

as it was altogether a novel way of worshipping, there was a chance of the party, engaged in this sort of worship, being maltreated by unsympathetic public ; secondly, there could be no realization without concentration, and concentration in the presence of an unsympathetic and discordant element, would be difficult. This concentration is called yoga or union,—union of the human soul with the Great Soul, its origin. It is for this reason that those who aspire to attain to that most difficult state by yoga, have to go to wilderness for the purpose. In a Kirtan this concentration of the mind can be very well secured even in the midst of men, but they must be sympathetic and pious companions. The music soothes the soul ; the wavering mind is brought into a focus ; and the devotee, with a little effort, succeeds in diverting it to the Lotus Feet. It will be thus seen why the Lord was so strict in the beginning, in not allowing unsympathetic out-siders to join or witness his Kirtan parties.

When the Lord came from Gaya he was in a state of abstraction. When he reached Nadia, he was voted a mad man by his adversaries. He was then completely under the control of some outside influence. Step by step he gained an ascendancy over this influence, and he succeeded at last in bringing it under complete subjugation. The Lord was in the beginning incomprehensible and unapproachable ; but in the end he became a good companion, who was found to behave like other men, when in

his human condition. True, when the Lord God revealed Himself in Nimai, his bhaktas found themselves debarred from all intimate intercourse with their master. But on the Lord resuming his human state, they again approached him, found in him a sweet companion, and almost forgot in his delightful presence that it was He, who had a little before revealed Himself to them as God Almighty.

When he had thus been able to bring the influence completely under subjugation, a change came to be perceived in the attitude of the Lord, which affected him gradually, slowly though surely. I said that Nimai taught his companions, by personal example, how to attain to God by bhakti. The bhaktas by imitating him, eventually came face to face with Sree Krishna. At last the time arrived for him to teach prem, and the change in him indicated this, though his companions knew it not. He became again more meditative, less talkative and more abstracted. He, day by day, ceased to attend the Kirtan ; he almost avoided the company of his friends, and shewed an extreme desire to remain alone. Ordinary fevers last for eight days ; but in a serious case, the fever, instead of being relieved after the seventh day, may increase on the eighth. So when the Lord was gradually attaining to his natural state, he was overtaken by another and more powerful influence. We shall now shew how this came about.

He refused to speak even about Krishna ; he

ceased to attend Kirtan parties. He ate, slept, bathed and walked about like other people, but all in a state of complete abstraction. His bhaktas had, therefore, always to keep guard over him. When he went to bathe in the river, he was thus guarded by his bhaktas ; when he sat to dinner, his bhaktas had to sit by him to persuade him to eat his dinner. They did not venture to ask him any questions ; neither did the Lord volunteer any information to them. It sometimes was evident that an inexpressible anguish was gnawing at his heart and that he was making ceaseless efforts to conceal what it was. But the mood changed often. Sometimes a celestial joy brightened up his chiselled countenance, which showered gladness on those who had the good fortune of being near him.

His silence was now and then interrupted by sobs, followed by copious tears ; and if Shachee asked him to explain the cause of his sorrow, she would get no answer. It was then evident that he was utterly beside himself and that his heart had been "stolen" by another. Gradually, the flow of his tears increased so that

Whether in the town or out of it,

Tears ceaselessly began to course down his cheeks.

—*Chaitanya Bhagabat.*

But although the earnest questions of his friends and mother did not rouse him from his reverie, yet the name of Hari or Sree Krishna had a powerful

effect upon him. If the name of Sree Krishna was uttered in his hearing, he would either give vent to his grief in loud cries or fall down into a death-like swoon. Indeed, while one day he was coming home from the bathing ghat a boy, not actually from mischievous intent, but for the purpose of seeing the fun, uttered the name of Hari loudly. The effect upon the Lord was instantaneous : he fell down as if dead. He had to be carried home by his bhaktas.

Believing that Nimai was in his normal state, Shachee ventured to ask, "what is the matter with thee, Nimai?" But she got no reply, or if she got one, it was short, and not always to the purpose. Thus even in his normal state, it was difficult to wean him from the deep abstraction which kept him enchained ceaselessly within himself.

The usual performance of the daily Kirtan was not, however, stopped, though the Lord was not in a condition to join it always. Previously the Lord has been the master of the Kirtan ; his place was now taken by Advaita, at the request of the Lord himself. The Lord was in his house one day, surrounded by some of his most intimate bhaktas. It was morning ; yet the Kirtan party at Sreebas', which was led by Advaita, had not broken up. Usually this was done before dawn. But on that day, Advaita had been so much moved by the Kirtan that he was not willing to stop it. The sun rose, but still Advaita was not willing to stop. Indeed, he had almost gone mad over the Kirtan, and was sometimes seen rolling on the

ground in the anguish of his soul, and sometimes falling down in a fainting fit. It could then be seen that it was not joy that was moving him, but intense misery. But what was it? This could be guessed from his exclamations, for, he fervently prayed to the Lord as a penitent, in words like these: "Forgive me, My Lord," "Forgive my unbelief." "How happy are they who can believe!" "Wilt Thou, my Lord, never grant me faith?" And so forth.

When it was nearing noon, Advaita tried to calm his feelings by mighty efforts, and apparently succeeded. He then asked his companions to proceed to the bathing-place, and promised to follow them after a few moments' rest. So they all left him on the raised verandah, where he sat as a picture of utter despair, covered with dust, and his eyes red from the frequent flowing of tears. But the feeling came upon him again, and while ejaculating "my Lord, save me," he fell down to the yard from the verandah. Now, this was at Sreebas' house.

The Lord was at this moment sitting alone in his own verandah, his bhaktas having gone to bathe. He was sitting alone in a state of complete abstraction, utterly unconscious of his surroundings. But in a mysterious way, the sound of distress, uttered by Advaita, entered his ears, and he at once regained his self-possession. He ran with the speed of lightning to Sreebas' house to meet Advaita, and offer him the protection he was asking for!

He reached the house of Sreebas and saw Advaita

rolling on the yard in the anguish of his soul. The Lord sat by him, touched his head and thus announced his presence. Their eyes met. Those of Advaita betokened unutterable anguish and despair. In answer, those of the Lord infused hope and courage. "What ails thee? Here am I in response to thy call; ask what thou wilt," said the Lord. Advaita arose but remained silent, not knowing how to answer the question of the Lord. "Tell me what is it that you want. I thought you had got all that you wanted," said the Lord again. Advaita mustered sufficient courage to say: "Give me faith. I cannot yet prevail upon myself to cling to Thee. My faith in Thee goes and comes of its accord. Much as I wish to cling to Thee, my mind does not obey me. And that is the cause of my misery. While Thy other bhaktas are sporting joyously in the ocean of faith, I am being tossed about and pestered by doubts which force themselves into my heart."

The Lord mournfully gazed at him, and then slowly observed: "Can you suggest any means by which you think you would be satisfied?" Advaita immediately said: "Yes, I have thought of it, shew Yourself to me in the form of Vishvarup."

In that wonderful book, the *Geeta*, Sree Krishna explains and Arjuna listens. In that book, it is said, that to Arjuna He shewed the form of Vishvarup, that is to say, His form as the Universal God—the God Who created the universe out of Himself, the God Who pervades all space. To say that the

Vaishnavas worship Radha-Krishna because they have no idea of the grandeur of the Being Who created us, is wrong. They know very well that God is as large as the universe ; but that knowledge helps them very little in attaining to His lotus feet, but rather casts them away from Him. To convince Arjuna of this, Sree Krishna assumed the form of the Universal God. He, Arjuna, saw before him a Being Whose eyes were innumerable, Whose heads were innumerable, Whose hands were innumerable, Whose feet were innumerable, and the like. He saw that the Being before him had no beginning and no end. Arjuna began to tremble with fear, and he felt a faintness coming over him. Though he knew that he had nothing to apprehend from the Figure before him, and that the Being, Who was exhibiting Himself in this frightful form, was a friend, still he could not bear to see the sight. He shut his eyes and prayed to Sree Krishna to assume the form of man so that he could again regard Him as a friend.

Now, in this incident, a part of the basis of Vaishnavism is explained. If the companionship of God is sought, you must worship Him as a man. In any other form, He will not be able to excite any tender feelings for Him in the minds of men.

Advaita wanted to see the Vishvarup of God, because he felt that unless Pundit Nimai be God Almighty Himself, he would never be able to appear in the form which dazzled the eyes of Arjuna. It is needless to state here that when Nimai appeared

before Advaita, he was in his Divine state. So when Advaita made the suggestion, He said, "very well, come into the Puja-house of Sreebas,"—the house in which He had first revealed Himself to Sreebas. They both entered the Puja-house, and the door was shut. Though Advaita kept his eyes open, he, however, saw that the body of Nimai was undergoing a change. It began to increase in dimensions, and Advaita saw with dismay that the process was getting more and more painful to observe. Seeing this, the Lord, to re-assure him, loudly called upon him to "look." He began to repeat, "Look!" "Look!" "Don't get frightened," as His body increased in dimensions. This the Lord had to do because a faintness was coming over Advaita, and it was necessary that he should be kept in a conscious state. Just at this moment Nitai, who had gone to bathe, appeared at the door. Not finding the Lord at his own home, he had come to Sreebas', expecting to find the Lord there. He, however, found none there, but heard the Lord loudly calling upon Advaita "to look" from within the Puja-house, the door of which was shut. He knocked at the door, and the Lord permitted him to enter. Nitai came and saw the form of Vishvarup! Nitai felt as if he would fall down in a swoon then and there, and the Lord at once withdrew His mightiness and appeared before him in his usual lovely form. Advaita's despair was supplanted by indescribable ecstasy, and he held the hand of Nitai, and they both began to dance in their joy.

The Lord went home in a state of abstraction, and remained so. Gadadhar, Narahari and his other constant companions kept guard over him day and night. This change in the mood of the Lord meant that he was entering upon a new state of existence. The influence entered into him and he instinctively resisted it ; yet day by day it was gaining ground on him. Now he was completely under the influence, now he overcame it ; and in this manner he was led into that condition which it was necessary for him to attain to, in order that he might teach prem to mankind. How he arrived at that state step by step, is vividly described by his companions. Indeed, the Lord was converting himself into Radha, pure and simple, to give mankind a personal experience of her love for Sree Krishna.

Will the reader please bring to his mind the Krishna-Leela ? That must be remembered to understand what follow. Radha went to Jamuna to wash herself. Seeing Krishna there, she was smitten with love, and came home a changed person. The Lord, when coming from Gaya, had seen and been embraced by Krishna, and he thus won his attraction for Him and taught bhakti. When that was accomplished, indeed, when he had almost arrived at his normal state, he commenced the other—the greater—work of teaching prem to mankind.

The Lord saw Krishna again, and was smitten as Radha was. One day he went to the river to bathe, and he saw Krishna, leaning against a Kadamba tree,

as a Youth of dazzling beauty with a flute in hand. The sight of Sree Krishna took away his self-consciousness at once. He then came to regard himself as Radha ; in other words, he became Radha. He altogether forgot that he was Pundit Nimai, the son of Shachee,—that consciousness was altogether lost to him. The idea *entirely* took possession of his mind that he was himself Radha who had gone to wash herself in the Jamuna and had seen Sree Krishna. There were flower-gardens on the bank, and it all took the shape of Brindaban to him, and the Ganges was similarly converted into the Jamuna. Thus he, as Radha, saw Krishna, flute in hand, in Brindaban on the bank of the Jamuna.

When the Lord saw Sree Krishna, he was as hopelessly smitten as Radha had been. But he was then Radha, a lady, and it would not do for a lady to stare at a man ; so he regretfully left Krishna behind, and came home, of course, taking advantage of every opportunity to have another and yet another look at him. Thus he came back home, transformed into Radha, and sat on his verandah !

His companions came and saw that the Lord had either fled or retired within himself ; they came to feel at every step that he was no longer the same individual that he was before. The reader will understand the situation when he comes to feel that they regarded him as Pundit Nimai, whilst he himself had forgotten the very existence of, that individual and regarded himself as Radha of Brindaban. So he and his com-

panions could not understand one another, and therefore could not agree. The companions expected the Lord to speak, act and think as Nimai Pundit would have done. The Lord did not recognise his companions, for, he was Radha in Brindaban, in love with Krishna ; and he sought to find in the companions the maids, who attended Radha.

It took a good deal of time for the Lord to attain to this stage. Even when he had completely converted himself into Radha, his companions did not understand him. They watched his proceedings closely, and at last they made the discovery that their Lord had fled, leaving Radha behind. So Narahari inquires in his song :* "What is the matter with the Lord?" And at last he suggests the answer himself. Says he : "It seems that the Lord was betraying all the symptoms of love that Radha had betrayed for Sree Krishna."

Narahari had no other business except to attend on the Lord, his whole soul was absorbed in him, and the Lord was therefore subjected to his rigid inspection. What he saw, he describes in his songs. Says he : "What is the matter with the Lord? His gold-hued body is besmeared with dust. Alas! he looks so sad. And then he sighs in agony, thereby audibly revealing the sorrow of his heart, which he tries to conceal. He utters loud lamentations and

* Narahari has left a good many songs, describing the Leela of the Lord.

strikes his breast, and his tears wet, not only his body, but all his clothes."

"What is it that ails him?" Thus Narahari thinks and puts his thoughts into a song. Narahari again essays to describe the condition of the Lord. Now it must be always kept in mind that the description is not only minute but that of an eye-witness, who is closely watching the Lord. Narahari in another song again asks a question of his companions. Here is the translation of that song :

"Can you tell me what is the matter with the Lord? Why has he flung himself prostrate on the floor, weeping the while? Now he gets up and says, 'Oh, my Lord Hari! Thou hast made me mad.' And then the Lord raises up his long arms, and complains to the Creator for having filled him with love for a Being with whom union is impossible."

In the song, literally translated, the description is not expressive. What Narahari means, is this : "The Lord addresses the Creator, and says, 'why hast Thou given me love for Krishna, since to possess Him is impossible? See, He has taken away all my senses, and I have become perfectly mad.'"

Of course, the Lord did not tell them that he had become Radha ; he told them nothing. But they discovered the fact by his actions and by the words that he muttered now and then. In the following song by Narahari, the condition of the Lord is graphically described :

"My Lord Gauranga is utterly unconscious of the external world. Indeed, he cannot distinguish night from day. Now he laughs, why nobody can say. Now he asks of everybody: 'Where is my beloved Krishna?' Now he is seized by a shivering, now he tries to fly to his beloved. Now he asks of everyone, 'will you lead me to the lord of my life?' Now he dances in joy: but the mood changes, and he shuts his eyes and weeps with the ejaculation, 'Oh, my beloved!'" Thinks Narahari: My Lord betrays the love which Radha felt for Sree Krishna."

Thus the discovery was made. Says Narahari again: "The Lord muttered—'what business had I to fall in love with Krishna? Surely I shall plunge into the Jamuna and put an end of myself.'" Now this language could only be used by Radha, and so they were able to understand the nature of the influence which had taken possession of the Lord. The Lord oftentimes mistook his companions for the maids of Radha. Thus he would address Purushottam, one of his dearest bhaktas, by the name of Lalita, the chief maid of Radha. He would address him thus: "Lalita, do please dress me; for, my Lord Krishna is expected to come to me to-night." And Purushottam and others at once divined that it was not the Lord who was speaking, but Radha herself.

