

Lord Gaurāṅga:
Salvation for All

Volume I

Translated from the Bengali by the author

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edited, annotated, and introduced
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September 9, 2019

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Editor's Introduction

This book, *Lord Gaurāṅga, or Salvation for All*, was the first full-length presentation of the life and teachings of the great Bengali bhakta-saint, Śrī Kṛṣṇacaitanya (Lord Gaurāṅga, 1486-1533 CE), to appear in the English language. Its author, Śrī Śīśira Kumāra Ghoṣa (Shishir Kumar Ghosh, 1840–1911 CE), was one of the great Bengali journalists, patriots, poets, and musicians of 19th century Bengal. He was also a devout Vaiṣṇava who some considered a realized saint of the tradition. The first volume of this book was published in Bengal in 1897. The second volume came out in 1898. It has been reprinted many times and in many forms since then. The primary purpose of the book was to introduce the life of Lord Gaurāṅga to Western, predominantly Christian audiences. It also had the effect, however, of introducing him to other parts of India where languages other than Bengali were spoken through the shared medium of English which was the *lingua franca* of India during the British period. During its long life, the book has become regarded as a classic of religious biography and continues to draw the attention of newer generations to extraordinary career and personality of Śrī Caitanya. As such a modern edition seemed a worthy endeavor for those of us who study and follow the great Bengali saint, or at least the tradition that congealed around him and has survived to the present day.

The Book

The Author

Later Hagiographies

Peculiarities

The Kaḍacā of Murārigupta

Part I

**Ghosh's Lord Gaurāṅga
(Vol. 1)**

Preface (S. K. Ghosh)

Now that steam, electricity, and the printing press have brought into closer communication the different races that inhabit the earth, and have expanded the minds of men, tending to dispel the illusion that God Almighty especially favours any particular people, it is time to proclaim to the world, that if a messenger from God appeared in Judea about nineteen hundred years ago, it is no less true that a messenger from the same God appeared in the quiet town of Navadvīpa (popularly known as Nadia) in Bengal, some fifteen centuries later. The former is known by the name of Jesus Christ; the latter is known in India by the name of Śrī Gaurāṅga, Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya and several other names. If wonders attended Jesus, so also they attended Śrī Gaurāṅga of Nadia.

The Christians have conferred an inestimable obligation upon those Hindus whose faith has been affected by Western materialism, by presenting Christ to them; and they, as a grateful return, are anxious to present Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Śrī Gaurāṅga to the people of the West.

If it is a fact that a Messiah was born in Judea nineteen hundred years ago, it seems not unreasonable to suppose that, in other places, other Messiahs might appear at different periods of the history of the world, and in different localities. Thus, the advent of Jesus Christ establishes the possibility of the divine character of Śrī Gaurāṅga, and, in the same way, the advent of Śrī Gaurāṅga establishes the possibility of the advent of Jesus Christ. The writer of this book had long entertained a notion that Jesus Christ was a mythical character. But when, by study, he came to believe in the reality of the heavenly mission of Śrī Gaurāṅga, he was led to admit the truth of that of Jesus Christ also. Others may be benefitted in the same way.

According to the teachings of the Hindu philosophy, the advent of an *avatāra*, (i.e. the incarnation of God upon earth) is a law of nature. In the sacred book entitled the *Bhagavad-gītā*, we find a *śloka* (stanza), in which Śrī Kṛṣṇa (God Almighty) declares: “Wherever there is need of establishing the superiority of righteousness over sin, I become an *avatāra*, which means, I

come down to earth to vindicate the superiority of righteousness over sin.”¹

It is impossible to deny the principle inculcated in the above. If God sends a messenger to one place, it is natural to expect that He sends others to other places. Man is a progressive being, and he needs subtler spiritual food as he grows spiritually. What sufficed for the Jews in the days of Abraham, did not meet their requirements at the time of Jesus. Is it, then, a sacrilege to suppose, that if God Almighty sends messengers at all, he would send them at different periods of the world’s history and human progress?

