was accepted, and Sree Krishna, with his friends, sought a hiding-place behind a number of flower bushes.

Radha (Lord Nimai).—Friend Lalita! We have brought everything for the purpose of worshipping Siva, excepting flowers which we have omitted to bring lest they should wither on the way.

Lalita (Gadadhar).—What of that? In Brindaban there is certainly no want of flowers.

Radha.—Yes, there is no want of flowers, but I have to tarry to gather them. I am sorely afraid of the wild asses which roam about here.

Madhu Mangal (aside to Sree Krishna).—Friend! do you hear how impertinent these damsels are?

Sree Krishna.—I do not understand you.

Madhu Mangal.—You don't understand me? That is but natural, for, you are the dullest Being

ment of all that is loveliest in God's creation. But lest it should bring her down to the level of humanity, the Srimat Bhagabat describes Her as "God's reflex-self," the purest and fairest being, representing love in nature.

in the Universe. Otherwise why, being the Lord of the Universe, should you come here to attend upon cows? Don't you understand that these uncivil asses call us, your followers, wild asses? I do not like this at all. Who are these wild asses but we who follow you? We, your followers, have a particular objection to being called asses.

Radha (to Lalita).—Let us go to pluck flowers from the *labanga* creepers.

Barai (to Radha).—Grand-daughter, don't do it, for, you may fall into the hands of Sree Krishna. Don't you know that that fickle youth is devotedly fond of the flowers of that creeper?

Lalita.—Well, if our friend (Radha) falls into the hands of Sree Krishna, we shall procure her release by keeping you as her security.

Thus they amused themselves, while plucking flowers. Just then a honey-bee began to hover round the face of Radha, no doubt, mistaking it for a sweet-scented flower, while Radha tried to protect herself from its attack with her right hand.

Radha.—Lalita, help me, I am in distress, the bee annoys me very much.

Lalita.—If you are in danger, call Sree Krishna, for, it is He alone that can afford protection to the distressed. (Radha blushed.)

Madhu Mangal (to Sree Krishna).—Friend, here is an opportunity for you to appear on the scene ;

for, you are summoned, though indirectly. But who dare summon you directly?*

Sree Krishna.—Friend, you are a fool to offer such an advice. Don't you see that from this place of concealment I am able to devour the beauty of Radha? I don't choose to disturb the scene and deprive myself of that pleasure. Mark! how the annoyance, which the bee is causing her, has increased her loveliness, a hundredfold? If I now appear before her, all this lovely sight will be lost to me. Yet, I think, the fright which my sudden appearance may give her, will impart to her face an added loveliness.

So saying, Sree Krishna appears on the scene.

Sree Krishna (to Lalita).—Who are you, please? That you are women, is clear; but what surprises me, is the want of maidenly bashfulness and timidity in your deportment; you have guileless faces, no doubt, but you are too bold for maidens. Besides, your conduct is far from being respectable. What right have you to pluck flowers here? Who gave you permission? You are plucking flowers, trampling the bushes under foot, as if you were the owners of the property; wait, I must teach you a lesson for mischief and trespass.

Barai.—Krishna, Thou wert ever a fickle youth, and Thy sense of justice is always a mystery to us, poor mortals. Who made Thee the Lord of Brindaban? Brindaban is as much ours as Thine.

* A good deal of philosophy is concealed in this sentiment.

Madhu Mangal.—Look here, old woman, you are in your dotage. It is your duty to offer good advice to the young maidens and prevent trespass, instead of which you are encouraging them.

Barai.—Yes, I am old and you are a baby. But though you be a Brahmin, your intellect is not higher than that of a mouse.

Lalita (to Madhu Mangal).—You old donkey, who called you here? What business have you to interfere in such matters?

Madhu Mangal.—Don't you know that I am a Brahmin of eminent position? The Lord of Brindaban is Sree Krishna, and I am His minister and priest.

Barai.—Krishna, this Brindaban belongs to the Gopees. But if you really covet these flowers, you will gain nothing by quarrelling about them. Listen to my advice. Be humble, beg Radha for her flowers, and she may condescend to give you some.

Saying this, Barai forcibly made Radha throw the flowers, she had plucked, upon the person of Sree Krishna.

Radha, faintly smiling, blushed, and said, addressing Barai: "My good lady, what have you done? I plucked these flowers to worship Siva with, and look! to what a wretched use you have applied them."

Barai.—Let us go home; they are the stronger here, and there is no chance of a fair battle.