I shall explain the significance of this Leela in a word. Love (prem) and Bhakti are the two means of attaining to Sree Krishna. But how to love Sree Krishna? The answer is, 'do as Radha did.' For,

Radha not only loved Krishna, but her love for Him transcends all human love and can never be rivalled by that of any other being. And why? Because, Radha is only a part of Him, representing the love that exists in nature. But Radha is a myth, says the sceptical devotee, and if not a myth, it is impossible to love Krishna, at least to feel anything like the love which, it is alleged, she bore for Him. Besides, no one knows what is the nature of the love that Radha felt for Sree Krishna. Well, the Lord became Radha to shew mankind the nature of her love for, and how she loved, Sree Krishna. Of course, the love which the Lord, as Radha, showed for Krishna is beyond the power of man to feel or imitate; yet what the devotee has to do, is to earn any portion of the feeling of Radha that he can, and thus approach Sree Krishna.

Do you, dear devotee, think Radha to be a myth? But the Lord Nimai is not a myth. What matters if we reject the Krishna-Leela altogether? Certainly, we need a Radha to show us her love for Sree Krishna, so that we may learn from her how to love Him. But since we find her in the Lord, it is not of any moment whether the Radha of Brindaban existed or not. The Lord as Radha was not an actor; he did not *imitate* the sobs of the bereaved Radha, nor her voice, nor her possible actions. There are actors who can act the part of another in a wonderful manner, but yet they must always fall short of the reality. Assume that Radha did live and assume also that she could manifest herself fully through the Lord,

and you will understand the significance of this Leela, —what is meant by the Lord becoming Radha.

So we get a Radha in the Lord, and as for God, He is certainly not a myth. We get then Radha and the God of olve, whom, let us call Sree Krishna. When the companions of the Lord found that the Lord had become Radha, it was then that they could realize with wonder, not only the intensity of her love for Krishna, but of the power of the feeling itself called Love. Previously, they had no conception that one could love another with so much ardour, devotion and disinterestedness, and much less when that Being was God. When they thus saw in the Lord a living picture of Radha, they naturally began to realize what love for Sree Krishna meant.

Thus, the Lord taught mankind by example how Radha loved Sree Krishna,—a feat which was never before performed and which, we believe, it is impossible for a mere man to accomplish. Says Bashu Ghose: "If the Lord Nimai had not appeared, who would have given mankind an idea of what real Love was, and of the intensity of the love of Radha for Sree Krishna? Where is the being with the power to do it?"

The Lord recovered his lucid moments now and then; and then he seemed to have awakened from a dream. On such occasions, he would ask, "was I dreaming?" or, "did I rave?" Sometimes he would say, "what an hallucination! I felt that I was Radha." But these lucid moments were again

followed by a complete transformation, when, as Radha, he would show such an intense hankering after Krishna as the wildest of lovers had never felt for his or her beloved. And when he felt that Krishna was not with him, he expressed such an anguish of the soul as had never been betrayed by the fondest of mothers at the death of her only son, or the fondest of wives at the death of her husband. For the sake of Krishna, either in joy when he thought He was with him, or in sorrow when he felt that He was not with him, he died "a hundred deaths" every day. That is to say, he fell into death-like swoons repeatedly, one coming after another in rapid succession, either in the excess of his joy or of his sorrow. On some occasions these swoons carried him away almost to the gate of death, for he lay unconscious for hours, nay, days, without any sign of life in him whatever. Heaven willing, I shall do my best to give some idea as to how he behaved as Radha, and how he taught mankind the extent of Radha's love for Sree Krishna, as I proceed.

In short, he did as Radha, is alleged to have done, as ascribed to her in the *Sreemat Bhagabat*. Thus, he felt the *Purbarag* of Radha (*vide* Krishna-Leela, Vol. I, page XXIV): he made his *Basak-sajya* as Radha did; he went through the *Dan-leela*, and at last, as Radha, performed the *Rash-leela* with all his bhaktas. He did more: he shewed much more than was ever conceived by the author of that great book, *Sreemat Bhagabat*. As the other half of the Divine

Pair, he passed through all the experiences which ardent lovers are supposed to do in their lovely dealings with one another, and many, which lovers had never conceived before.

Sree Krishna, after he had sported with Radha in Brindaban, went to Mathura, leaving Radha disconsolate. Then Radha passed her days and nights in anguish, the pangs of separation carried her almost to the brink of death. The Lord, after performing all the Leelas enumerated above, from *Purbarag* to *Rash*, at last arrived at that stage of Radha when she was separated from Krishna. In this condition of bereaved Radha, he remained for a considerable time ; indeed, it may be said that he passed almost all his life on this earth in that state.

"Where is my Krishna?" "Who has stolen my Krishna from me?" "Where is the friend who will bring back my Krishna to me?" "How can I live without Him?" "The world is dreary to me without Him." "Who will be so good as to take a message from me, His forlorn servant, to Him?" With these and similar ejaculations he passed his days and sleepless nights. He sighed, sobbed and wept, and when overpowered, he fell down in a swoon. The sight of the moon gives him a shudder. He addresses the moon : "Why do you torment me? My Krishna is not with me." He sees a beautiful flower and feels as if he had been shot with an arrow. "Thou beautiful thing," he addresses the flower, "what art thou but a torment to me? For, Krishna has forsaken me.

Go to him who has Krishna, and therefore the inclination to enjoy your excellence." He sits on the bank of the Ganges, which he fancies to be the Jamuna, and he is thus led to feel that Mathura is on the other side where Krishna is. He sits gazing intently on the other bank, expecting to see Krishna, if by chance he comes by that way. Then he clasps the neck of a companion and weeps bitterly. "My friend," says he, "my Krishna is good. He cannot bear to see the misery of others. I know Him very well. If it could but be made known to Him that I was dying by inches for Him, He would surely run to my breast."

Sometimes he would take offence at Krishna's unfeeling conduct. "Thou hast stolen my heart," says he, addressing Krishna, "and now that I am helpless, Thou forsakest me. Is this worthy of Thee? People call Thee merciful, but, the fact is Thou hast no heart, and I was a fool to deliver myself up to Thee." Then he would remember that he had spoken disrespectfully of Krishna, and he would fall on his knees and exclaim : "Pardon, pardon me, my Krishna, I know not what I say. Thy absence has made me lose my senses."

It was thus he spent his days and nights, relieved by repeated fainting fits and copious tears. Shachee, Vishnupriya and his friends, all passed their days in the deepest anguish and misery possible. They knew not what to do. They tried to rouse him to consciousness and adopted various means for that purpose. Vishnupriya sits by him, and talks to him words of

love. Shachee weeps and begs of her son to take pity on her ; but, all to no purpose,—he could never be roused to consciousness. But what everybody failed to do, was at last partially accomplished by a trifling, and rather a ludicrous, incident.

Krishnananda was a fellow-student of the Lord's in the Grammer *tole* of Gangadas. He, after completing his education, became the leader of the Tantriks, and acquired the title of Agamvagees. The Tantra is a mixture of occultism and religion, and thousands and thousands of books have been written on the subject and are yet extant. Many valuable things are to be found in them, though there is much also that is not only nonsense but horrible, at least apparently so. If Raghunath, in the absence of Sarbabhaum, was the first man in Naya in Nadia or properly in the whole of India, Krishnananda was the first man in India in Tantra. Of course, he and the Lord could never agree. Much of what he, or rather the Tantra, advocated, was an abomination to the religion that the Lord taught. Besides, the black Tantras preached, at least apparently, the necessity of the drinking of liquor and other bestialities for the purpose of salvation. Krishnananda and the Lord had never met, that is to say, after the latter had revealed himself. But the former had, of course, heard of the Lord and treated him, his followers and his doctrines, with supreme contempt. One day he took into his head to pay a visit to the Lord, and to have, if possible,

a debate with him about the innovations that he was preaching.

So he boldly entered the house of the Lord in a spirit of defiance. He found that the Lord was sitting in the verandah, surrounded by a large number of his bhaktas. This was lucky, thought Krishnananda, for, he would be able thus to annihilate Nimai Pandit in the presence of his stupid followers. But there were some insuperable difficulties in the way of a polemical discussion, for, the Lord would not fight and could not be made to fight. For, he was then Radha, deeply contemplating the beautiful figure of his Beloved in his heart, forgetful of the presence of his bhaktas and surroundings. When Krishnananda looked at the face of the Lord, he was staggered. He had seen the aggressive Nimai Pundit of former days ; but now his guileless face and gentle look at once disarmed his pugnacious spirit. Indeed, the face of the Lord seemed to him so innocent and the look of the Lord so pathetic, that, in pity he gave up the idea of a discussion, and in its stead, wanted to give the deluded young man some sound advice. He addressed the Lord. Of course, it was not expected that the Lord would listen to him, or give any reply to his questions ; but, wonder of wonders, he did on this occasion. Yet there was some confusion. For, Krishnananda addressed the Lord as he would do Pundit Nimai of Nadia, whilst the Lord replied as Radha of Brindaban ! The Lord fancied that Krishnananda was a servant of Krishna in Mathura ; and as

he, as Radha, had been led to entertain a particular dislike for everybody and everything in connection with that place, which had stolen and enchained his Krishna, the Lord replied to him in disgust. Said the Lord: "Return thou from here to thy Master. I am resolved never to follow in the wake of Krishna. Has He sent you to take me? I am surely not going. He is heartless and cruel." Now Krishnananda had, of course, no idea that the Lord was speaking as Radha, and he found, in what he considered the blasphemy of the Lord, an opportunity of showing his own superiority before the company, and giving the Lord some advice. He said: "Pundit! Fie! it is blasphemy that you are talking. Don't talk of Krishna in that disrespectful way."

The Lord was not then in an amiable mood with Krishnananda. He had a particular dislike for the people of Mathura who had robbed him of his Beloved; and Krishnananda was a man of that place, who could not possibly have any good motive in coming there. In short, the Lord lost his temper, and in anger, snatched a stick that was near and rose with this threat to Krishnananda: "Get thee away or I shall compel thee."

When Krishnananda saw that Nimai, a young man of twenty-four, of herculean proportions, was trying to assault him with a big stick, he, an intellectual man, who had never in his life perhaps handled a lethal weapon, thought that his last days had arrived. And with a shriek, and a loud call for help; he ran

for his life, without even looking behind to see whether he was being followed or not. He reached home running and found himself in the midst of his followers. There, while out of breath, he had to give an immediate explanation to all, of the sad plight in which he was found. He gave a description of all that had happened, and then ended by declaring that he owed his life solely to his having fled precipitately!

Neither Krishnananda nor his disciples had any high opinion of, or good feeling for the Lord. But hitherto they had found no trace of any opportunity of giving vent to their spite against him. But here was one, and they were in high spirits. "So he has become a god,—the fellow whom we saw the other day starving for want of food!" said one. Said another: "Let us put an end to his frolics. Let us give him a good thrashing, a sound one." And they all liked the proposal immensely; indeed, at that moment at least they seriously contemplated of offering violence to the person of the Lord.

A section of the people felt a spite towards the Lord. All good beings have their enemies. Those whom people find unapproachably high, those who are without a blemish and beyond reach, and those who, from obscurity, suddenly rise into prominence, incur the ill-will of a portion of their fellows. The Lord was perfect; he was worshipped as the Lord God; his house was full of the best things in the town, with which his bhaktas supplied him without stint; and thus he was an object of envy. When

he walked abroad, he looked like a prince ; and some people very naturally hated him. So, if Krishnananda had actually succeeded in offering violence to the Lord, there were many who would have been glad.

Let us now come to the Lord. When he rose to run after Krishnananda, stick in hand, the bhaktas sought to hold him back ; but just then he was roused by the shriek of the Tantrik Pundit. This shriek jarred upon the ears of the Lord, gave a rude shock to his nerves, and lo ! it roused him into consciousness. The run of Krishnananda in a fright and his shriek, brought the Lord back to his normal state, which all the efforts of his dear ones had hitherto failed to accomplish. Having regained consciousness, he hastily flung away the stick, and looked around him in confusion. Said he : "What is this mad act I have committed just now?" He realized at once all that had happened, and an inexpressible anguish darkened his lovely face. He sat down,—a picture of sorrow.*

He sat as Nimai Pundit, penitent for the act that

* It must be borne in mind that the object of the Lord was to show what Radha's love was really like. He could have done it by precepts, but that the Sreemat Bhagabat had done, though in a faint way. He wanted to show it by example. This he could have done by acting the part of Radha, but that would have never made so permanent an impression as his becoming the real Radha made. To secure that end, he had to become Radha and destroy his own identity completely. So he behaved, just as Radha would have done, under the very circumstance, in his thoughts, deeds, and sayings.

he had been led to do under the influence which had completely mastered him. The bhaktas could see that he had regained consciousness ; his look and everything about him showed it. But he said nothing, nor did the bhaktas venture to utter any word of consolation. It was a new experience to the Lord ; he had never before felt like it, for, he had never done before one wrong act for which he had been led to feel sorry. He felt he had done wrong, and it could be seen by his bhaktas that the thought was gnawing at his heart. And thus he remained, as if stupefied, for a time.

After a while he rose and proceeded on his way, the bhaktas following him. If he proceeded on without a word, so did his companions. He sat on the bank of the Ganges, and his companions sat surrounding him. The Lord was thinking ; an idea was working in his mind ; but what was it? Suddenly he burst into a loud laugh!

The bhaktas were startled. The sound and the scene startled them, for, they had never before heard the Lord laugh in that way. His laugh and smile generally dispensed gladness around him, but there was nothing sweet in that laugh ; on the contrary, it showed a deep-seated sorrow. That was a laughter which betrayed the anguish of his heart.

The Lord stopped, and then muttered : "The remedy has proved worse than the disease." He said this to himself, for, though he was then perfectly conscious, yet so deep was the nature of the feeling

that was working in his mind, that he had no knowledge of the presence of his companions. After a while, he rose, and came home—silent though conscious, sorry though undemonstrative. And in this manner, in a state of deep remorse and maintaining utter silence all the while, he passed several days.

"What did the Lord mean by that,—the remedy proved worse than the disease?"—asked one bhakta of another. No one could say definitely what the Lord meant. But Mukunda attempted an explanation. He said: "That means that the Lord will forsake us." "That cannot be," said all. "For we cannot survive his separation, and it is not possible that he, who loves us so well, will kill us." "Don't be too sure," rejoined Mukunda, "he is greater by far than men. His ways must be mysterious. Don't you remember what he said when he performed the miracle at the death of Sreebas' son, that his heart was rent at the prospect of parting with such noble company? There is no doubt that he will forsake us, to serve a great and unknown purpose." They felt stunned by the thought.

But the Lord himself had a private talk with Nitai. "Sreepad," said the Lord, addressing Nityananda, thus suddenly breaking the silence of days, "have you heard of what they are contemplating in the town? It is to give me a thrashing. Have you not heard of it?" Nitai bent his head in sorrow, for, he had heard of it, but gave no reply. "Yes, I know what they contemplate," continued the Lord, "nay,

I know also the party who are in the conspiracy. Advise me what I am to do now." Nitai could give no reply. The Lord continued, "Listen to the project I have formed in my mind to meet them. I will renounce society and be a Sannyasee, and beg alms at the door of those who now bear ill-will towards me. That will surely disarm them. And then they will not only forget their ill-feelings towards me, but will also accept Harinam." Nitai could see that the Lord was not merely throwing out a suggestion, but giving expression to a deliberate opinion and deliberate resolution which he had formed. His face became pale with anxiety and sorrow. He stammered out: "Lord, don't leave us. Those who think of offering violence to your sacred person, are brutes. Think of us, and think of your mother. If you forsake us, every one of your followers will surely die of a broken heart."