Then, again, belief in reports of supernatural incidents is not arrived at by natural means. For instance, who could, by means of his unaided reason alone, have believed the report that diseases were cured by blowing upon with the mouth, and by the passing of hands over the affected parts? In India, this has been one of the ways by which diseases are sought to be cured. When for the first time we witnessed the process, we believed it to be merely the outcome of superstition. When, however, we came to know that in France, Mesmer resorted to the very same seemingly strange process for the healing of diseases, we were forced, not only to admit that there was some truth underlying Mesmerism, but also that similar practices, obtaining here, were likewise founded upon some natural law.

Unlikely incidents, from their very nature, do not commend themselves to our belief in the beginning; but if similar things happen at other places and other periods, the very improbability of the occurrences tends to prove their reality. Tell an intelligent man, who has never heard either of Jesus or Gaurāṅga, that Jesus, as generally believed in the West, was a messenger of God, and he will laugh at you. But tell him that, as alleged in the East, precisely similar incidents to those reported of Christ, were repeated in Nadia fifteen centuries later, and that, like Jesus, Śrī Gaurāṅga was, for his superhuman powers, believed to be a messenger from God, then he, if honest-minded, will have to admit, that such strange things, happening in two such widely-separated places and at two different periods, are proofs tending to establish the divine nature of the messengers and their teachings. The contention that, if Jesus and Gaurāṅga had been fictions, they would have been differently conceived, has also a good deal of force in it.

Prophets, if really such, must never preach contradictory doctrines; for, there is but one God, and his laws are immutable. And, as a matter of fact, we see Jesus, Mohamed, and Śrī Gaurāṅga, agreeing in the essentials and proclaiming the same doctrines, viz., the fatherhood of God, and the brotherhood of man, the existence of a future state, and the high density of mankind.

¹Bhagavad-gītā: 4.7:

yadā yadā hi dharmasya glānir bhavati bhārata|
abhyutthānam adharmasya tadātmānaṃ sṛjāmy aham||

(ed.)

That the prophets appear at different places and periods, have nevertheless agreed in essentials is a proof that they are not fictions.

Foolish people quarrel over the prophets of their respective faiths, each praising his own and belittling all others. But the unprejudiced man, who is also a seeker after the truth, will at once perceive that the prophets, over whom their respective followers quarrel, prove only the genuineness of one another. If Jesus Christ is a prophet, we are bound to regard Mahomed and Śrī Gaurāṅga in the same light. If Śrī Gaurāṅga is a prophet, we are bound to accept the reality of the mission of Jesus and Mahomed.

The denial of any widely-accepted messiah would lead to the denial of almost every religion in the world; for, most religious faiths are founded upon messages from above. There is a ceaseless quarrel over messiahs, between Buddhists, Christians, and Mussulmans. If the followers of Christ claim the right of denying the reality of other prophets, they thereby entitle the followers of the other prophets to claim the same right of denying the genuineness of theirs. And what will be the result? Buddhists and Mahomedans will reject Christ and only Christians uphold him; Mahomedans will support their prophet, while both Christians and Buddhists repudiate him; and the same treatment will be meted out to Buddha by the followers of every other prophet. In this manner the genuineness of every prophet would be disproved. The Hindus accept all, and this is in accordance with the impartiality and fatherhood attributed to the creator.

The last of the prophets, Śrī Gaurāṅga, has many advantages over those who preceded him. The accounts given of the life of Jesus are comparatively meagre; the same may be said of that of Mahomed. But the sayings and doings of Śrī Gaurāṅga have been preserved for us, even to the minutest detail, by eye-witnesses, and by his immediate followers—themselves learned and holy men of the highest character. His advent was immediately followed by the appearance of thousands of books bearing on his life and works, and the creation of thousands of saints, saintly families, and sacred places. All the data, necessary for the purpose of conclusively proving a historical fact, does exist to prove the reality of the wonderful deeds of Śrī Gaurāṅga.

Many of the localities, where the other prophets carried on their labours, can hardly be traced now. But traces of the wanderings of Śrī Gaurāṅga are to be seen in thousands of places throughout this country, from Agra to Cape Comorin. The place where he had chanced to pass a night became holy, as did the spot where he once had sat; rivers changed their names because he had bathed therein; villages were called after him because he had passed through them.