Radha.—We came to worship Siva; how can we go back without performing that sacred duty?

his body, though the previous disguise remained, still it could be seen through it that he was no other than Advaita. Thus when heat enters cold water, the water becomes hot, and when the heat leaves it, the water becomes cold again. It was Sree Krishna, Radha and others who came to utilize the bodies of those who were enacting the *dan-leela*, and thus succeeded in giving the character of absolute reality to the whole thing."

The *dan* is that Leela of Krishna which was first dramatised by the Lord in his own way, for the purpose of pointing out to mankind a very excellent way of acquiring Prem and Bhakti. Other Leelas were dramatized subsequently by his bhaktas. The effect of these dramatic representations of the Krishna Leela upon the audience, is indescribable. To be *en rapport* with God, is a difficult feat for most men. Sree Krishna is brought on the stage face to face with the audience. He is endowed with human feelings, and thus sweetened to suit the palate of His creatures, who are men and who can only appreciate emotions which influence the human mind. Of course, diverse objections could be raised to this practice. It could be said that to bring God on the stage, is to belittle Him.* But those who have once enjoyed the privilege of witnessing such representa-

* If God is as big as the universe, He is also smaller in size than man, or He could never have created the creatures revealed to us by the microscope. ☺

tions, will think otherwise. When the Krishna Leela is properly dramatized and acted, the effect is irresistible both upon non-believers and believers. We understand that the Christians have their "Passion play", which is similar to the one described above; and I have been assured that it produces wonderful effect upon those who witness it.

The above book, the *Chaitanya Chandrodaya*, was written more than three hundred and fifty years ago, and it explains the *dan-leela* performed by the Lord and his *bhaktas* in a manner which confirms the philosophy of possession, mentioned in all religious books of the different races inhabiting the earth. The philosophy is this that men live after death; and that these men, notwithstanding that they are apparently dead, can communicate with the living by means of some individuals who are sensitive and susceptible to such influences. Howitt in his "History of the Supernatural" has shewn that every religion, and divisions and sub-divisions of religion, in the world, is founded upon what is called possession.

Now as man is immortal, he is more interested in securing a better future, or, in other words, in making his soul better fitted to accommodate itself to life in other spheres, than in securing any possession on this earth, where he has to live only for a temporary period. Those who have reached the other spheres, can realize this truth better than men of this, engrossed, as they are, with their own affairs; and they, of the other spheres, therefore, whenever

they can, try to impress this fact upon their fellow-beings who are in this mundane sphere. It was in this manner, says William Howitt, that all the religions, and divisions and sub-divisions of religion, on this earth, were founded. Thus a good man, in the spirit-land, finds his fellow-beings on earth forgetful of their true interests, living like animals, and engrossed with worldly affairs. He finds in Wesley a proper man to receive his influences. Wesley Wesley feels that he is beside himself, and forced to carry out a mission of spiritualizing his brethren. He is backed by a force from above, and, therefore, finds himself strong enough to be able to make conversions. And thus Wesleyans became a sect of Christians.

The reader is referred to Howitt's book on this subject, in which he himself, a very good Christian, has, after much toil and research, proved that there is no religion on this earth, which is not based upon what he calls the supernatural.

But to proceed. Every one was freed of his influence except the Lord Himself. He entered the stage as Radha, the Beloved Consort of Sree Krishna of Brindaban ; now he remained Radha, no doubt, but as the Mother of the Universe. As Radha of Brindaban, she is beloved of Krishna, and, therefore, the beloved of the Gopees, and those devotees who worship Him through the Gopees. But as the negative half of the Creator, Radha is the Mother of all the Universe.

Whether the face of the Lord then assumed a matronly appearance or whether he impressed the fact mysteriously upon their hearts, all those present felt towards the female figure before them as if she were their mother, and the mother whom they had lost. Moreover, they felt themselves as children and forgot that they were all grown-up men. There is a time in every man's life when the heart yearns after his mother ; it is when he is an infant and has not yet arrived at boyhood. This love which all of them had forgotten, now returned to them with irresistible force. "Mother, mother, where art thou?—" cried they, and surrounded the female figure of the Lord.

The female figure, then, surrounded by her children, entered the worship-house of Chandra Shekhar, and sat upon the cushion of God as the Mother of the Universe, who is styled Durga or Devi or Bhagabati. There the figure sat and intently watched the faces of those who surrounded Her as a doting mother would gaze upon her children. She then seized Haridas, who was nearest, as a mother would her child, and took him in her lap as easily and as naturally as a mother would take her one-year old child.