The Lord replied: "Do not blame those who do not like my ways. I live a life of luxury; I have beautiful garments, excellent dishes, nay, everything which makes life enjoyable. Human nature is such that man will never take Harinam, that is to say, accept salvation from a man who lives a life of luxury. Yet I lived the life of a householder, for two reasons. One was, I had to show that an innocent life of enjoyment is not incompatible with the culture of prem and bhakti.* The other was, that as no one has

* This is a lesson which the Hindus needed very much. The idea, that torments upon the body would please God, had

been so well-served as I have been by my friends, it would have been ungrateful on my part to leave them abruptly and thus make them miserable. So I was looking for an opportunity, like the one that has luckily presented itself, in order to show you that, to accomplish my mission, I must leave society. I lived like a householder to please you and my mother, the result of which, you see, is that some people have not accepted Harinam. Now, dear Sreepad, counsel me what I am to do. Shall I, to please you, remain in society, or give you the great pain of renouncing society and save those who would not otherwise accept Harinam from me?"

Nitai remained silent,—he could make no reply. He knew that what the Lord proposed he himself would do, if that was necessary to save men. He knew also that he would accompany the Lord wherever he would go. But the thought of the Lord becoming a houseless wanderer, a mendicant with a piece of rag round his loins, broke his heart. But he felt more for Shachee and Vishnupriya. He, however, kept the secret to himself but wept incessantly days and nights alone.

CHAPTER IV.

KRISHNA-BIRAH.

Early in the morning, a day or two after the incident referred to in the last chapter, the Lord began to lament for Krishna in the manner he was used to do as Radha bereaved. On this occasion he was doing it, however, in a state of self-consciousness. Now, it is impossible to describe, by mere language, the heart-rending spectacle that the Lord presented to those who surrounded him. His pathetic voice ; his face which betokened unutterable misery ; the short ejaculations that escaped his lips, led the bhaktas to weep with him loudly. And what did he say? This was how he unburthened his heart : "I have borne enough. No more, no more, shall I bear the absence of Krishna." "I must go to Krishna, I must have Him." "He is merciful, why should He not grant my heart's earnest desire?" "I want only a sight, a sight of Him." "Shall I never see Him?" He also addressed Krishna directly : "Thou art good. Oh my beloved, Thou art sweet. It is thus my heart hankers after Thee. Show Thyself to me or I shall die. Have pity, have pity, my beloved." He rolled on the dust in the anguish of his soul, and

Gadadhar sought to raise him. He rose,—but to fly to his Krishna! He said, “do not detain me, I go to my Krishna,” and tried to go, but he fell down in a swoon.*

The bhaktas saw that there was something in the mind of the Lord; they knew that such pangs were due to Krishna-biraha;* they knew also that it was a feeling which scarcely even left the Lord. On that day, however, they feared that the Lord had some special cause for his sorrow, and it would really break his heart. And they tried to soothe him by all means in their power. Swoon followed swoon, and he was roused with difficulty. Every one of these swoons carried him to the gate of death, and on each occasion the bhaktas feared that this fit would be the last!

Thus noon approached. The Lord, however, came to see that his bhaktas had become extremely miserable, and he tried to restrain himself. He leaned on Gadadhar and stretched his legs; his

* To second-class bhaktas Sree Krishna of Brindaban is only an emblem; to first-class bhaktas, he is a reality. The Lord flourished as a man-god, and as a bhakta. He flourished as a model bhakta, for the benefit of humanity. To him Sree Krishna and Brindaban were realities, and therefore, he sought to fly to Brindaban, to find Krishna where the latter flourished. It will be seen that though the Lord tried to find Krishna in Brindaban near Mathura, he did not go there in the beginning, and sought to find Him elsewhere.

* If prem is love, biraha is the pang which is caused by separation from the beloved.

gold-hued body, hair and clothes covered with dust, his eyes red with the ceaseless flowing of tears, and his body shivering from excess of emotion. He beckoned his bhaktas to come near; they approached. The Lord wanted to say something, but the words choked him.

By an effort he found his speech, and he said in an attitude of submission: “Dear friends! This body of mine belongs to every one of you. You can sell it and dispose of it in any way you think fit. You have disinterestedly served me, followed me like a shadow and loved me with a fervour which has no parallel. Forgive me if I now leave you. I must now go, I must leave you to find my Krishna.” The Lord was not sorry because of his own sorrows as a mendicant. He was sorry because his supposed sorrows, as a mendicant, would give his bhaktas pain; and so he addressed them in a tone of penitence, imploring them to forgive him.

As soon as he, however, uttered the name of Krishna, he found himself assailed by his feelings; but by a great effort he succeeded in keeping his senses clear. The bhaktas remained silent. The Lord continued: “The supreme object of life is the attainment of the lotus-feet of God. It is of no moment to us whether we live together or live separate, in a palace or in wilderness. My dear friends, worship Krishna in my absence. As for myself, I go for the common weal. As merchants go abroad to earn money, and when they come back,

maintain their friends with the money thus earned ; in the same manner, I shall go out to earn Krishna-prem, and when I return, we shall divide it among us."

The announcement fell on the bhaktas like a thunderbolt. All, however, could not at once realize the full significance of the proposal. The bhaktas could at last see that the Lord was making a serious proposal to them, which was to let him leave society in search of Krishna. It affected the bhaktas in divers ways ; indeed, some even thought that the Lord was acting cruelly towards them. Sreebas angrily replied : "Let those, who can survive your separation, wait for the Krishna-prem. For myself I can tell you that I shall never survive it ; so, your words of consolation to me at least are useless."

Gadadhar never ventured to speak to the Lord. He obeyed his commands, and that was all. But he got bold at a time of peril. He said : "My Lord, we do not understand you. You mean to leave us, by which you mean that you wish to leave mother Shachee. I have no faith in that bhakti for Sree Krishna, which leads one to forsake his old mother,—a mother who has no one except yourself to console her."

This bold language from Gadadhar astonished all the other bhaktas, and, to speak the truth, also pleased them, and so they eagerly waited for the Lord's reply. The Lord looked at Gadadhar with reproachful eyes. Said he : "If you love me disin-

terestedly, you will comfort my mother when I am gone. By your words you aim a poisoned arrow at my heart. My greatest difficulty is my mother. As a friend, help me to overcome it. You know very well that I must leave you and that I cannot help it. You talk of my remaining with you. What will you do with me, pray ? My body is like an empty shell ; for, my soul has fled away to Krishna. I shall candidly explain to you my position. You know what fever is. The burning fire of Krishna-biraha has, like a severe fever, reduced all the desires in my heart to ashes. There is nothing, nothing, absolutely nothing in this world which can give me any pleasure except Krishna. Would you like to see me, whom you love so well, consumed by a slow fire ?"

Murari concluded that any proposal, based upon worldly considerations, would never move the Lord. So he adopted another plan. He said : "My Lord, you taught us, worldly men, how to cultivate bhakti. You planted the germ of bhakti in our hearts. Would you now destroy it by leaving us to ourselves ?" And then Haridas found speech. Indeed, the bhaktas, one by one, addressed the Lord, and tried to dissuade him from the momentous act of leaving society and them for ever. I have no space for all that they said. They wept, they reasoned, they implored, and they did all they could, in the anguish of their hearts, to move the heart of the Lord. It was Mukunda, however, who gave a new turn to the

discussion. He eschewed argument, and, falling at the feet of the Lord with a shriek, delivered himself in the midst of sobs, which well-nigh choked him, thus: "You will forsake us, my Lord! Is that possible? The mere contemplation of such an event rends our hearts. How can we live without you,—our life, the life of our life?" And Mukunda, having fallen at the feet of the Lord and thus unburdened himself, the whole company followed this example and began to give vent to their feelings by loud lamentations.

The Lord was very much moved, and for a moment he was so confounded as not to know what to say. He implored them to listen to him with calmness. He said that they had given a very serious turn to a very trifling matter. If he left society, he would not leave them for good. If it was impossible for them to live without him, he too could not live without them. He was not leaving them then and there and for ever; he would have other conversations on the subject with them. And in this manner the Lord tried to soothe his inconsolable bhaktas. Indeed the Lord smiled, and embraced every one of them in turn to show that the matter was not so serious a thing as they had taken it for.

In one of his songs Narahari describes how he was affected when he first came across the Lord. In the song, addressing a friend he says: "Sister,*

* Those who worship God in the wake of Radha, that is to say, with prem, pose themselves as females. For they attend

when I came across Gora (another name of our Lord, Gora meaning the white-bodied), I became beside myself. For, I began not only to see him in my heart but also wherever I directed my glance. Indeed, the entire universe seemed to be filled with his lovely face. What is this disease that has overtaken me?"

Well, this disease is nothing else than one of the highest symptoms of love.* When one is filled with love he is sometimes overtaken by the symptoms described by Narahari, that is to say, he sees his beloved everywhere. Narahari only describes the

Radha, and none but females, of course, can do it. Here the saying of the female saint, Mirabai, may be remembered. She said, "every one in the universe is a female, the male being Krishna alone."—(Vide Vol. I, page XL.)

* The symptoms, that attend one who is in love, were not accurately known before the Lord appeared. Very few people, if ever any, know what true love is. The only being who ever tasted love in perfection, was Lord Nimai, in his love for Krishna. His love for Krishna produced symptoms in him which have been kept on record by his bhaktas. The same symptoms would follow in the case of every one in love, of course, according to the intensity of his feeling, though the object may be a human being. Indeed, a man who has once loved, is saved, though the object may not be Krishna. The Sreemat Bhagabat only knew of eight such symptoms, but the Lord showed in his person many more than eight. One of these symptoms is to see the beloved wherever the one, stricken by love, casts his or her glance. It was from the way the Lord betrayed his love for Krishna that a science was founded called the *Rasa-shastra* or "the science of emotions," viz., Prem and Bhakti.

feelings that the bhaktas generally entertained for the Lord. Indeed, they had come to love the Lord almost as Radha loved Krishna. They had forgotten everything they held dear,—wife, children, wealth, worldly prospects, even their own existence, in their love for the Lord. They could not do without him for a moment, and live without him. They could neither think nor talk of any one else. Indeed, the Lord had taken entire possession of their hearts. Everything in him appeared sweet to them. And the pleasure of being with him, compensated completely for the sacrifices that they had been led to make for him. They adored his person, his smile, his limbs, his movements, nay, loved him from “the sole of his foot to the crown of his head.” This tyrant of their hearts was now going to forsake them, and they felt that their existence would become unbearable without him.

The Lord himself felt similarly. If they all loved him intensely, so, in his turn, he loved them dearly. Indeed, as regards love, every one got more than he gave, because he, the Lord, had a greater capacity for loving than they.

The Lord, to console his bhaktas, began to see every one privately at his house. When Nimai goes to a bhakta's house privately, the latter feels gratified and flattered; he feels as if he has obtained the highest object of his ambition. The master sits by him, talks to him, embraces him, and, in this manner,

takes affectionate leave of him. He clasps the neck of the bhakta and weeps with him. He unburthens his heart to each of them: “I must go, the sufferings of humanity rend my heart. And you must help me.” To some others he would say: “The absence of Krishna has made my life unhappy. I cannot live without Him. I must go to find Him. Forgive me, if I give you pain by leaving you.” And the bhakta is so persuaded by the earnestness of the Lord that he thinks he ought to allow the Lord to go, and that if his separation from the Lord is a keen suffering to him, it is also a blessing, for, it means the salvation of mankind and happiness to the Lord.

Since the second change in the mood of the Lord, Shachee had not enjoyed a moment's happiness. She had not forgotten the wound that her eldest son had left in her breast. Would Nimai follow him? This thought was a source of constant anguish to her. She regained her natural cheerfulness when she saw that her son had overcome the influence under which he laboured on his return from Gaya. She saw that thousands loved her son and her son loved them in return, as also that he loved Kirtan passionately. She had, therefore, come to assure herself that her son would never leave such devoted company and such fine Kirtan. But the new influence which had taken possession of the Lord again threw her into despair.

She sent for her younger sister, the wife of

Chandra Shelkhar. "Sister," said she when she had come, "the condition of Nimai gives me uneasiness. Will he also leave me as his elder did? Whenever he sees a holy man, he talks to him with great earnestness. Indeed, the other day that renowned Sannyasee of Katwa, Keshava Bharati, came to Nadia, and Nimai brought him here and held a private conversation with him for some time, and the spectacle gave me a fright."

"Why that should give you a fright, I do not see," said the sister. "He is a holy man and it is natural that Nimai should associate with him." Shachee replied: "You do not see, sister, that Bishvarup has left a lesson for me behind him. Whenever I see a Sannyasee in Nadia, the apprehension seizes me that he has come to take my Nimai away. Who and what is to assure me that Nimai will not forsake me?" The sister suggested that she should ask her son direct, and she was sure he would conceal nothing from her. Shachee would have done so, but she had not the requisite courage. Luckily Nimai just then appeared before them, and seeing his mother and his aunt, he, with great reverence, prostrated himself before them.

Shachee mustered courage and addressed her son. "Nimai," said she, "will you give a frank reply to a question from me?" Nimai said, "of course, mother." Shachee pondered,—she was framing a question. She said, "you know I cannot bear your absence for a moment. Will you leave me?" Nimai

took some time to reflect, before answering the question. He then looked his mother tenderly in the face and replied, "yes, mother, I have an intention of going to a holy place. But don't get alarmed. I will never go anywhere without your permission. And if I am ever permitted to go, I shall come back to salute you."

Dear reader, here do not fail to take note of the courage of our Master. A son like him would be a Sannyasee with the free permission of a mother like his, with only one child, and who is in the sixty-seventh year of her age!

"You promise this, Nimai?" asked Shachee. "Yes, I promise," replied the Lord. Shachee was assured; and she felt extremely happy. She knew that her son would never break a promise, and she believed that on her part she would never give him permission to go.

Such an open conversation between mother and son had never taken place since the return of the latter from Gaya. It gave her intense satisfaction, and reminded her of a trick that she had played upon her son. She said with a voice of penitence: "Nimai, will you forgive me? I have done you a wrong."

Nimai expressed horror at the idea of a mother asking forgiveness of her son. He said: "It is impossible that any act of yours towards me can be wrong. Tell me mother what it is."

Shachee replied: "Your brother, Visvarup, left

a book with me to be delivered over to you when you had grown up—," saying this, she stopped. The Lord immediately felt a lively interest in the conversation, and eagerly asked the lady to give him the book. Shachee continued the discourse with an effort. "A few days after handing over to me the book, he left home and society. I thought that education had opened his eyes and led him to realize the worthlessness of everything worldly and to leave us. Besides, he one day in a dream tempted you to follow in his wake. I took alarm and thought that I must not permit you to read the book, and therefore threw it into fire."

A shade of disappointment passed through the face of the Lord. But he recovered his good humour immediately. He said: "Mother, you were led by your motherly feeling for me to do it; never mind," and he left the old lady.

This happiness of the lady, however, did not last for any length of time. For, the rueful face of the bhaktas kept her in a constant state of alarm, nay, some of them even went to the length of telling her that she should try to keep her son at home, as he contemplated leaving Nadia. This they did from the best of motives. They thought that, if any one could detain him, it was the old lady, the mother of the Lord. Of course, Shachee had the promise of her son, but yet she found in her heart of hearts, that she was again getting more and more unhappy day by day.

Again mother and son met, a few days after the last meeting, for a talk. Shachee opened the conversation. She said: "Nimai, you told me that you intended to go to a holy place. When do you go and where is the holy place?"

The time had come for the Lord to reveal his intentions to his mother. He replied: "The dearest object of my life is to go to Brindaban—." No sooner had the Lord pronounced the word than he had to stop,—he was choked by his emotion! Shachee was alarmed, lest her son would fall down in a swoon from the excess of his feelings; but he recovered. "Mother," continued he with exceeding earnestness, "I promised that I would never leave you without your permission. Will you not allow me to go?"