As will appear from a perusal of this book, when Śrī Gaurāṅga flourished, the Brahmins of Nadia had carried culture of the intellect to such a pitch as had never been achieved before, either in ancient or modern times. Śrī

Gaurāṅga had thus to address men of the highest intelligence and the profoundest learning, and it is, therefore, but natural that his teachings should be deeper and more comprehensive than those revealed to the Jews by Jesus Christ, or to the Mussulmans by Mahomed.

Prophets who have been worshipped by millions throughout successive ages cannot be considered as men who would be likely to deceive their followers by false pretensions. Since, therefore, Jesus said that he was the son of God, we are bound to accept him as such; and since Mahomed announced himself as the *dost* or friend of God, we are similarly bound to take him at his word.

Śrī Gaurāṅga lived as the meekest and humblest of devotees; but the hundreds of thousands who followed him, among whom were men of the highest position, regarded him as an *avatāra* of the Almighty himself, who had come upon earth to show his people what sort of being he was and how it was possible for a human creature to associate with him.

Why he was regarded by the highest men in the land as an *avatāra* of God Almighty himself, will be explained in detail in this book. I may, however, mention here that his character, his presence, and his mental powers were such as to compel men of the highest intellect to worship him as a divine being. He was so perfect a being, physically, mentally, and spiritually, that the excellence that was seen in him was considered to be above the reach of humanity. It was thought that if it ever pleased God almighty to appear among mankind in the character of a human being, he could not present himself in a more delectable or excellent form than that of Śrī Gaurāṅga. His powers were more than human; his presence, look, or touch converted the cruelest of men and the most hardened of sinners into saints. Kings, princes, ministers, warriors and savants deserted society and became ascetics at his bidding. His teachings revealed to the gaze of man a wonderful and beautiful world, the existence of which had never before been suspected by them.

As previously stated, millions (many of whom belonged to the highest ranks of society in India) worshipped Śrī Gaurāṅga as God almighty himself. But whether he was in truth God almighty himself, or only a messenger from him, is not the point at issue. If it can be established that he brought a message from God, this fact in itself will have conferred an inestimable blessing upon mankind. The important point to be established is that the message, which he proclaimed as coming from God, is not a fiction but a reality. That point cannot be established quite conclusively of Christ from the accounts given of him, partly because these are meagre, and partly for other reasons. But it can be done conclusively in regard to Śrī Gaurāṅga from the facts in his life.

Thus the life of Śrī Gaurāṅga is valuable to all mankind. It contains incidents to establish the fact that God almighty does send messages of love to

mankind. If this point is once established, the destiny of man becomes happy indeed. For, the reality of a message of love from God means the acquisition of all that is required by man to render him happy. It means that God is kind and affectionate, and that man is immortal and his destiny great. If man be assured of an everlasting happy future, the transient miseries of this world will no longer disconcert or vex him.

Reader! Let us not quarrel over our repective prophets, and needlessly bring discord in, where there ought to be only harmony. We are all children of the same father, who has wealth and love enough to provide for all, according to their requirements. A professed Christian is not a true Christian if he has no faith. We have no desire to wrest a Christian from the bosom of Christ in order to transfer him to that of Śrī Gaurāṅga. Our object is to preserve the kingdom of Christ and not to destroy it. A study of the life of the Nadia *avatāra* will only confirm the faith of an unbelieving Christian in Christ, and of a sceptic in the reality of a beneficent God and of a future life. This much, however, we claim for the *avatāra* of Nadia that he had to address himself to a more advanced audience than the prophet of Judea had to do.

The ways of God are mysterious. The only wealth that a man has is his religion. Religion! What untold treasure lies hidden in that oft-repeated and misunderstood word! Land, gold, position and the like are only transient and delusive blessings to mankind. Śrī Gaurāṅga appeared in India, and his doings and sayings have been hitherto kept hidden from the rest of mankind. Is it possible that his great work in India should forever remain a sealed book to other nations? Can the work of God prove abortive? Who knows but that India was conquered so that this Nadia prophet's message might be proclaimed to the world? For, what can be a greater blessing to mankind than the assurance that God does send messages of love to humanity?