Haridas, of course, did not resist ; on the contrary, he felt that the more natural thing on his part was to go to the lap of the female figure, his mother. There he lay as a child would, while drawing milk from its mother. He felt himself secure

in that lap and in peace with the Universe, and with himself.

Others, however, felt jealous of Haridas ; or, in other words, wanted to be similarly blessed. And as children implore the mother to be taken into her lap, all those who surrounded the Lord, feeling just then as children would do and that the figure before them was their mother, began to be importunate. "Mother take me into thy lap," cried one, and another and another. Others caught hold of her *saree* to attract her attention, and some wanted to enter her lap, without permission, and by force.

In the above scene, the Lord presented to his bhaktas the picture of God as mother. When God is worshipped by Prem and Bhakti, He can be regarded as a father or a mother or a master. The feeling of a son for his mother or father or kind master cannot be love, pure and simple ; nor is it Bhakti ; it is a mixture of both.

Christians worship God as Father ; Hindus call Him likewise Father, and sometimes Mother. Thus Siva is Father and Durga or Bhagabati is Mother. But the feeling of a son for his father is not love ; it does not adequately represent the feeling which binds the soul to its great Partner. That feeling which God, rather the Loving, the Personal, and the Beautiful God Sree Krishna evokes in the hearts of men, can only be likened to that of a woman who is in love. A woman, who is in love, will forsake her children, husband, position, nay, brave scandal,

to possess her beloved. It is just the same with a soul which has fallen in love with Krishna. During the *Rash leela* of the Gopees, when they heard the sound of the flute, they ran to Sree Krishna, some throwing down their children whom they were suckling, some forsaking their husbands whom they were tending, and some abandoning other household duties in which they were engaged. Their guardians and relations obstructed their passage, reasoned with them, threatened and implored them in turn ; but they would not listen to any advice or succumb to any threats or importunity. Well, this is the way a man feels when in love with Krishna, and the Lord showed it practically by his own example.

The Lord sat as the Mother God in the cushioned seat meant for Him, in the worship-house of Chandra Shekhar.*

The female figure was suckling Haridas. After a while, she left him and took up another. Haridas, satisfied, began to dance in ecstatic delight. She then took up another and another, and in this manner she satisfied them all. They all felt as children (though Advaita was seventy-six), and began to

* Here the Lord gave an indirect sanction to the worship of God as Mother, as the Shaktas do in India. But the highest love, the conjugal, cannot be developed if God is worshipped as Mother. In Sree Krishna, the devotee will find an object for the development of all the four kinds of love referred to in the beginning, *viz.*, conjugal, filial, fraternal, etc.

dance, after clasping one another's hands, round and round the mother. The beautiful matron, who sat upon the *dais*, looked upon her children with beaming eyes, glistening with love. Indeed, the sight melted every one, including the Mother Herself.

The above spectacle was presented to the bhaktas for the benefit of those who were in favour of worshipping God as Mother or as Father. To worship God as a lover, as the Gopees did, is not within the capacity of all men. To worship God as a mother, is far easier.

In the midst of the ecstatic dance of the bhaktas round the mother, they were disturbed by the appearance of the sun. The bright luminary had appeared for some time, but the court-yard was covered over with canopies ; and engrossed, as they were, the bhaktas had not perceived that day had already begun. The appearance of day-light, however, as it were, broke the charm, and they suddenly found themselves as if roused from an indescribably pleasant dream. They gazed at each other with stupefaction ; and then realizing the scene, they burst into tears. They wept because they again found themselves on earth, and not in the celestial regions where hitherto they had thought themselves to be.

The Lord left the house of Chandra Shekhar, but he left behind him wonderful evidence of his presence and of the dramatic performance.

This is what Murari Gupta, an eye-witness, says in his notes in Sanskrit :

श्रीचन्द्रशेखराचार्यरत्नवाट्यां महाप्रभुः ।
ननर्त्त यत्र तन्नासित्तेजस्तु महदद्भुतं ॥
सप्ताहं शीतलं चन्द्रतेजसा सदृशं हरिं ।
चञ्चलैव सुदुष्प्रेक्ष्यं चित्तलादकारं शुचिम् ॥
ये ये तत्रागता लोका जञ्चस्तत्र कथं दृशोः ।
सन्मीलने न शक्ताः स विद्युद्दत् प्रेक्ष्य भूतले ॥

A free translation of the above is as follows :—
When the Lord left the house of Chandra Shekhar, he left behind him in the house a cool luminosity which resembled the rays of the moon. This light remained in the house for seven days and nights continuously, and then gradually disappeared. The light looked like electricity as if the lightning of the heaven was playing upon earth. Its effect upon the eyes was such that no one could open them when under its influence.