Shachee replied to the question by another: "Nimai, what is this that people say in whispers about you? Do not deceive me." The question visibly moved the Lord, and the old lady could easily see that she had nothing agreeable to expect in reply from her son. For he looked tenderly in her face, and his eyes were filled with tears which he tried to suppress.

Nimai, however, partially conquered his feelings and said: "Mother, listen! You nourished me in your womb; you suckled me when a baby; you fed me when a boy, and educated me as a father would have done. Mother, every pore of my body belongs to you. It is now my duty to devote all my energies for the purpose of making the rest of your life happy, as far as that is possible. Is that not so, mother?"

Shachee felt that the thunderbolt was coming and her face showed extreme anxiety. She, however, could not say anything in reply.

The Lord continued: "Yes, my duty is to serve you and not Sree Krishna. But He is proving towards me stronger than yourself. Mother, I cannot help it. People have sometimes unworthy and ungrateful children, also children who are useless to them, either because they are blind or sickly. Mother, I am like one of them. My duty towards you remains unfulfilled, my huge debt to you remains unpaid. I can no longer remain in society. I must go out in search of Krishna. I cannot pay the debt I owe you by any effort of mine. Release me from it, and show to the world what a mother's disinterested love is capable of accomplishing."

"That is to say, you want to be a Sannyasee like your brother," asked Shachee. "Deal frankly with me."

"Yes, mother," replied Nimai.

"And you want my permission?"

"Yes, mother," replied Nimai.

"A free permission, of course?" rejoined Shachee.

"Certainly, mother," said Nimai.

"That is impossible, my beloved son. If you want permission for form's sake, I will, of course, accord it to oblige you; for, I have never denied you anything. But a free or hearty permission is impossible,—nature will not permit it; for, I am a mother,

I have no one else besides you, I am old, and I love you at least as other mothers love their children."

The strong-minded lady did not break out into lamentations or fall into a swoon, nor did she meet the Lord with an outburst, but remained firm as a rock, apparently unmoved, and for once in her life, she ventured to speak face to face with her irresistible child.

The Lord looked with admiration and tenderness on his mother. He suppressed the tears that rushed into his eyes,—he suppressed the tender feelings that sought to choke him. Mother and son gazed at each other for some time, when Shachee again broke the silence by discharging, at her son, a barbed arrow in the shape of a question, which was, "And Vishnu-priya?"

The Lord felt himself for a moment like a guilty man before his mother. The shaft had done its work; the name of Vishnupriya led him to hang down his head in thought. He replied, "Mother, if I go I shall go with her permission. And more, I shall leave her in holy joy. Of course, she will pine, but she will have the consolation that I leave her only to discharge a sacred duty that I owe to Krishna. Yes, hers will be a life of suffering, from a worldly point of view, but mine will be worse."

Shachee interrupted Nimai with these words: "And you will leave that poor forsaken girl to me round my neck like 'a garland of misery' to torment me as long as I live? Nimai, you have become a

saint. But is it the duty of a holy man to forsake mother and wife? Nimai, your love for mankind knows no bounds. Their misery literally breaks your heart. That is not only what the world says, but I have seen too often to forget it. Why are you then so cruel to your mother and wife, who are also human beings?"

If the Lord, as a son, could have obtained the leave of his mother for such a purpose, it would have cast a reflection on her parental affection. He was, therefore, pleased to find that he, as a son, had no chance with his mother. Thus he had to adopt another method to secure his object.

The son merged into the teacher, and the Lord assumed an attitude which was high above the reach of humanity. He said: "Mother, you have at last reached the point to which I was leading you. Who will forgive my offences cheerfully but those who bear disinterested love for me, if I use them ill? My sympathy for men is, no doubt, one of the reasons which take me away from you. I speak freely with you because you are mine and I am yours. You will, as I said, bear all my offences towards you with cheerfulness. Mother! I am going to perform a holy duty; you, who love me the most, ought to be the most ardent in offering me help. It would grieve me to think that you were throwing obstacles in the way of your son performing a holy duty. Mother, bear in mind that the attainment of Sree Krishna is the object of every human being. To obtain Him is

the sole object of existence. To win Him is alone happiness, while not to enjoy Him is misery. The misery from which worldly men suffer, is delusion. What are earthly miseries to a man who has Sree Krishna? Do, mother, worship Him and He will not only console you, but make you happy. It is He who brings loving hearts together, and it is He who parts them. Knowing that He is good, merciful, nay, loving, let us submit not only resignedly, but cheerfully to His dictates. I go not willingly. I go because He takes me away, no doubt, for an object of His. You trust me thus far, that I go from a sense of duty, and you must help me. Dear mother, think of Krishna and be superior to these petty worldly considerations, and give me leave to depart. For, you know I cannot go without your leave, freely given."

The above few words were spoken in a manner which it is impossible to describe. It was a privilege possessed by the Lord alone of being able to give tangible shape to his sentiments. His sentiments, therefore, always proved irresistible to those whom he addressed. Indeed, when they were uttered, Shachee realized vividly that the ground that the Lord had taken was unassailable. She at once found that she was getting, as usual, helpless before her son. She felt that resistance would be useless, nay, that she would not be able to offer resistance much longer. The first announcement of the Lord that he wanted leave, had acted like a thunderbolt and stunned her. She gradually realized the situation, and tears now

filled her eyes. She said: "Nimai, I have been expecting all this. Vishvarup prepared me for this final catastrophe. My supreme happiness warned me that this could not last. A poor bereaved widow, I suddenly found myself the proud mother of a son whom the world worshipped. No, I mistake; that was not the cause of my happiness. My cause of happiness was your love. Had ever any mother such a son? Besides, I have no fear about salvation; your mother must be sure of it. I thought of all this, and then the idea, how unworthy I was for all this happiness, rushed into my mind. Yes, yes, you must go. I know, an unworthy woman like me must not enjoy continual happiness, when men and women around me are so miserable. But, Nimai, I live in you; I cannot bear your separation for a moment: tell me how can I live without you? No, no; here I talk of myself. I must suffer. Yet I had an ambition. It was that you would live as a householder and that your children would surround me, and that I would tend them. All that is dream now, never to be fulfilled! But Nimai, you have been tenderly nursed; you are always under the influence of prem, so that others have to feed you and tend you. How will you manage alone in wilderness? The soles of your feet are as soft as the *sirish* flower; how will you be able to walk bare-footed? And Nimai, you will now, with a piece of rag round your loins and a mendicant's bag on your shoulder, beg from door to door for a handful of rice, and when exhausted, sleep on the bare ground,

under the shade of trees, in heat and cold, in storm and rain! See, Nimai, I have thought out all these in the imagination, and you ask me to let you go freely to lead the life of a Sannyasee. Could any mother do so?"

Shachee proceeded, and the Lord did not interrupt her; and, at last, overpowered by her miseries, she began to talk incoherently. Nimai then caught her in his arms, embraced her, and said with deep emotion: "Mother! what is this? If you take it so ill, I will not go. You know I cannot go without your free permission."

Shachee.—"Oh, no, I give you permission, since you say it is the will of Krishna; but it would be speaking a lie to tell you that I was capable of giving you free leave."

Nimai.—"Mother, do you think it possible that I have any choice in the matter? Who does not naturally wish to remain at home with his friends? But the moment I attempt to think of it, I feel my heart bursting with an irresistible feeling which urges me to leave home. No, mother, it is not in my power to stay,—to stay is to die. I can't stay and live, that is, believe me, mother, my precise condition. Besides, I must find Sree Krishna; I must search for Him in every corner of the world. I am sure to find him in Brindaban—." Here the idea of finding Sree Krishna in Brindaban so affected the Lord, that he could not proceed any further, and he sat down and wept, utterly overcome.

Shachee sprinkled water on his face, gently called him by his name, and awoke him to consciousness. Nimai, when conscious, recollected the business before him, and, with some effort, continued the discourse with indescribable pathos. "Mother," he said, "the world is full of misery because they have forgotten God. The will of Krishna is that I should proclaim Him and His goodness to mankind. For this I must travel from door to door as a mendicant. Many will never accept Krishna at the hands of a man, endowed with worldly prosperity. In this manner, Sree Krishna will remove the miseries of men. What do you say? Shall I do it, or remain with you?"

It is stated in the *Chaitanya Mangal* that, at this stage, the Lord imparted to his mother wisdom, so that she could realize all the circumstances of the case. This sudden influx of *gyan* (wisdom) opened her eyes, and she felt that she had been so long acting like a silly woman. Was not the Lord God anxious to save mankind? And could it be proper that she, a mere worm, should try to obstruct such an act of divine mercy? And would she be able to do it? She felt just then that there was only one loving Father, and that all were His children, and that He was only trying to draw them towards Him. She at that moment not only felt an irresistible bhakti for God, but also sympathy for all His children. And she was filled with holy joy so that tears of ecstasy began to course down her cheeks.

She then found herself high above all human feelings.

She said: "Nimai, yes, I see it. It is all right," and her voice showed that she was drunk with joy. "You must go, and I was a fool to throw obstacles in your way. Go, my son, spread bhakti and save the creatures who crawl on this earth. I remember now what I had forgot, that you are the same Krishna who is the Life of all created beings. Lucky am I that you chose me for you mother. It pleased you to call me mother for some time; it now pleases you to be the Teacher, to save all your children. Happy is the destiny of man! Go, son, I give you free permission, nay, rejoice that you should go."

A divine smile brightened up the countenance of the Lord as he heard his mother. He looked at her with a most tender and approving look, and said slowly, "yes, mother, to-day you have made Sree Krishna your debtor."

Wisdom (*gyan*) had conquered her maternal feelings for a moment; but when she had spoken the word, she realized what she had done, and the maternal feeling again obtained ascendancy over her. She fell down in the agony of her sorrow, and began to roll on the ground, exclaiming, "Oh Nimai, my darling Nimai, your cruel mother is driving you away from home."

Says the *Chaitanya Mangal*, the Lord imparted wisdom to her mother for the purpose of securing

the permission from her ; for, Sachee could have never, without being enlightened by wisdom, given her son a free permission to leave home. When this permission was obtained, the Lord withdrew the wisdom from her, and allowed the maternal feelings again to take possession of her heart.

Was it right, it may be asked here, was it not something like cheating her, to extort her permission by imparting her *gyan* for a moment, and then withdrawing it? Besides, why did the Lord withdraw the *gyan* which made his mother so happy? And why did he return her the feelings which unnerved her and made her, for the moment, the most miserable woman on earth?

The chroniclers of the Leela of the Lord reply thus : which would you prefer, *gyan* or *prem*? The Lord certainly preferred *prem*, and so he gave it back to his mother.* By *gyan* Sachee came to see that she was only one of the innumerable beings who were all tending towards a loving father. She

* A Greek philosopher proposed that as human flesh had been proved to be wholesome food, the better course for men would be to eat their dead parents than to bury them. From the point of view of a man of *gyan*, the philosopher is perfectly right. A man of *gyan* crushes all those tender feelings which make men so sweet and beautiful. Yet these tender feelings are the sources of most of our miseries. To crush these tender feelings out of the mind, is emasculation, and the process brutalizes the victim. A man who has not married and has no children, has not much of the miseries of the ordinary householder, but he has also no joys of life.

then almost forgot her relationship with her son. By her wisdom she had lost her son, for, she realized that Nimai was the Father of all, and not one particularly her own. By *prem* she got exclusive possession of her son Nimai,—a deserving object of love. If Shachee had been asked whether she would accept wisdom, which would make Nimai an object of indifference to her, and therefore, save her from the pangs of separation for him, or she would have Nimai for her son and along with it the pangs of separation, she would have assuredly preferred the latter alternative. Of course, the joys of *prem* brought along with them the sufferings of bereavement ; but then, if one must have the ecstasy he ought to have also the suffering. *Prem* and bereavement are inseparable ; wherever there is one, there is the other. Besides, there is no bereavement whatsoever in the world. For, wherever there is an attraction, there must be an ultimate union. Bereavement must, therefore, always be temporary. After all, without separation love is never nourished. Drops of separation water the tree of love ; separation is necessary for the growth of *prem*. Death unites and not separates. By giving Shachee the pangs of separation, the Lord not only returned back her son to her, but enhanced her love for him, or, in other words, her Krishna-*prem*, which is the highest blessing of God to man.

When Shachee began to roll on the ground, giving vent to her sorrows by short ejaculations,

Nimai tried to soothe her, gently stroking her head. The Lord wept, and said: "Mother, this expression of sorrow is a reflection against Krishna. Remember, that you suffer in the merciful work of Krishna. And mother, is it proper that you should weep in my name? Better weep in the name of Krishna, for, then you will not lose Him, and if you do not lose Him, you lose nothing, certainly not me.*

Shachee here gave vent to her sorrows by loud lamentations. "Was there ever a mother like me," said she, "to drive a dutiful and loving son into the wilderness?" "Mother," intervened the Lord, "I assure you, it is Krishna who made you give me permission. Dear mother, console yourself. I am not presently running away from you. I am conscious, I have given you, as a son, very little happiness. I promise, henceforth, as long as I live in the house, to behave just as a householder, pure and simple, should do." The Lord then caught hold of the hand of his mother and said with indescribable pathos: "Mother! I promise this. Whenever you feel an ardent desire to see me, I will come to soothe you, and you will see me in your heart. Further,

* A tear, according to our Master, is misspent which is not shed for Sree Krishna. One of the main reasons, which enabled the Lord to take a free leave of his friends and relations, was that those in Nadia, who followed him, had then been purged out of all impurities, enabling them to undergo unparalleled sacrifices for Krishna.

I take charge of your body and soul. As for that poor thing, Vishnupriya, whom I have to forsake, teach her to worship Krishna and He will soothe her. That is my request to you; for, she is very young and needs your blessings. And she will, likewise, see me whenever she ardently wishes to do so."

CHAPTER V.

VISHNUPRIYA AT HER FATHER'S.

FROM that moment the Lord became a householder, pious, charitable, hospitable ; good to every one. He bade, as it were, all influences to leave him for the moment, and they left him like obedient servants. He ate, slept and behaved like other people, though he could never suppress the unattainable piety, the bewitching sweetness and the irresistible magnetism which marked him from others. The Lord had taken free permission of his mother to leave society ; but another obstacle yet remained in his way,—his wife, Vishnupriya, the girl of fifteen. Of course, the Lord could have fled without minding her at all. But that he would never do. Was she not his wife ? Why should she object to a proceeding which would please Krishna ? The resolve of the Lord was that if he should go, he must do it with the permission of his wife, and all those who loved him. Now judge the character of the being who, a youth of twenty-four, is capable of leaving his dearly-beloved and beautiful wife of fifteen from consideration of duty,—a duty in which he is not personally interested,—and a being who has the courage of hoping that he will be able to

VISHNUPRIYA AT HER FATHER'S 117

accomplish his object with the free consent of his devoted wife !

The lady, Vishnupriya, had gone on a visit to her father and mother for a few days. It was in her absence that the Lord had taken permission of his mother to leave society. While there, she heard inarticulate whispers to the effect that her lord contemplated leaving her and society. The news gave her a shock which filled her with deep anxiety. But one idea kept her spirits up. Her husband was love personified. She did not know whom he did not love,—the high and the low, men and women, the lower animals, even shrubs and creepers. She could never persuade herself to believe that her lord would be able to take the cruel step of leaving his mother, herself, and the bhaktas for ever. She, however, did not tarry any longer at her father's, but immediately proceeded towards her own house, though it was then evening. It was then the middle of December. She found that her husband had already retired to bed,—a thing unusual with him ; for, he was used to spend his nights sleepless with Krishna. She did not know that her husband had promised his mother to live for a time as an ordinary householder, like other men. She hastily took her supper, and as hastily entered the sleeping-room with a plate in hand which contained betel, chandan paste, and a garland of flowers. She found her husband was sleeping profoundly, having covered himself, as winter had set in, with a quilt, leaving his face uncovered.