Nadia's message is particularly addressed to those who have no faith in religion, God, and an after-world. These may, by a perusal of the life of Śrī Gaurāṅga, come to realize that, not only is there a God, but that he loves man more than a father loves his child or a wife loves her husband, and that he destined man for high purposes—to make him his everlasting and dear companion in his eternal home of peace and ever-increasing joy.

If the gifted races of the West have devoted all their energies to the solution of the mysteries which surround the material universe, the Hindus have devoted themselves from time immemorial to the solution of the mysteries which appertain to the spiritual nature of man. The highest intellectual efforts of the Hindus in this direction culminated in Vedantism, Buddhism, and other similar cults or systems of philosophy—all of which ended disastrously, chiefly for the reason that they were supposed, unjustly we think, to teach the extinction of the soul after death. The principles of these systems are not unknown to the people of the West. But the emotional side of human na-

ture, as it has been examined by the Hindus, and analysed, developed, and utilized for purposes of salvation, is perhaps altogether unknown to them. It was Śrī Gaurāṅga who first went, as it were, to the very bottom of the subject, and taught his followers to regard with abhorrence and loathing the doctrine which makes the extinction of the soul—or, what is practically the extinction of the soul—the goal of life. As we have already said, his doctrine reveals not only a new but a fascinating world to humanity.

The writer of this book deeply regrets that his imperfect knowledge of the English language, and the untranslatable nature of many of the ideas with which he has had to deal, have made it impossible for him to do full justice to the subject which he has taken in hand. He craves the reader's indulgence for the manifold defects due to these causes, which the perusal of these pages will disclose to him.

May his blessings be showered upon mankind! May we realise that we are all brethren, sons of the same father, and that we are destined to live in peace and harmony with one another, and forbear from quarrelling over transient and therefore worthless possessions! May we realise that the object of human life is the attainment of God!

Introduction

About the time when Śrī Gaurāṅga appeared, Bengal had nearly lost its independence. The ruler was a Mahomedan; and though the Hindus succeeded, from time to time, in occupying the throne, they were obliged to embrace Mahomedanism in order to retain their sovereignty. The Hindu King, Subuddhi Rai, was dethroned by his General, Hossein Khan, who ascended the throne of Bengal under the title of Hossein Shah in A.D. 1498.

Gauḍa (now in ruins), near Rajmehal, was then the capital of Bengal. The Mussulman sovereigns nominally administered the affairs of the country through Kazis or Governors. The chief business of these officials was to administer justice, to collect the revenue from the Hindu Rājas under them, and to remit a portion thereof to the general treasury, keeping the remainder for themselves. The administration of the country was virtually carried on, generally speaking, by these Hindu Rājas. The villagers, though they paid rent to the Rājas, practically managed their own affairs. Every village was, in fact, a sort of miniature republic.

Navadvīpa, popularly called Nadia, situated on the banks of the Bhāgīrathī, about seventy miles north of Calcutta, and a very large and populous city, was under the rule of a Mussulman Governor who resided there. It is said in the book called *Caitanya-bhāgavata*, that hundreds of thousands bathed at a single *ghāṭa* (bathing-place) in that city, which moreover had many such bathing-places. It was not the metropolis of Bengal, nor an emporium of trade, but was famous as a seat of learning. It was, in fact, in that respect the most famous city in the world. The one absorbing idea of all the respectable citizens was the acquisition of knowledge. The old and the young, men and women, among the higher classes, were constantly engaged in intellectual pursuits, as if there were no other business in the world. Wealth, politics, war, pleasures, and amusements had no attraction for them. Fighting they abhorred as being the occupation of beasts of prey and unworthy of human beings. Gratification of the senses, they knew, debased the soul, and they had such an aversion for sensual pleasures that no liquor shop was permitted to be established in the city. It was considered disgraceful to hold office,

even that of Prime Minister of the King, an office-holder being likened to a dog.

In the opinion of the citizens, man was born only to acquire knowledge, which was the end and aim of human life. The student was the only being who could claim the title of man. Beauty, rank, power, and wealth were nothing in comparison with learning. The education of boys commenced at four. The mother, not to say the father, regularly prayed to God that her son might become a learned man. He that had a daughter wished to marry her, not to a millionaire, but to a man of learning.