This is what the *Chaitanya Bhagabat* says, written under the auspices of Nityananda and Sreebas, both of whom took part in the play :

सप्त दिन श्रीआचार्यरत्ने र मन्दिरि ।
परमअद्भुत तेज क्विल निरन्तरे ॥
चन्द्र स्तथ्ये विद्युत् एकत्र येन ज्वले ।
देखये सुकृति सब महाकृतूहले ॥

यतेक आइसे लोक आचार्येर घरे ।
 चक्षु मेलिवारे शक्ति केह नाहि घरे ॥
 लोके बले कि कारणे आचार्येर घरे ।
 दुइ चक्षु मेलिते फुटिया येन पड़े ॥

The above can be translated thus: (In the house of Chandra Shekhar after the Lord had left it), there shone a light continuously for seven days and nights. The light seemed to be composed of the mingled rays of the sun and moon combined with electricity. Those who came to the said house found that they could not open their eyes. And whoever entered, exclaimed: "How is it that in this house when one attempts to open his eyes, he cannot do so, for the attempt makes him feel that they would burst?"

Says the *Chaitanya Mangal*, written under the auspices of Narahari, the constant companion of the Lord. We give only a free translation: "In the house of Chandra Shekhar a light shone continuously for seven days and nights, so that it seemed to be always day there, and never night. When the Lord left the house he left behind him some luminosity which gave the idea of innumerable moons shining there. The light was cool, and seemed to be electric in its origin, and it imparted gladness to the heart. Its effect upon the eyes were that they could not be opened when in its midst."

There cannot be any manner of doubt about this luminosity, or whatever you choose to call it, that the Lord left behind him. For, incidents like this could not possibly be invented.

It is this dramatic representation which led Advaita to leave Nadia in a huff, an account of which, and how the Lord dwelt with him, have been already described in Chapter I.

CHAPTER III.

DISTURBING ELEMENT.

DURING the dramatic performance, the door was kept locked ; indeed, even when the first Kirtans of the Lord were held in the house of Sreebas, no outsider was permitted to enter the place. The reason, it seems, was that any disturbing element either retarded, stopped, or polluted the flow of bhakti that a Kirtan has the power of evoking. Perhaps perfect harmony is essential for the success of a Kirtan. Indeed, it sometimes happened that outsiders succeeded in entering the place of the Kirtan at Sreebas'. A very good man once persuaded Sreebas to allow him to see what a Kirtan was like. Sreebas knew the man, and he thought that the Lord would not object to the presence of such a pious man as he knew the applicant for admission to be. But it so happened that the Lord, as soon as he had commenced dancing, stopped, and said : "How is it, I don't get the necessary ecstasy for a dance?" Then he looked at Sreebas, and inquired : "Pundit, is it possible you have admitted a stranger? Sreebas immediately knelt at the feet of the Lord and confessed to having admitted one without permission. In extenuation of his offence he explained that the man,

he had admitted, was known to be very pure and religious, and that he lived entirely upon milk. It must be borne in mind that religious men in India not only eschewed meat and drink, but sometimes bread and rice. The Lord smiled and said : "Let your good man go elsewhere. This is no place for men who want to attain to the lotus feet of God by living upon liquid diet!" The poor man was then expelled.

But the sight that the man had seen, had already given him a re-birth. He did not mind the expulsion : on the other hand, he left the place in an ecstasy of joy, for, previously he had not the living faith which he acquired by witnessing the Kirtan, and coming in contact with the Lord. He entered only as a pure man ; he was leaving the place as a full believer in the Lord. But he had not proceeded more than a few steps when he was summoned to return. He came back and fell at the feet of the Lord, asking forgiveness for having entered without permission and soliciting his blessing. The Lord said that he knew that he was a bhakta, and he had been expelled only to convey a lesson to his friends, namely, to teach them that the good Lord is not to be acquired by any external act,* such as living upon any particular diet.

When the Lord inaugurated Kirtan he had to do it with closed doors, mainly for two reasons. First,

* In India, this lesson was exceedingly necessary.