The sight of the face, which eclipsed the full moon in lustre and beauty, gave her a thrill of joy. She felt a little disappointed when she saw that her husband was sleeping ; but a little reflection showed that she should consider that circumstance rather lucky than otherwise. She had very little opportunities of coming in contact with her husband. He sometimes passed the whole night in kirtan, sometimes he passed the night in a state of ecstasy, forgetful of the external world. Vishnupriya felt that her lord had little opportunities of enjoying a good sleep. "Let him enjoy it," she thought, "I can wait. Besides, I have very little opportunities of enjoying a full sight of his lovely face. Now I can do it without interruption." So she sat at his feet on the couch, took them up in her lap and began to rub them gently with her tender hands. The two feet seemed to her like a couple of lotuses, and she gazed at them, smelt them, touched them, and saluted them with great reverence, while tears of joy trickled down her cheeks. "I am the luckiest woman in the world," thought she. Immediately a pang shot through her heart. The great joy in her heart led her to the opposite extreme. "Do I deserve this joy," she now thought, "and did I not hear from trusty sources that he was contemplating leaving me? Yes, the most likely thing is, that he will leave me, for, it cannot be just that when there is so much misery in the world, I alone should enjoy uninterrupted happiness." This thought so affected her that tears gushed out of her

eyes with some force, so that a drop or two fell on one of the feet of her Lord.*

Whether the warm tears produced an unusual sensation on the feet of the Lord, or for some other reason we know not, the Lord gave a start and opened his eyes. He found himself face to face with his wife, who, he saw, was weeping. He hastily arose, and tenderly embracing her, said: "What ails thee, my beloved? Why these tears?" The loving address from her husband only gave an additional impetus to the flow, and she could not, for a time, speak at all. The Lord allowed her time to calm herself, which she was able to do in a few minutes. She then looked at her husband reproachfully, and said: "Tell me, what is it that I hear?"

The Lord at once understood what the lady was aiming at, but he was then not quite ready to disclose his intentions to her. He wanted to evade the question, and, therefore, in an offhand manner, replied that she had no business to listen to what people said. Vishnupriya saw that her husband was in a gay mood,—a thing unusual with him,—and the change in her lord gave her pleasure and hope. She thought that it would be impossible for her loving husband to leave her. So she asked, though with less anxiety than what she felt before, to explain why people were circulating the rumour that he would leave—she

* Chaitanya Mangal.

was going to say her, but correcting herself, said—his mother.

The Lord laughed a gay laugh at the query. "And is this the way we meet after so many days' absence?" said he. "Let us talk of lighter things." Now the poor woman had never seen her lord in that mood before, and she forgot all about the rumour in her happiness. So they passed a few hours in bliss as wife and husband. The Lord had promised Shachee that he would live an ordinary life and he was doing so. That night he tried to forget his bhaktas, and sought the happiness of his wife. Suddenly Vishnupriya asked, in a tone of anxiety and alarm: "Why are you weeping?"

The Lord was not weeping, but smiling,—smiling externally, though his heart was, no doubt, bursting. The loving eyes of the wife had penetrated through this external gaiety and succeeded in detecting that, though he was smiling in his face, he was weeping in his heart. The simple wife had then forgotten all about the anxiety, and was "swimming in an ocean of pleasure," in the company of her husband. Her simplicity, her trust in him her love for him, made his parting with her a serious business with the Lord. The thought that he would have to part with such a loving and confiding girl, who had no one in the world except himself to console or protect her, led his heart to weep in silence, and though he tried to conceal the fact from his wife by assuming an external gaiety, the loving eyes of the wife had found it

out. To her question, the Lord replied, "Weep? You see, I am laughing."

The reply did not remove the suspicion of the wife, but increased it. For, she saw that her question had almost betrayed her husband into an outburst of tears. So she said this time, with great earnestness, anxiety and alarm: "I clearly see you are weeping. I feel that you are not enjoying yourself; you are deceiving me by your hollow smiles, and I am convinced that you are contemplating something dreadful, and,—the rumour is true."

The Lord suddenly became grave. He felt that the time had come to unburthen his heart to his wife. He looked sadly at her face, and said with a voice, trembling with emotion, "you have divined correctly, —I mean to be a Sannyasee."

The lady looked at her husband, almost stunned by the information, to assure herself whether she had heard aright. The Lord continued: "You and I are united for ever; nothing can separate us except our own folly. Let us worship Krishna, which is the sole object of human existence. Listen to my advice, because I am your most disinterested friend. You are called Vishnupriya, which means 'beloved of Vishnu, God.' Prove it by your action. Make Krishna love you by your devotion to Him. Forget this world—it is only a temporary abode."

Vishnupriya ought to have fallen into a fainting fit, at the dreadful news imparted to her. But

whether she did not then properly realize the import of the message conveyed to her, or the holy presence of the Lord gave her strength, she remained in her senses. She, however, found herself paralyzed. She attempted to say something, but could not for some time. She at last broke silence, and said: "Do not be cruel to your mother. People will speak ill of you. As for me, I know I do not deserve to have you." And she tried to think, which she found difficult in her that state of mind.

She again commenced: "I see, I am a clog in the way of your spiritual progress. Very well, I will not come to you, I will live at my father's; but do not leave your mother, I beseech you.*

The Lord replied: "My dearest, give up all these worldly thoughts. I love you, you love me. It is not possible for me to make you miserable for a mere whim or caprice. I know you will suffer for my absence, but forget not also that I will suffer equally. And why do I give you, my beloved, this pang of separation, and also take it upon myself, unless because there is no help for it? I do all this to worship Krishna, and the result will be excellent both for you and me. So, my dear wife, give me leave with a cheerful heart, so that I may go, happy in the thought that I go with your permission."

* The general impression is that a life of celibacy is necessary for an uninterrupted growth of the spiritual faculties.

But who gave out to the Chroniclers, what peeped between husband and wife at that night?

Vishnupriya.—"But why do you ask the leave of me? Are you not free to do whatever you like?"

Lord.—"No, I have no right to go without your permission, given freely, without any pressure whatsoever, for, you are my wife."

Vishnupriya.—"But are you serious? Is it possible that you can leave me? How can that be? Your mother will die as soon as she hears of this. Do not talk or think of leaving her. Every one in Nadia will either die or follow you, if you leave home. You are, no doubt, jesting. Let me go to mother and tell her that you are talking dreadful things." And she rose to depart.

The Lord caught hold of her hand and assured her in a most serious manner, that his mother had already been informed of everything and had given her permission!

Vishnupriya gazed at him doubtingly. She felt dizzy, choked and dazed, and then she fell with a shriek into her husband's lap. The Lord was confounded. He sought to rouse her, and after a while, succeeded. But she awoke only to weep. The poor girl at last found speech. She said, "I am the luckiest woman in the world, yet I cannot say that I was passing a pleasant life. I tossed about in my bed for sleep which refused to come without you, while you were doing Kirtan at Sribas'. When you came home after Kirtan, you seemed to me unapproachable. Husband as you are, I have had rarely an opportunity of having a full sight of your face. Now,

you leave your young wife to her fate! Can this be religion? You say your mother has given you permission. She is noble. I have not her strength of mind. But she is old; death which is sure to happen sooner in her case, will release her from her sufferings. But I shall have to lead a dreary life for how long God alone knows. Don't leave me, dear. I never offended you. It is not your duty to leave me. I cannot live without you. Do not forsake your innocent wife." And she, with folded hands and in a kneeling posture, earnestly and with tearful eyes besought her lord.

The Lord felt himself overcome by this girl of fifteen,—the wife proved stronger than even the mother. But yet she must yield, for, an Avatar of God cannot go for nothing, and no human being can frustrate or retard His work. The Lord had to deaden the love of his mother Shachee for him, to obtain her permission to go, by imparting to her wisdom. In the same manner, the Lord sought to overawe the love of Vishnupriya for him, by a vision. In the case of his mother he succeeded partially, but in the case of his wife he utterly failed.

His wife at this moment saw that her husband had been changed into Vishnu! Vishnu is a form of Sree Krishna.

Vishnupriya saw as if her husband had disappeared, and Sree Vishnu taken his place. The young girl thus found herself face to face with Divinity. She was not confounded, however, by the

sight, nor even confused. When she saw the living Vishnu before her, she immediately assumed the posture of reverence as one should do before a holy man, and saluted Him with the deepest humility. And then with folded hands, she said: "Thou great Lord of the universe! Give me this boon (bar). Return to me my husband!"*

Said Vishnu: "But you get Me. What more do you want?"

Vishnupriya.—"My Lord God, I cannot live without my husband. I worship you, Merciful Father, but I love my husband; give him back to me."

Such was the love of Vishnupriya for her husband. And the Lord had to cut such a tie asunder to renounce society!

The form of Vishnu immediately disappeared, and the Lord again re-appeared, to the wondering gaze of his wife.

He immediately took her in his bosom, and said: "Bravo, my dear! The worthiest of women, the best of wives! So you preferred me to Vishnu!" He said this, and wept. And thus wife and husband wept for some time. The Lord at length broke the silence. He said: "As you are the worthier half of me, you must help me in my work of imparting Harinam to mankind: For this purpose I must become a Sannyasee." Here his wife interrupted:

* Chaitanya Mangal.

"You see, what I complain of is that if you must leave society, why should you not take me with you?"

The Lord smiled: "No, that cannot be. I must forsake you, I must make you, my mother and all my dear ones weep, and by their tears wipe out the sins of mankind. Do you understand me? If I leave you all, the hearts of men will be softened towards me, and they will accept and nourish the seed of bhakti in their heart. Put the salvation of men in one scale, and your pangs of separation in the other, and you will see that your desire to keep me is based upon selfish considerations. Would you not suffer, to save mankind? Why should you not suffer, if your sufferings remove the miseries of men?"

Vishnupriya.—"Yes, I see, I should be doing wrong by detaining you. But the fact is, I cannot survive your departure."

The Lord.—"No, do not think of that. Survive my departure bravely, as I hope to be able to survive separation from you. You talk of pangs of separation. But separation for spiritual purposes is not separation at all. And then how do we separate? You will still possess everything of me, except my body. I shall live as you will, and we shall still have the privilege of loving one another. You will get news of me constantly. As for seeing me, that you will be able to do in your heart. Enthroned in your heart and enjoy my company. We never obtain the body of Krishna, but the sublime bliss of

men consists in their union with Him, spirit to spirit. Now, my dear, I promise you this as I promised my mother, that whenever you feel an ardent desire to see me, I will come to soothe you and you will see me in your heart."

The Lord stopped, gazed at his wife, and then said slowly: "I have yet a request to make of you. Worship Krishna, day and night, and that is the last request of your husband."

The Lord again stopped and continued: "And then I will tell you a secret. As a human being you are subject to the laws which govern humanity. Of course, you will now and then pine for me. But God pays them fully who perform great deeds from disinterested motives. He gives them holy joy, which guards them from sufferings. Mankind will bless you for ever and ever for your suffering on their account."

Vishnupriya got alarmed. She hastily said: "Are you going just now? Let me have your company for a few days more."

The Lord took her in his lap, and said: "No, not just now. I will go when you have been almost tired of me." And the Lord again came down to the level of his wife. He clasped her neck and wept bitterly. He said: "Forgive me for leaving you. I am beside myself; indeed, I am not under my own control.* The absence of Krishna has made

* Contradiction as he himself was Krishna and made his wife believe so just before by appointing as Vishnu.

me restless. The world is a desert without Him. Without Him I am like a body without a soul. All my passions, all my desires, have been dried up. It is Krishna, and Krishna alone Who can fill the void in me." And husband and wife wept. Vishnupriya said that she agreed to perform her part of the compact, and cheerfully accept the situation. The fact is, the idea that her sufferings meant the salvation of mankind, gave her a joy which drowned the sorrows that the prospect of a temporary separation from her husband gave her. Besides, the company and example of her husband led her into a position never occupied by a woman before. She felt herself then more a spiritual than a human being of flesh and blood, and the most blessed of God's creatures.*

* The Vaishnava theory is, that God can be "won over" by disinterested love, though the object of such love be not He Himself. Vishnupriya sacrificed Vishnu (God) for her husband, and such disinterested love is intensely pleasing to Vishnu. Another theory is, disinterested sacrifice is so pleasing to God that He presents a holy joy to the devotee, which enables the latter to undergo the suffering, not only without pain but with positive joy to himself. Though Vishnupriya pined for her husband, yet the holy joy, that she had earned by her sacrifice on behalf of humanity, sustained her.

CHAPTER VI.

THE RENUNCIATION.

THUS the Lord took leave of his friends and relations. If the idea of the Lord becoming a mendicant, gave them intense pain, the Lord himself did his best to make them forget it by his conduct towards them. He was now always with them,—friends, mother and wife. Although he could never think nor speak of anything except Krishna, still he kept their company, and rarely allowed himself to be overpowered by the influence. He slept well, ate well, and lived like other men. Thus about a month passed. The Lord in this manner fulfilled his promise to his mother, that he would spend some days in Nadia as a householder. The highest happiness of Shachee was to cook fine dishes for her son, who, of course, was a strict vegetarian, and this she was able to do for a month, to her heart's content.

Indeed, the gay humour of the Lord, his constant presence in the midst of those who loved him, and the gladness which he imparted to every one who approached him, led the latter to forget partially the fact that he was about to leave society. Some even went to the length of believing that if the Lord ever left them, it would be after the lapse of many years.

But the Lord had fixed the day of his departure

at the moment he promised his mother that he would remain for some time at home. He had taken permission of his mother, say, towards the close of December ; and then end of January was then approaching. Indeed, the last day of his stay in society had arrived, yet no one had the least suspicion that he would leave Nadia the following day.

The Lord rose in the morning as usual. No trace could be seen in either his attitude, actions or words that he would leave home on the following day,—for ever. He bathed, and then ate his breakfast. He talked to his friends of his Krishna—the topic which absorbed his mind. Afternoon came, and he set out with a charming dress for a stroll in the town. He passed through familiar places—places where he had played as a boy and taught as a Professor. He was wearing a precious silken *dhuti*, and the bhaktas had, as usual, decorated him with garlands of flowers. Friends surrounded him, and crowds followed him. Ladies stood on the terrace to have a look at him. As he proceeded, they showered flowers upon him. As he passes people, they fall prostrate before him ; and though this sort of submission pains the Lord, he cannot help it. He talks of Krishna as he proceeds ; and whenever a friend has been able to say a good thing in reply, he encourages him with a smile,—a smile which has been likened to the rays of the moon. Shop-keepers leave their occupation as he passes by their shops, to come to salute him ; every one in the

streets stands aside to give him and his friends way. Thus he passed through some of the principal streets of the city,—for the last time.

He arrived at the strand, and there saw some beautiful places. He came to his own bathing-place ; the place where he had passed the happiest hours of his life ; where he had played so many mischievous pranks as a boy, and as a young student ; where he had defeated Keshava, the intellectual giant ; and where he had enjoyed the company of his friends, and spent day after day, discoursing about Krishna for many happy months. He sat there, and his companions sat with him. He looked at the Ganges, and mentally took leave of the dear objects that surrounded him. Never more would he sit there as a citizen of Nadia, or a son of Shachee ! He visited the trees, shrubs, flowers and gardens, which he loved so well ; he took leave of them, one by one, as he would see them no more.