The people of Nadia devoted most of their time to the pursuit of knowledge. The learned had no fear of suffering from want. During every festival—and the Hindus have at least one every month—gifts were made to the learned. One of the principal duties of a wealthy man was to protect, against want, those who were engaged in intellectual and spiritual culture for the benefit of their fellows. Such was the honour bestowed upon learning, that when a wealthy man, proceeding in his state-chair, met a savant in the street, he was obliged to descend therefrom to salute him. In short, the whole energies of the city were directed towards the creation of learned men.

The intense devotion to learning, by the majority of the citizens of Navadvīpa, gave a peculiar character to the town, distinguishing it from any other city in the world. Students thronged everywhere. They filled the marketplace, the streets, the bathing-*ghāṭas*, and the strand. They assembled in thousands at every convenient spot to hold literary discussions. When the students walked in the street they talked on literary subjects. Literary tournaments were held every day at every *ghāṭa* of the city. And so earnest were the combatants, that sometimes these tournaments ended in free fights, and the defeated parties had to swim across to the other bank of the river to save themselves. Each student had a book in his left hand,—that being his distinguishing badge to mark him out from others. It was his ornament, his friend and his strength, which secured for him respectful attention everywhere.

In each street there were several *ṭolas* (colleges); and each college contained, according to the *Caitanya-bhāgavata*, hundreds and, sometimes, thousands of students. Says Ṭhākura Vṛndāvanadāsa, himself a citizen, a saint, a student, and an eye-witness: “Thousands every day came to the city from all parts of India, some to begin and some to finish their education, and thousands left every day after having obtained their diplomas.”

There were thousands, again, merely temporary sojourners in Navadvīpa, who had come there either for their own education or to supervise the education of their sons, to pay court to its learned men, or to visit the splendid educational institutions with which the place was studded. The student who had been educated as far as possible elsewhere, felt bound to come to Nadia to complete his education and obtain a diploma, without which he could not

hope to attain to any considerable status in society.

It was considered a disgrace to take fees for education or for administering justice. Thus the sale of justice or education was unknown. It was moreover considered disgraceful to decline to teach anyone who might demand to be taught. The *ṭolas*, where thousands got their education, were each presided over by a single professor; but the more advanced students were bound to devote a portion of their time to the teaching of the less advanced.

Nadia, however, had one great want, namely, that of a proper college for the study of the Nyāya philosophy—a want caused by the absence of a text-book from which to teach the subject. This philosophy was first developed in the land of Gautama Buddha (Mithilā), and the Bengalis had to repair thither to study it. The philosophers of Mithilā, keenly aware of their inability to meet in fair fight the more intellectual Bengalis, never permitted their Bengali students of Nyāya to take a copy of the text-book¹ home with them. Rāmabhadra had his Nyāya college in Nadia, but he failed to give full satisfaction to his students for want of a text-book.

Vāsudeva Sarvabhauma, however, removed this difficulty. He went to Mithilā (Tirhūt) to study Nyāya, and there committed the whole of the text-book to memory; after which he returned to Nadia and established a Nyāya college there. This almost superhuman feat immortalised his name. The first Nyāya college, properly so called, in Bengal, was thus established by Sārvabhauma. The Nyāya philosophy, developed in Mithilā, received its further development in Nadia, so that the ideas, which gradually became interwoven in this peculiar product of the Indian mind, were, after successive analysis, so intricate and so subtle as to make, according to Professor Cowell, the European head dizzy, which attempts to master or even understand them.

This feat enabled Nadia to obtain the very first place in India as a seat of learning, in every branch of knowledge. Out of the text-book on Nyāya philosophy, Sārvabhauma developed a philosophy of his own, more profound, comprehensive and subtle than the original, which he called “*Cintāmaṇi*” or “the Gem of Meditation.”² He had as pupils Bhavānanda, Raghunandana, Raghunātha, Kṛṣṇānanda and several others, all of whom left undying fame behind them. Raghunātha developed, out of the *Cintāmaṇi*, his great book of Nyāya philosophy called the *Didhiti*, which is perhaps the subtlest book that has ever been produced in any language.³ Kṛṣṇānanda’s work on Tantra

¹The *Tattva-cintāmaṇi* of Gaṅgeśa Upādhyāya, the fundamental text of the Neo-Nyāya school. (ed.)