He came home in the evening and sat with his friends in his verandah,—where he would never sit again. He had yet two duties to perform. One was to take a hearty dinner, to satisfy his mother. The highest object of Shachee's ambition, as I said, was to cook for her son, and set before him choice dishes. The Lord had ordered his mother to cook for him some fine ones. This he had done solely to please his mother. The other object of the Lord was to take leave of the citizens. To serve the latter purpose, he attracted them.

During the *Rash Leela* Sree Krishna played his flute, and the Gopees ran to Him. In the same manner, the Lord desired the presence of the citizens, and they felt an irresistible impulse to come to see him. "Let us go to see the Lord," said they, and they invaded his house in batches. Soon the house, the courtyard and out-houses of the Lord were filled with people. They all came with garlands of flowers, and some trifling presents, such as vegetables, butter, milk, sweets, and so forth, for the Lord. They all fell prostrate before the Lord and prayed for salvation. They exclaim, "save us, O Lord, thou friend of the sinner." The Lord answers them, saying, "Worship Sree Krishna and He will save you," and the crowd raise a peal of Haribole. They disperse, and another crowd comes.

Thus the Lord was occupied till midnight in taking leave of his followers. He looks at them mournfully and earnestly recommends them never to forget Krishna. "Of course, you love me," he tells them. "If so, show it by worshipping Krishna." And the crowd leaves him, filled with bhakti and with a determination to live a holy life the rest of their days. He then embraced his friends ardently as usual with him, and dismissed them. They saw that the Lord was in the happiest of moods, and they themselves felt happy and left him to pass a happy night at their respective homes. The Lord then sat down to his dinner. The good old lady placed before him fifty dishes, and sat before him

to make him eat everything that she had prepared. He ate and talked to his mother in the gayest mood possible, as if she and he were the only two living beings in existence. When he had finished eating he took leave of his mother, and entering his sleeping room, waited there for his wife to come. Vishnupriya had almost forgotten that her Lord had asked and obtained her permission to be a Sannyasee. She was now accustomed to dress beautifully,—her husband's change of mood had led her to do so ; and on the night in question, she appeared before him as a fairy queen, the most beautiful woman in the world.

Now the Lord wanted to pass the night with her. It was agreed that they would dress one another, and the wife began first. She decorated the face of her husband with *alokā* (white paint) and combed his hair and tied it into beautiful shape ; she had brought flowers and garlands as usual with her, and she utilized them to the best effect.

The husband then claimed the privilege of dressing her, according to previous arrangement. Vishnupriya was surprised to see the taste displayed by her Lord. She was drunken with joy at the tender care bestowed upon her by her Lord ; indeed, he seemed to be in the merriest of moods. Thus they spent hours together in supreme bliss.* And then they

* The custom in Bengal is that wives, while they are young, are not generally permitted to meet their husbands or speak with

slept. The lady exhausted, soon fell profoundly asleep, but the husband did not. It was the cold season and the lady slept in the warm bosom of her husband.

The Lord, on perceiving that his wife was asleep, was anxious to get up, but being in the close embrace of his wife, he found it difficult to do it without disturbing her. He succeeded eventually, however, in extricating himself, and whilst doing so, gave her his pillow in his stead.* Having kissed her without awakening her, he came down gently from the couch, and in as gentle a manner, changed his beautiful clothes for coarse ones. He possessed golden chains and other ornaments which he determined to leave behind. He, in short, would take nothing with him, except the coarse piece of cloth which he wore. Though it was bitterly cold, he felt no need of any further clothing with which to cover himself. The door was noiselessly opened and he stepped into the courtyard. From there he saluted his sleeping mother with folded hands. He then passed through the outer door and from thence hastily proceeded towards the river.

It was dark. To use the ferry-boat, would not be in accordance with his purpose, for, he had no

them, in the presence of others. So they usually meet only when they retire for the night.

* *Bangshi-Sheekha*—by Bangshi, a companion of the Lord, and a guardian of Vishnupriya.

intention of leaving any trace behind ; so, following the example of his brother Vishwarup, he plunged into the river. A few moments before he was sleeping on a couch, provided with the finest bedding in the world, in the close embrace of his beautiful and loving wife. Now he was, in the bitter cold, swimming across the river ! With his powerful arms he soon reached the other bank, and fearing he might be overtaken by morning and his flight thus betrayed, he ran—actually ran towards his destination, with his wet cloths on.

When day arrived, he had already left behind him the neighbourhood where he was personally known. The chroniclers discuss the motive of the Lord in being so sweet to his wife on the night of his departure from home. His object was, say they, to kindle to its brightest the love which his wife bore for him, in order that at the last moment he should leave in her heart the sweetest impression of him. He had come to teach men to love by his own example ; to teach that God is All-good and All-love. He taught not only the ultimate union of men to God, but to those whom they loved. It was not his object to forget or to be forgotten.

Vishnupriya had been sleeping profoundly in the bosom of her husband,—secure, warm and happy. The pillow proved an indifferent substitute for her lord, and so, after a little, she awoke with a start. Finding that her husband was not in his place, she, in the dark, felt for him with her hands everywhere

on the couch, but only to discover that he was not there. Then she addressed him and asked: "Where have you gone?" But no reply came to her query. Thereupon she rose, and going to the door of her room, found that it was open. Alarmed, she hastily went out to the verandah. "Where can he have gone at this time of the night?"—thought she. Just then the idea rushed into her mind that her husband had perhaps left her for ever. She remembered the loving caresses of her lord a few hours before; his look, his attitude towards her; and she fancied that they all meant leave-taking. She felt dizzy, but by an effort dragged herself to the room of Shachee. "Mother," she knocks at the door, and says, "mother, get up quick." Shachee responded to the call at once. "Who is it that calls," responds the old lady. "Is it Vishnupriya? What is the matter, is Nimai all right?" "Get up, mother," says the wife of the Lord, "He is gone!"

"Gone! Where? What do you mean?"—asks the mother. Vishnupriya stammers out a reply.

The mother hurriedly got up and lighted a lamp. She opened the door and saw her daughter-in-law leaning against the wall for support. She explained that they both had been sleeping and that afterwards she awoke to find him not there.

Taking the lamp with them, both started in search of him. They found the outer door open. So they knew he had gone out. They entered the public street. Shachee carried the lamp and her

daughter-in-law closely followed her like a shadow, holding on to her *saree*. They proceeded on a few steps, and finding no trace of him, Shachee in the agony of her distress, began to call her son by name. "Nimai, is my Nimai there?" called she loudly.* This she continued to do as she proceeded on her way.

No response came. They both felt unequal to the task; they felt dizzy and could scarcely stand, and so they returned home, and having arrived, Shachee sat in the outer apartment. Just then Ishan, the servant, rose, and seeing the old lady prostrated with grief, went to her side and supported her, for, she was unable to sit up without assistance.

Vishnupriya entered the inner apartment and sat there alone,—in a state of despair. She had been beautifully dressed and decorated by her husband a few hours before. But she could not continue to sit upright; she flung herself on the bare ground. She tried to weep, but tears refused to come.

Soon afterwards Sreebas came and was followed by others, and in this manner the house was filled by the dear bhaktas of the Lord. They heard all, and stood stupefied. None of them could tell whither or why the Lord had gone. Of course, every one suspected that he had left them for ever, but no one felt absolutely sure. Besides, they had not the heart

* Bashu Ghose.

to suggest in the presence of the old lady that her son had left home and society for ever. What others refused to do, Shachee herself did. She touched her forehead, and by a sign indicated that her son had left her. She indicated by a sign, because she had scarcely the power of speech.

At last Shachee found speech. She said, "my house is full of valuable things. They belong to you all, bhaktas of Sree Krishna. Take them all. As for me, let me go in search of my son. You, his friends, take care of my daughter."

Sreebas suggested that she had no right to assume the worst. No one yet knew where the Lord had gone to, and for what purpose he had left home. "Let us have," he suggested, "a private talk amongst ourselves." The leaders thereupon left Shachee and the others for a moment, for a private conference amongst themselves. "What do you think?" asks Nitai of Sreebas. Sreebas said, "there is no use concealing the fact, I think, the worst has happened." "So do I," said Nitai. And they began to discuss the plan to be followed. It was at last settled to organise a search party. There are well-known places in India where Sannyasees congregate. These the bhaktas prepared to visit. Of course, there were hundreds of such places in India, and many of them from two to three thousand miles away from Nadia, and almost inaccessible. But the bhaktas were not to be baulked in their then state of mind by such trifling considerations. They proposed to divide

themselves into as many search-parties as there were holy places, and having visited all of them, bring the Lord back, or at least tidings of him. As the bhaktas literally could not live without him, they resolved either to find the Lord, or to die in the attempt.

At this moment Nitai remembered having heard the Lord state that he would be initiated at Katwa, by Keshava Bharati. His idea was, therefore, that before organising the search-parties, the wisest course would be to search him at Katwa, which was a town only sixteen miles up the river from Nadia. So it was resolved that Nitai, Chandra Shekhar, Mukunda and a few others should proceed to Katwa to fetch back the Lord, if he was there, and if he would consent to return. Nitai now returned to Shachee and addressed her and the company present, in a voice loud enough for Vishnupriya to hear, who was in an inner room, and with as much cheerfulness as he could assume: "Our Lord has left us, temporarily as we hope. Let us strictly follow his bidding. Pundit Sreebas and others will take care of the mother and the wife. I and others are proceeding to Katwa to see if the Lord has gone there." And then addressing Shachee directly, he said, "Mother, rest assured, I shall bring the Lord back to you. I promise this." Saying this, Nitai and his companions fled towards Katwa.

Nitai felt that he had been, by the flight of the Lord, placed in sole charge of his affairs. He felt that unless he succeeded in bringing back the Lord,

the ladies would die of grief. He would, therefore, bring him at whatever cost. He would sacrifice ten times over to accomplish that object.

CHAPTER VII.

THE MONASTERY.

KESHAVA BHARATI was sitting in his hut, near the river Ganges, under a Bat tree. There the Lord met him and fell at his feet. The ascetic Bharati was startled; he thought a celestial being had dropped from the heavens. For, the Lord had approached him with the speed of lightning, enveloped in the light which was always emitted by his person when in a state of ecstasy. So he asked: "Who are you saluting me? You seem to be much higher than I am."

The Lord replied with folded hands: "They call me Nimai. I once looked upon your lotus feet at Nadia. Then you were kind enough to promise to initiate me as a Sannyasee. I am now come to be blessed. I now offer myself at your lotus feet. Accept me, merciful as you are, and pilot me across the ocean of worldliness."

Bharati then remembered all He also remembered expressing the belief, when the young man came before him as an applicant, that he could be no other than the Lord God Himself. But in course of time his faith in the Lord had become weak. He now became aware that the most beautiful youth in the world was intent on making him fulfil the promise

of initiating him, that he had made in a moment of forgetfulness. He was not willing to perform the ceremony, but how could he evade it? Without giving the Lord any information on the subject, he proposed to him that he should rest there for the present, and that he would receive an answer some time after.

When he had first seen the Lord at Nadia, the Bharati had come to the conclusion that he was God Almighty. The second inspection at Katwa revived that belief to some extent. But God or man, there was no doubt that he was a very comely being. He thought that the rigours of the life of a Sannyasee would kill this tender creature.* His soft, lustrous, large eyes showed that he was made of love. How would absolute renunciation, which requires the eradication of all sentiments, suit him? There was another difficulty. Sannyasee as he was, Keshava felt his heart violently moved at the sight of the Lord. Indeed, he felt an attraction for him like that of a tender father for his child. He resolved, in his mind,

* It is impossible for a man to endure the rigours of the life of a Sannyasee, who has not the holy fire in him. His food must come to him unsolicited. He must take no condiment, not even salt. He must sleep on the bare ground. He must not see even the shadow of a woman. He must conquer all emotions, and must make no difference between the foulest and the most attractive of things. The rigours are too many for enumeration.

that he would never comply with the request of the young man.

But then, he had made a promise and was bound to fulfil it. After much thought, he said: "Nimai, it is true I made you a promise, and I am willing to keep it. But it is not orthodox to permit a young man to enter our order. A man must have passed the age of fifty before he can hope to enter our society. The passions are always very strong, and to subdue them is difficult. But a Sannyasee must do so, or he is irrevocably lost. A householder may fall a victim, say, to his lust, and yet may be excused. But for a Sannyasee there is no forgiveness if he shows any such weakness. We, therefore, offer no one the privilege of entering our order until he has proved the strength of his mind, and attained the age of fifty."

Nimai, who was all the while thinking of his beloved Krishna, was roused from his reveries. He understood the purport of the address, and replied: "Master! I know, you only test me by your refusal. As to answering your objection, I am a mere boy, and know not how to reply. You object because I am young; but do not the young die? Pray, do not disappoint me. I am dying by inches for want of Krishna, Whom I must visit at Brindaban, and, merciful master, you alone can release me from the bondage which keeps me from going there."

"Your bondage is your wife and mother,—is it not?" said the Bharati. "You cannot now leave

home, because you have a duty towards them. I have to release you of your sacred duty so that you can forsake them with an easy conscience, leave them to their fate, and proceed on your longed-for pilgrimage. If I assist you, I shall thereby offend God, and your wife and mother will curse me, and I shall deserve it."

But people began to arrive, and a crowd already collected there. From Nadia, the five bhaktas of the Lord had left home and followed the Lord closely. They left Vishnupriya and Shachee in a condition which can be better imagined than described. They themselves felt, in the absence of the Lord, like bodies without souls. So they not only proceeded towards Katwa, but ran as fast as their legs would carry them. They approached the Bharati's shelter, and they saw that the Sannyasee was there and the Lord sitting before him, with his head between his knees. They raised the shout of "there", "there", "there is the Lord", and accelerated their pace. The shout led the Lord to raise his head. He was weeping for Krishna. But the sight of his friends lighted up his divine face with a smile. The bhaktas came, and they appeared before him as men who had just undergone a great shock. The Lord, however, received them with an affectionate smile which soothed their souls.

When the Lord looked at a man, his eyes showed such unutterable love that the party, looked at, immediately surrendered himself to the Master. The

Lord embraced them, and the bhaktas again felt rejoiced. But then strangers came also. Katwa was a much bigger city than it is now. Wherever there is light, insects are irresistibly attracted towards it. Thus the Lord could never be alone. His presence immediately collected an ever-increasing crowd around him. The crowd continuously increased, and the story flew from mouth to mouth, that a young man, who was perhaps a god in disguise, had left his young wife and old mother, to enter the order of the Sannyasees, at the monastery of Keshava Bharati.

People flocked to the place to see the young man. They came not to go back, for they were rivetted to the spot, by the spectacle before them.

The crowd increased constantly; men, women and children gathered round the Lord. To them the Lord seemed to be the incarnation of bhakti and prem. Those who looked at his innocent face, loving eyes and humble attitude, were violently affected. The sight of him filled them with holy thoughts and pathetic feelings. They were attracted to him in an irresistible manner. They had never seen him before, but yet they were drawn towards him in a manner of which they had no previous experience. Mothers felt more attracted by the Lord than even by their own children! How was this? But this was a fact; and, of course, they could not leave him. They stood there to see if they could dissuade the youth from his act of renunciation.

The crowd increased every moment, and the intelligence flew from street to street, from the town to the villages in the interior. When the bhaktas came, they found a crowd had already gathered. The Lord accosted the bhaktas with a benign smile: "I am glad you have come. To-morrow I shall let fall the shackles which bind me to society, and will then run to the lotus feet of my Krishna," and the thought gave him celestial joy. "Mukunda," continued he, "do sing of Krishna. My heart is thirsting after Him." And Mukunda, who had gone there to bring the Lord back and not to encourage him in the performance of his pious duties, had not the courage to refuse the command. So he sang in praise of Krishna. The sound sent a thrill of joy through the whole frame of the Lord, and he rose for a dance!

The Lord, in short, was in the highest spirits. He had now almost gained his end; he was at the point of leaving society for a trip to Brindaban in search of Krishna. That was now the highest object of his ambition, and when Mukunda began his song, he danced with such power that the crowd who had come to see him, were irresistibly carried away by the current. A holy feeling gradually overpowered them, and many began to sing and dance with the Lord.

Worldliness in every shape found no place there. A feeling of pathos was evoked, which moved every one present. Nay, this feeling was carried to the

villages. Those present ran to their homes to fetch their dear ones to have a sight of the holy spectacle, and thus a dense crowd filled the monastery of Keshava.

When the Lord danced, tears gushed out of his eyes and wetted the spectators as if by a shower. Every one was surprised at the spectacle. The Lord was persuaded to desist by Nitai and Chandra Shekhar, and to take rest for a moment. Keshava then addressed the Lord. He said: "Nimai, if Krishna-prem is the highest object of human existence, I see you have got it in the fullest degree. What is then the use of entering into our order? We became Sannyasees only to save our souls, but it seems to me that you are competent to save the souls of all mankind. You have no need to be a Sannyasee." The Lord was very much hurt at this speech. He implored the holy man to take pity on him and not to speak to him in that way; for, he had come to be saved and not praised. "Release me, master," said he, "have mercy upon me; for, my heart is rent at the thought that I am without Krishna."

The Sannyasee again replied: "But, Nimai, do you think I have not found you out? You are the Krishna Whom you are seeking, for everything in you shows it."

No sooner had the Lord heard this than he fell with a shriek at the feet of the holy man. He said: "I am already almost dead, and, pray, do not trample

me in addition. I am a worm only in the creation of God, and you call me Krishna! Even to listen to such compliments, is perdition. Pray, master, do not be so cruel as to pay me any compliment," and he wept with such anguish that Keshava felt sorry that he had hurt the tender heart of the Lord by a thoughtless remark. But he was nevertheless determined not to initiate the Lord. So he said: "Forgive me, Nimai, if I have pained you. But I cannot initiate you. You must first take leave, free leave, of your mother, and beget a child before you can hope to be initiated.

The Lord looked imploringly at Keshava, and said: "Listen, master! Both my mother and wife have given me free leave. And, as for my youth, death is not a respecter of age; if the old die, so do the young. We must be always prepared for death. Save me. Further, your refusal is killing me by inches."

The Bharati replied: "Nimai, I will frankly deal with you. I have never seen a being like you, nor has any one else. You look more tender than a flower. You have been tenderly nursed. You have no idea of the rigours that a man in my order has to go through. You will never survive them. In a short time you will die, and then the sin of having killed you, will descend upon my head. Your mother and wife will curse me, and that curse I shall deserve and it will take effect. Besides, you are not in need of entering into this or that order, for the

salvation of your soul. You are already higher than all men. You have attained to a higher position than any one had ever succeeded in reaching before. Moreover, I have not told you the greatest of my difficulties. You say that you have already obtained permission from your mother and wife. That can never be a free permission. I fancy they gave it because they could not resist you, as I myself feel it difficult to do. You see, I am a Sannyasee; I have to eradicate all my tender sentiments. As a matter of fact, I have almost conquered the emotions which influence the human mind. But your sight has spoilt all that I had acquired by a life-long culture in asceticism. It has melted my heart, and I would have wept like a silly man; but I have suppressed my feelings for fear of creating a scandal. I feel for you as a doting father does for only and worthy son. Excuse me, Nimai. See, how these thousands of men are weeping for you."

Nimai raised his head to have a look at those who surrounded him, and whose presence he had hitherto scarcely noticed. This movement on the part of Nimai was a signal for loud lamentations from the thousands who had assembled. They all wept in a chorus. They all implored him to go home, and save the lives of his mother and wife whom he had left disconsolate.

The nearest to him said: "Pundit, your personal charms, your grace, your bhakti and your prem are beyond description. And are you going now to cover

yourself with a piece of rag and live under trees and in caves? The hardest of men will die of grief at the spectacle that you intend to present to the world."

Nimai rose and with folded hands and tearful eyes addressed the vast assembly:—"Fathers and mothers, bless me! Bless me that I may get my Krishna. You don't know what is my misery. It is of no moment to me whether I live in a palace or in a cave. My heart is void, for, there is no Krishna there. His presence alone can give me happiness, and His absence is misery. Yes, I am young, and my colour is somewhat fair. If there is anything good in me, is not Krishna the most worthy object to whom I could consecrate it?"

The sentiment of the Lord, the pathos in his voice, the earnestness of his tone and the deep holy feeling that his lovely face and tearful eyes betrayed, led the assembly to another outburst of grief. They felt silenced; they had no answer to give to his irresistible appeal.

His own companions had gone there to fetch him home. His uncle, Chandra Shekhar, his only important relation, and who was in the place of his father, had gone to persuade him to come back. But the spectacle they saw silenced them. They could not utter a word. They sat, as statue, dazed. When, at the bidding of the Lord, Mukunda sang, and when the Lord rose to dance, Nitai rose with him to hold him, lest he should fall to the ground in a swoon.

And Chandra Shekhar either helped Mukunda in the song, or sat with his head between his knees, weeping. That was all they did.

But worldly griefs found very little opportunity of oppressing those present. The Lord expelled such sentiments by his methods, which, together with his presence, evoked higher feelings in the mind. In a song describing the Lord, a bhakta says that, "a look at the face of the Lord created pathetic feelings in the mind. He attracted men irresistibly towards him. At his bidding, hundreds of his bhaktas would have died a hundred deaths with pleasure." Napoleon said that no man was served by his fellows as he was. But Napoleon was never served as Lord Gauranga was. The multitude that had collected, felt a sort of indescribable attraction for him. This irresistibly attractive and lovely being was going to be a Sannyasee, or rather going to sacrifice himself for ever, and people wept. How could any one bear the idea of such a beautiful object living under a tree, and starving himself almost to death? When a beautiful young lady enters a convent purely to devote her life to the service of God, the sight evokes higher feelings, and a feeling of deep compassion for her. It was a similar feeling, but intensified a hundredfold, that overtook those who saw the spectacle before them. How could a mother survive the sufferings and loss of such a son? thought the elderly ladies; and they wept with the men. The young ladies thought of his young wife, and they too joined

in the sympathy. Now this was worldly misery which sought to overtake them.

But the Lord's presence, sayings and doings, on the other hand, evoked the highest feelings in the mind. What they saw was that the being, for whom they were weeping, was himself not at all aware of the sacrifice that he was going to make. On the other hand, he was in the highest state of ecstasy. They saw that the mere name of Krishna threw him into a paroxysm of joy. They saw that he would have danced and danced in his superabundant joy, utterly forgetful of the fact that he was leaving home, mother, wife and society, and going to live in the wilderness, if he had not been forced to stop by his bhaktas. They saw his tears of joy which gushed out in torrents, and the ever-changing graceful expression of his face, due to the divers holy feelings which passed through his mind ; and they themselves were filled by holy feelings of which they had no former experience.

First came *udas* or indifference to worldly things. Then came repentance. The idea rushed into their minds that they were temporary sojourners in the world, and that it was *maya* (delusion) which was keeping them bound to earth. What is money worth, or power or honour? It does not accompany its owner to the other world. What is the good of gold when it can neither secure happiness here, nor save one from punishment hereafter? What folly to cleave to this world as if there was anything in it

which could give any real happiness ! And this is *udas*.

The feeling that followed *udas* was repentance. "And so we have forgotten God ! To attain him is the object of human existence ; but what are we doing ? Are we not living the lives of brutes ? Fie ! We have no right to stop Nimai Pundit. Let him forsake society ; that is the best thing for everyone of us to do. Who is a wife and who is a mother ? Every one suffers for his own acts. A wife must bear her own burdens, as the husband his. We have forgotten Him, from Whom we came and to Whom we must go." And this is repentance.

Others attained to a higher position. They imbibed some of the joys of the Lord. That joy proceeded from the realization of the fact that Krishna is good, loving, merciful and charitable ; that He is constantly drawing His creatures towards him ; and that misery is a delusion, with such a loving God to protect man. "Why should I mourn when I have my Krishna ? Is not Krishna, who is love and joy, ceaselessly dancing with Radha in Brindaban, and drawing all men towards Him by his bewitching flute ? So let us join in His *ananda* (joy). Oh joy ! Oh joy ! misery is a delusion. Let us dance."

Notwithstanding the influx of the holy feeling into the minds of the vast crowd present, worldly feelings occasionally overtook them. Then they felt that the Lord ought to go back home, and they wept in sympathy. Said Bharati, addressing the Lord,

whose determination not to initiate the latter was getting gradually weaker: "Nimai, you see, I cannot initiate you except with the express permission of your mother and wife. You say you obtained it. But that does not satisfy me. You had better go back home, take their permission again and come to me, and then I will initiate you."

No sooner had Bharti said so than the Lord looked mournfully at the holy man, and said, "Very well, since you wish it," and he rose to run home! He had already proceeded a hundred steps before the bhaktas came to know of his intention. They asked the Lord to wait so that they could follow him, and the Lord waited.

Now the object of Bharati was to lead the Lord home by a stratagem, and then fly from Katwa. With this object he had asked the Lord to take permission once again from his mother and wife. The Lord was quite confident that it would be the easiest thing for him to obtain it; and he readily undertook this journey of sixteen miles and back for this permission. The look of the Lord when he left for home, shot through the heart of Bharati. "So I am deceiving this guileless young man, who is either the God Krishna Himself or His most favoured bhakta existing! Fie!" thought he; "This won't do for me, who aspires after a holy life." So he again addressed the Lord. He said, "Come back, Pundit, I will initiate you."

No sooner had Keshava Bharati said this than

the bhaktas sat down then and there, as if shot down by a cannon ball, and the vast crowd raised a loud shout of lamentation. Keshava himself hung down his head in sorrow and repentance,—repentance for having weakly yielded to the wishes of the young man against his strong determination. It was only the Lord, amongst the vast crowd, who felt happy, as he came back and fell at the feet of Keshava to express his gratitude. He then addressed the bhaktas: "Why do you weep? This is not showing any love for me. To-morrow I hope to be released from worldliness, and to go to my Krishna. If you love me, wish me joy." And then he addressed the vast crowd and said, "to-morrow the fetters that bind me to worldliness and to the world, will be cut asunder. To-morrow I shall be released from the bondage of worldliness. Bless me, fathers and mothers!" He came to teach bhakti. Yet he thought initiative necessary! So pure bhakti would not lead to God!

CHAPTER VIII.

THE MEMORABLE DAY.

ASSURED of his initiation, the Lord became mad with joy, and imparted the holy feelings that filled him, to the crowd present. He himself danced the whole of the long wintry night, without feeling any exhaustion. His bhaktas forgot altogether that they had come to take the Lord back, and danced with him. Nay, the vast crowd was also moved to take part in the dance. Soon a large number of kholes and cymbals appeared on the scene, and different Kirtan parties were formed. In this manner, thousands, who surrounded the Lord, danced in the name of Hari, and in this holy occupation passed the whole night.

At daybreak they all became a little sober. The Lord sat down and the bhaktas too. He then addressed his uncle, Chandra Shekhar, saying, "Uncle! to-day I hope to be released from my bondage. Kindly make all the necessary preparations."

Now Chandra Shekhar had gone to fetch him home, and not to help him in quitting it. Shachee had sent him as the only relation of Nimai, one who stood in the position of a father to him, to persuade her son to return. The Lord asked this man to assist him in making all the necessary preparations—for his

renunciation! This was a little cruel, but the Lord himself did not feel that it was so. Indeed, if Shachee had been there, the Lord would have chosen her, as the most suitable person to take charge of the necessary preparations for the ceremony. For, if the others thought that the Lord was going to make an unparalleled* sacrifice, he himself felt that he was going to do the only thing which could make him happy. He had no idea of sacrifice at all. He could not understand why others were taking his initiation so much to heart. And, that being the case, was not his mother the best party to help him in making the preparations? He knew he was going to do a duty, and he had no sympathy with those who, from purely selfish and worldly feelings, would throw obstacles in his way. He thought that the more one loved him, the more that person was bound to help him in the performance of his duty.

Chandra Shekhar thought in his mind that the Lord was a little bit cruel in asking him to make all the preparations for the ceremony of renunciation. For, he was his uncle, and had come to fetch him home, and Shachee and Vishnupriya relied more

* The sacrifice made by the Lord has no parallel. A youth of irresistible beauty, honoured for his learning in his native city of learned men, recognised as the Lord God by thousands of wealthy men, the only son of an old mother of sixty-seven, the husband of a devoted wife, a girl of fifteen and of exquisite beauty, and himself possessing a heart which loved every human being, his renunciation necessarily convulsed India. Buddha?

upon him than others in the work of persuading Nimai to return home. He muttered to himself: "If the old lady asked me I would have to confess that, instead of persuading him to come back, I had helped him to leave home." He thought all these things in his mind; but uncle though he was, he did not venture to utter a word. He only said, "yes, as you command."

The fact is, when a man has decided to enter the order to which Keshava belonged, he has to go through a certain ceremony, for which a good many things are required, including clothes, etables, fruits, etc. The Lord asked Chandra Shekhar to procure everything necessary for the occasion. Chandra Shekhar's task was, however, very much lightened by the fact that, as soon as the assembled people had heard of the matter, they one and all rushed off to carry out the wishes of the Lord. Soon the residence of Keshava was filled with the things, thus procured by the thousands of devout followers of the Lord, who wished to contribute their humble mite to the performance of the sacred ceremony. It was in this manner that articles of food and clothing, sufficient for many thousands, were collected on the spot.

The face of the Lord "shone with ecstasy;" his bhaktas sat around him, paralysed; and the vast crowd that surrounded him, were in a state of frenzy. The whole of the night they had spent in Kirtan and in holy thoughts and exercises. The word flew

from mouth to mouth that Keshava had agreed to initiate the Lord, and those who had gone home for one necessary purpose or another, now came back to the spot. The news soon filled the place with many thousands of human beings. It is difficult to get a clear idea as to the number that assembled there. We are told that "the crowd was immense," that "there was a sea of human faces," that "there were hundreds of thousands," and so forth.

Did the Lord attract them? Was it his wish to save them all, these "hundreds of thousands," by presenting to them the spectacle of his renunciation? The suggestion is not a wild one. For, even the contemplation of the renunciation of the Lord has a chastening and purifying effect upon the mind even now. To those present, the sight proved an efficient antidote to all worldly feeling and an incentive to approach the lotus feet of God. How the crowd increased, is thus described. A householder, violently moved by the sight, runs back to his native village. He passes through other villages on his way home; and as he proceeds, calls on the villagers,—men, women and children,—to come and witness the renunciation of Pundit Nimai, the Avatar of Nadia.

This man, frenzied by the sight of the spectacle, does all this. Those who hear his invitation, are themselves similarly affected. They see his wild look, hear his voice full of emotion, imbibe the spirit that he carries with him, and so are affected like him.

Therefore they leave their homes and their business, to run to the spot.