²It appears that S. K. Ghosh is confused here. The text book that Sārvabhauma brought back from Mithilā was the *Tattva-cintāmaṇi*, the *Thought-jewel of Truth*, or just the *Cintāmaṇi* of Gaṅgeśa. Sārvabhauma wrote his own commentary on that text called the *Tattva-cintāmaṇi-parīkṣā* (“Examination of the Thought-jewel of Truth”). The *Cintāmaṇi*, however, is Gaṅgeśa’s work. (ed.)

³The *Didhiti* or “Ray of Light” is Raghunātha’s commentary on the *Cintāmaṇi* of Gaṅgeśa. (ed.)

philosophy is the standard book on the subject. Raghunandana's *Smṛti* or *Code of Laws*, divided into twenty-eight chapters, is regarded as the highest authority in Bengal.

Such were the master-spirits who adorned the college of Sārvabhauma. The works they have left behind excite the wonder of mankind. The subtlest ideas were playthings with them, and they manipulated them as magicians manipulate the instruments of their art.

There was for a time another pupil in the *ṭola* college of Sārvabhauma. Although the youngest of all, he was no less respected than feared by the students of the world-wide celebrity mentioned above, for his incomparable intellect. They felt themselves as pigmies beside him. His name was Nimāi—the great Lord Gaurāṅga himself.

The fame of Sārvabhauma led Pratāparudra, the powerful King of Orissa, and the only Hindu prince then independent on this side of India, to invite him to establish a college at Puri or Jagannātha—a holy city in his dominions. He accepted the King's invitation and founded a college there which was resorted to by innumerable students from all parts of India. The loss which Nadia sustained by the withdrawal of Sārvabhauma was more than compensated by the genius and labours of Raghunātha and others of his pupils.

A Brahmin of the Vedic class, by name Jagannātha Miśra, read at the same college with Sārvabhauma. Jagannātha's father Upendra Miśra, lived in the District of Sylhet. He had seven sons, of whom the third, Jagannātha, came to Navadvīpa for his education and obtained his diplomas with credit. He was exceedingly learned as well as very handsome in person, and this led Nīlāmbara Cakravartī, a celebrated *paṇḍita*, to give him in marriage his exquisitely beautiful daughter, Śacī. Jagannātha was persuaded to live with his wife at Nadia. He had successively eight daughters, all of whom died soon after birth. A son was then born to him whom he call Viśvarūpa. A few years after the birth of this son, another was born, and this was Nimāi, the great *avātara* of Nadia.

The religious instinct has been always strong in the Hindu mind. It was especially so in former times. In those days the belief in the comparative nothingness of this world was so strong that many men readily gave up society and became ascetics in order to lead a life of austerity and meditation. They did not marry, lest they should love and then suffer the loss of their dear ones. They never acquired property, lest their souls should be attracted towards transient and earthly things. Respectable people, besides, were accustomed to make pilgrimages, travelling on foot to shrines, hundreds, perhaps thousands, of miles away. The performance of pilgrimages was one of the distinguishing marks of a person of the higher ranks of society.

If education was considered a very important thing, the practice of religion was looked upon as the paramount duty of men and women. Indeed,

the reason why the people of Nadia were such enthusiasts in regard to the education of the mind, was that they expected to secure salvation by it. If the genius of the Western nations lies in the cultivation and development of the exact sciences, the solution of the mysterious problems surrounding the destiny of man was the main object of the students in Nadia and elsewhere in India. They proceeded on the basis that everything earthly is valueless because it is transient. Even the knowledge which refers to earthly matters was treated with something like contempt. What they wanted to know was the nature of the soul, and its relationship to God. Of course, chemistry, mathematics, astronomy, philosophy, literature, law, and the like, were cultivated and taught, and that with no little zeal; but the great aim of the greatest number was the solution of the deeper problems which affected the life of man. Every one, man or woman, high or low, went through his or her religious practices. Early in the morning tens of thousands bathed in the river Bhāgirathī, and sat along the bank, engaged in worship. The river itself was covered with flowers dedicated to the deities. The same scene was repeated in the evening.

One of the most pious, learned, respectable and devoted of these worshippers was Advaita Ācārya, the head of the Vaiṣṇavas, that is, the sect that worships Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the God of infinite love.

The Prayer of Advaita

A few miles from the celebrated city of Navadvīpa, in the town of Śāntipura, lived Advaita Ācārya. He had also a house at Navadvīpa as many other respectable men had. The wickedness and misery that prevailed in the world deeply pained his feeling heart. Failing to find any remedy for the evil, he took upon himself to invoke the aid of God Almighty himself. With a deep and unalterable resolve he would sit on the bank of the Bhāgirathī to offer up his prayer to Śrī Kṛṣṇa—the soul and father of the universe. He prayed in this manner:

Father Śrī Kṛṣṇa! My Lord and beloved protector! The misery of mankind pains me. I know, the cause of this misery is their own wickedness. They have forgotten the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man, and are ceaselessly quarrelling from motives of selfishness, as dogs do over a piece of bone. They ought to know that earthly blessings, being transient, carry with them no real happiness; yet for such they are sacrificing their future life. They ought to know that thou art good, merciful and loving, yet thou hast no place in their hearts! My beloved Lord! The sufferings of my fellow-beings rend my heart; yet I, a sinner like

them, can do them no good. Come thou, therefore, amongst thy children. Manifest thyself to them and show them how good thou art. Teach them by precept and example how to attain to thee. By this means only will they learn to venerate and love thee, and thereby put an end to their own misery. The work is great, and it is thou alone that canst accomplish it. Come, come, my Lord, who, though invisible, art yet always with us!

This and such like prayers he was accustomed to offer; and while asking the Lord to come, would sometimes raise his voice to a thunderlike pitch. Sometimes, with folded hands, and weeping the while, he would implore the Lord to manifest himself. He would say: “Thou art unapproachable, invisible, unknowable, and illimitable. Appear in human form, so that we may approach thee without fear. Appear in thy perfect loveliness, so that we may love thee. It is presumption in me to suggest to thee what thou shouldst do for thy children. But, Lord, my heart breaks to think of the misery of man.” And he would then weep like a child. He prayed thus day after day, week after week, month after month, and year after year. And thus several years passed. In sickness, in sorrow, in difficulty, Advaita never deviated from the resolve that he had made. He was determined to succeed or die in the attempt. One day, in the midst of his prayers, an unearthly joy dawned suddenly on his heart. He felt that his prayers had been heard, and the fulfilment of his desire led him to dance in an ecstasy of joy, while he repeatedly said: “I have brought the Lord down.” His disciple Haridāsa, who stood by, asked him the reason of his unusual happiness. Advaita said in reply: “I feel that he is come, and the idea fills my heart with ecstasy.” But he had no clear notion as to how, when, and where, the Lord would manifest himself.

The Beloved Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa

Advaita Ācārya, as a Vaiṣṇava, addressed his prayers to the Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the last incarnation of the supreme being, who had appeared in Mathurā, a town in the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh, thousands of years before.⁴ The story of his life is shortly given in the great religious poem of the Hindus, the *Mahābhārata*. But an elaborate account thereof is to be found in the *Śrīmat Bhāgavata*, the Old Testament of the Vaiṣṇavas, and in other books.

⁴For a due comprehension of the life of Śrī Gaurāṅga, a knowledge of the life of Śrī Kṛṣṇa is essential. On the other hand, no one, without a thorough knowledge of the life of Śrī Gaurāṅga, will be able to clearly understand the true significance of Śrī Kṛṣṇa-līlā (the play of Śrī Kṛṣṇa). If the reader finds anything incomprehensible in the life of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, he will find it thoroughly explained in the life of Śrī Gaurāṅga.

Kaṁsa, a barbarian, forcibly took possession of the throne of Mathurā. He married his sister to Vasudeva, a scion of the Yādava race. On the day when Vasudeva was leading his bride home, Kaṁsa himself was the driver of the carriage which conveyed them. Suddenly, they were all aware of a heavenly voice which, addressing Kaṁsa, said: "Fool! The eighth child of thy sister will be the cause of thy death."