Passes a villager by the hermitage of Keshava Bharati by chance. He sees the outskirts of the vast crowd, and inquires the reason of the gathering. He is simply told that Keshava Bharati has agreed to initiate Nimai Pundit. But who is Keshava and who is Nimai, and why do you all come here? asks he. What is to me or to you if one, calling himself Nimai, chooses to enter the order of Sannyasee? He asks the above questions and gets no satisfactory reply. But his wonder increases, as he enters into the middle of the crowd. He sees that thousands have formed themselves into Kirtan parties, and being filled with bhakti, are acting like mad men under the impulse of their feelings. Some are rolling on the ground, some weeping, some laughing, some dancing, some embracing others in the excess of their emotion, etc. He does not understand all these movements on the part of his fellows. Bewildered, he moves about listlessly, and is at last overtaken by the spirit that inspires the vast assembly there. He catches the contagion and himself begins to act like the others.

Two contradictory feelings moved the vast crowd. Of the two feelings, one was holy, and the other worldly. Influenced by the latter feeling, they sought to restrain the Master from joining the order of the Sannyasees, and wept in sorrow. The source of this feeling was the stranger from Nadia, the would-be ascetic. They saw his lovely face, they thought

of the sacrifices that he was about to make, and wept in sympathy. But, on the other hand, the example of the Lord filled them with the holiest of feelings, and so they danced with joy. Thus, when overpowered by worldly feelings, they wept and sought to restrain the Lord, but when overpowered by holy feelings, they helped the Lord in his act of renunciation. And thus they all supplied him with the things, necessary for the ceremony.

When in the morning it came to be known that everything had been settled, and that there was no way of stopping the sacrifice, they all raised a bitter cry of anguish. The whole company wept and expressed the anguish of their souls in loud lamentations. Suggests a strong young man, "Why do we weep? Let us deport the Sannyasee Keshava Bharati. Let us take him to the opposite bank of the river, or let us beat him. He it is who is at the root of all the mischief. Why does he agree to initiate this young man?" The suggestion was approved of by other young men; thereupon he and they fiercely assailed the holy man with reproaches and threats. They said that it was he who was the cause of all the trouble. Why had he agreed to initiate the young man? And why should he not now refuse to do it, and thereby please this vast multitude? The holy man said nothing in reply. And this irritated them the more. They threatened him,—they threatened to kill him!

The holy man then rose and addressed the multi-

tude. He said: "You have suggested wisely. Kill me and thereby extricate me from this difficulty." "But what is your difficulty? You can refuse the initiation, and then there will be an end of the matter," say his assailants. The holy man explains:—"You all love the young man; why not persuade him to give up the notion? Better make the attempt."

The suggestion seemed reasonable; and elderly and leading men approached the Lord. They said all manner of things to persuade him to give up his idea of renouncing society; they reminded him of his old mother, his young wife, and of the hardships of the life of a Sannyasee, and so forth. What the Lord said in reply, need not be repeated. Indeed, I fear I have already occupied more space than I had intended, in describing the renunciation of the Lord, although I have not been able to put on record one-half of what has been left in writing by his companions. To proceed, however. Those who had come forward to persuade the Lord to give up his idea of renunciation, came back crest-fallen. They had gone boldly to accomplish a work which, they thought, would be an easy one; but they came back convinced that the Lord was doing nothing wrong. "What is the result of your mission?" asks the crowd. They reply: "Friends, we are all wrong, and he is right. He is doing what every one of us should do. Indeed, we are thinking of following him."

Here was a combat between worldliness and its opposite, the holy feeling of *udas*. They went to the Lord under the influence of the former feeling. But the words of the Lord had the effect of filling them with the holiest of feelings. They came back, thoroughly convinced that what the Lord was doing was not only proper, but what every man should do.

The feelings that the renunciation of the Lord evoked, are too extraordinary, too unworldly and too grand to be described in language. The incident occurred more than four hundred years ago; yet a portion of the feelings, created on that occasion, still remains. The renunciation of the Lord has been dramatized by different bhaktas, and the plays are called "Nimai Sannyas." When they are enacted, they create something like a feeling of madness in the audience. Those who have witnessed the passion plays of Jesus, exhibiting his crucifixion, can form some idea of the feelings evoked. The principal barber of the town was sent for; for, the ceremony requires that the head of the would-be Sannyasee should be shaved. The barber came, saluted the Lord, and refused to perform the duty!

"The barber refuses," was the cry raised, and the crowd was delighted. "Bravo! Haridas barber, keep to your resolution," was the shout raised. The Lord came to know of it. He plaintively addressed Haridas the barber, saying, "Do me the service of releasing me from the world. I am impatient to go to Brindaban." But Haridas flatly refused. The

sum total of all the objections of Haridas was that he had never seen such beautiful hair in his life, and that it would be desecration to shave him ; that his heart was weeping at the sight, and therefore, his hand was trembling. He would cut the Lord, and thus jeopardise his salvation, &c., &c.

It took some time for the Lord to persuade the barber to do his duty, and the latter had at last to yield to the irresistible being whom none in this world could resist. And the barber sat before the Lord. This shaving is the first step ; its esoteric meaning is release from the world. The hair on the head is the tie which binds a man to worldly society. Before a man is initiated, these ties must be rent asunder, that is to say, he must be shaved. Once shaved, he becomes entitled to initiation, and there is no returning to the world. And thus when the Lord and the barber sat face to face, there was an outburst from hundreds of thousands of throats. The bhaktas covered their faces with their clothes.*

But what was the attitude of the Lord at this last moment? He looked a picture of supreme happiness. Indeed, as soon as the barber began the operation, he obliged him to stop. The Lord addressed the barber, and said : "Stop a moment, please, let me have a dance." And saying this, he rose to have one ! And how was that like? I cannot describe it ; suffice it to say that those who witnessed

it, were convinced that the Lord was in a state of joy which was not only boundless, but which was not to be found elsewhere on this earth. He danced with such grace and power that the hundreds of thousands present were carried away by ecstasy. But the Lord, recollecting the occasion, soon sat down.

The shaving was renewed, but the operation was again suspended. The Lord again implored the barber to give him a few minutes for a dance !

Now, when the heart is surcharged with any feeling, a copious flow of tears, or a swoon, or some other physical effect results and brings relief. A man, in the same manner, when his joy is more than his heart can contain, is either overpowered by fainting or relieves himself by a laugh, or by a dance, and so on. The Lord had to dance, to relieve himself a little of the joy that was overpowering him.

The case is simply this. Nimai is a young man of twenty-four. He has good health, beauty and education. He has an old mother of sixty-seven and a wife of fifteen, devoted to him, as his loving heart is devoted to them. Mother and wife have no one but him to cheer or protect them. He is paid actually divine honours by thousands of the highest men of the land. This young man is going, not only to renounce all the above blessings, but to lead the hardest life which imagination can paint. He is going to live beyond the pale of worldly society, forsaking all its choise blessings. This wonderful being, in the very act of renouncing all these things

* Chaitanya Mangal.

so dear to man, finds that his joy does not give him an opportunity of a few moments' rest to be shaved. Given all the propositions above, try to imagine the joy which overtook our Master.

I referred to the indescribable feeling produced on the occasion. One of the most important reasons for this was the attitude of the Lord. If he had shown that he was taking the renunciation to heart, his sympathisers would have suffered less. If he had shown that he was aware of the grand nature of the sacrifice that he was going to make, even then the people would have felt less for him. But not only did he show that he was not even aware of any sacrifice in his renunciation, but he showed joy in it,—a joy which knew no bounds. So, when he asked of the barber leave for a dance, the people felt that the strange being was more than human. The spectators were then overpowered by such anguish as cannot be described. They addressed the young man, and said: "You rend our hearts by this display of joy; weep, and that will give us relief!" A mere man can never be absolute master of himself, but Gauranga was.

By this time the barber himself was overtaken by the prevailing feeling. When the Lord, warned by Keshava that it was getting late, again sat down, the barber rose for a dance, on his own account! He danced, and receded the while, without turning his back on the Lord, and when he had gone back a few steps, advanced again to the Lord dancing! In this

manner he moved backwards and forwards to the wonder and delight of the by-standers. The Lord himself was delighted to see the condition of the barber. The sight was too much for him, so he himself rose and they both danced for a while, clasping each other's hands. The Lord was, however, eventually persuaded to desist in order that the operation of shaving him might be concluded. The barber sat down also, but his hand, indeed his whole body, trembled with emotion. The shaving was, however, somehow or other finished.

The Lord then proceeded to the river for his ablutions, and the whole crowd followed him, Bharati alone excepted. The bathing was done in the midst of Haribole, uttered by thousands of throats; and the Lord returned to his guru in his wet clothes.

The Bharati stood up and offered the Lord two pieces of red-coloured rags. These two the Lord accepted with both hands, and placed them, with great reverence, on his head. And then he turned towards the crowd for permission to put on the dress of a mendicant. Said he: "My fathers and mothers! I am now putting on the dress of a mendicant. Bless me that I may not disgrace it, and that I may get my Krishna." This movement of the Lord was, of course, followed by an outburst from the people.

The Lord then sat on the left side of the holy man, who breathed into his ears certain mystical words. The crowd had made a ring round the Lord, Keshava and the bhaktas. The crowd had now

become quiet, and was watching the proceedings with all-absorbing interest. Word flew from mouth to mouth that the mystical words had been breathed into the ears of the Lord!

One other ceremony remained to be gone through. This was to give the new Sannyasee a name. He is to be born again. His relationship with his father and mother, wife and friends, ceases the moment he becomes a Sannyasee. He is not permitted even to retain his original name.

Keshava had been thinking of a name which would suit the Lord. He got it by inspiration. He then touched the breast of the Lord with the palm of his right hand, and declared: "You were Nimai Pundit, henceforth you are

"KRISHNA CHAITANYA."

The name indicates that the man who bears it, "awakens Sree Krishna in the hearts of men." No sooner had Keshava given the name than the Lord became a Sannyasee, complete in all respects.

His bhaktas then rose, and fell at his feet. Said they: "Master, Teacher, Swami, save us"! Swami means "Lord."

And when the bhaktas fell prostrate, the vast crowd followed their example. They too fell prostrate with an exclamation and a prayer: "Oh saviour of sinners, save us"!

The Lord, now gratified, rose, and, in gratitude tried to fall at the feet of his guru, Keshava; but the latter held him up and asked for his embrace. And

thus the disciple gave the guru a warm embrace. What was the result? The guru was filled with prem, and he began to dance like a mad man! It must be borne in mind, that any display of motion was an abomination to one of his way of thinking. The guru got his reward!

Meanwhile the crowd lustily demanded to know the name of the Lord. They were told it was "KRISHNA CHAITANYA." They could catch only the latter; and the word "CHAITANYA" flew from mouth to mouth.

The work of the Lord was now accomplished, and he ran towards Brindaban, exclaiming, "My Krishna, I am coming!" He forgot the crowd which surrounded him, and the dear bhaktas who were sitting by him. But his progress was arrested by the dense mass of human beings who crossed his way. Though they made way for him, yet they could not do so with as much alacrity as would suit the Lord. This was an opportunity for Keshava, who had just then come to know of the departure of the Lord, to call after him, and remind him that he had left behind his mendicant's staff and cup!

The sound entered the ears of the Lord, and he regained consciousness. He came back to take the two things mentioned by his guru. He took the staff in his right hand, and the cup in his left, and now fully realized that he had become a mendicant. He stopped for a moment, and looking before him, saw the vast crowd that surrounded him. In the midst

of that vast multitude he stood, towering over their heads, the tallest and fairest of them all!

He leant a little on his staff and tenderly gazed at the crowd for a moment. He then addressed them saying: "Fathers and mothers! Bless me that I may find my Krishna in Brindaban."

The crowd burst into tears.

The Lord stopped a few seconds and said again: "Fathers, mothers! bless me that I do not disgrace my order."

Of course, this increased the emotion of the crowd.

And the Lord, after a pause, continued: "I am now a mendicant. I have now claims upon your charity. Fathers and mothers, let me humbly beg of you this: Never forget Krishna!"

The crowd was powerfully affected, and loudly exclaiming, said: "No, never, never shall we forget Krishna."

It seems to me as if he were even now standing before all of us with his mendicant's cup in his hand, beseeching us never to forget Krishna. Dear reader! Realize this picture in your mind; for, it will do you good.

The audible sobs of his bhaktas attracted his attention. He saw that they were weeping bitter tears of sorrow.

For a moment he remembered Nadia, his mother, and, no doubt, his wife. He addressed Chandra Shekhar: "Father," said he "ask my mother to

forgive me, and bid them all, every one of them, to worship Krishna."

His work among his people being now accomplished, he again moved his steps towards Brindaban, exclaiming, "Krishna, beloved Lord, I am coming!" The crowd followed him, exclaiming, "Stay, Lord, stay, Master, that we may one and all follow you." And they followed him,—men, women and children. And why did they follow him? It was because all their worldly ties had been broken asunder, and the Lord was drawing them after him. They had become filled with *udas*, and no longer felt attracted by anything or anybody but the Lord. Nay, the holy man, Keshava himself, stood up and followed the Lord. Thus the bhaktas, the holy man, and the crowd followed in the wake of the fleeing Lord. The crowd loudly called upon him to proceed slowly, so that they might accompany him. The Lord, thereupon, turning his face towards them for a moment, implored them with folded hands, to return to their homes and there worship Krishna. But the crowd had gone wild with excitement, and, without obeying him, still followed. They again implored the Lord to wait for them, but the Lord was then slowly entering into the state of *samadhi*, that is to say, he was cutting off his connection with the outer world completely!

CHAPTER IX.

YOGE EXPLAINED.

This state of *samadhi* is acquired by the practice of yoge. Yoge means union, and technically it means the union of the human soul with the Soul of souls, the Great Spirit, the Brahma, the God Almighty. The soul is attached to the body, and naturally feels a great attraction for it. But its real partner is the Great Soul of the universe.

The soul of man is likened to a woman, whose lover is the body, but whose husband is the Great Soul, *viz.*, God.

But she, the soul, undutifully forsakes her wedded Husband and cleaves to her gallant, the body. The object of the practice of yoge is to detach the woman (the human soul) from her lover (the human body) and re-unite her with her lawful Husband, the Great Soul, Brahman, or the Great Spirit.

Now those who practise austerities (as, for instance, the Advaitabadees) have their yoge; but those who attain to God by love and bhakti, have their yoge too. The Advaitabadees practise it in one way, and the latter in another way. The one way of attempting to detach a faithless woman from her lover is, (1) to reason with her; another way is, (2) to make her gallant disagreeable to her. The Advaita-

badees follow the methods mentioned just now, in order to detach the soul (woman) from her gallant, the body. (1) They reason with their souls and persuade them to believe that their undue attraction for the body cannot conduce to their happiness, for the body does not endure for ever. And (2) they practise all sorts of mortifications upon their bodies and thereby prevent the soul to derive any pleasure from its union therewith. The soul, thus driven to detach herself from the body, is slowly and gradually led towards the Great Spirit for the purpose of being united thereto. And this is the orthodox yoge which, originally confined to India, is now understood, at least partially, all over the world, through the kind services of the Theosophists.

But those who try to acquire God by prem (the Dvaitabadees) have their yoge too, though this is not so generally known, the popular belief being that the practice of yoge is the exclusive property of the other class of devotees, the Advaitabadees. But the methods of the Dvaitabadees are quite different. They do not try to (1) reason with their souls, or (2) subject the gallant (the body) to any mortification. But they enable the soul to obtain a view of her Great Partner and taste of His sweetness, whereby she is given an opportunity of comparing her gallant, the body, with her eternal Partner, Krishna. The result is that the woman (the soul), seeing that her husband (Sree Krishna) is incomparably more beautiful and sweeter than her gallant (the body), is led to forsake