Kaṁsa immediately drew his sword with the intention of killing his sister, but was dissuaded by Vasudeva from the commission of the great crime of killing a woman from whom personally he had nothing to fear, on the understanding that he should be at liberty to do whatever he liked with any children she might bear. Pursuant to this agreement, whenever his sister Devakī bore a child he killed it. Vasudeva and Devakī were subjected to the strict vigilance of guards, so that they could not conceal the children that were born to them.

At length God Almighty himself entered the womb of Devakī. Under directions from heaven, Vasudeva carried the child, who was born at midnight, to the house of his friend Nanda, a villiage lord in Gokula. When Vasudeva took the child in his arms to bear it away from the house, the doors opened of their own accord, the guards fell asleep, and every obstacle was removed by some unseen influence. He had to cross the river Yamunā, and it became fordable at his approach. Yaśodā, the wife of Nanda, had been delivered of a daughter at the same time. Vasudeva entered the lying-in-room of the sleeping Yaśodā, left his son there, carried away her daughter with him, and placed her by the side of Devakī. As everything was done under divine guidance, Vasudeva found no difficulty in carrying out the above arrangement; and neither Nanda nor Yaśodā, nor indeed anyone besides himself and Devakī, was aware of the exchange which had been made.

In what has just been stated, the reader will no doubt find much that at first sight may seem to be a tissue of absurdities. He must, however, bear with them and other statements still more extraordinary, which are to follow. He will understand thoroughly the aim and the object of the life of Śrī Kṛṣṇa as given in the *Śrīmat Bhāgavata*, the Old Testament of the Vaiṣṇavas, and other Vaiṣṇava books, when he comes to study the sayings and doings of Śrī Gaurāṅga. Moreover, such apparent absurdities are also to be found in the Old Testament of the Christians. On the other hand, in the books treating the life of Śrī Gaurāṅga, the reader will find scarcely anything to tax his credulity.

In the morning Kaṁsa found, as he believed, that his sister had been delivered of a female child, and he wanted to destroy it. But as he lifted it up to break its head, the infant slipped out of his hands, declaring at the same time, that the child whom he feared was already born and out of his reach. The infant was no other than the Goddess Durgā or Māyā. Baulked of his

intention, Kāṁsa resolved on the destruction of all new-born children in his dominions, by artifice and other means. Kāṁsa had reasons to suspect that the child from whom he apprehended misfortune was no other than the child of Nanda and Yaśodā.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa, meanwhile, was being reared in the house of Nanda. Nanda paid rent to Kāṁsa for the grazing lands that he enjoyed, he being a milk-man, and, therefore, in possession of a number of cattle. All his co-villagers were likewise milk-men, and lived a very simple, uneventful, and happy life. With the advent of the child, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, amongst them, however, danger after danger began to overtake them. This was because, as we said, Kāṁsa, suspecting that Śrī Kṛṣṇa might be the child from whom would come his death, sought to destroy him with the help of demons.

These demons were all, one by one, destroyed by Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Thus, when Pūtānā came to suckle the infant Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and by this means poison him to death, Śrī Kṛṣṇa sucked the life-blood out of the witch. She had entered the house with the appearance of a handsome matron, but, when dead, she was seen to be a hideous monster. Another demon came in the guise of a whirlwind, in that manner to spirit away the divine baby. But this demon was likewise foiled. Then, as we read in the account of Bakāsura, a demon arrived with the semblance of a heron and tried to swallow Śrī Kṛṣṇa entire. But he too was killed. There was yet another demon, who had the appearance of a donkey. This animal-demon had in his charge a fine palm orchard, and would never permit anyone to partake of the fruits. He himself being a donkey, could not, of course, pluck and partake of them, and whenever anyone came to the orchard with that object, he, braying the while in a ridiculous and dissonant voice, would set upon and kick him to death. He too was killed. These and many other demons tried to destroy the child, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, but they only succeeded in bringing about their own destruction.

These attacks on Śrī Kṛṣṇa led the whole colony of milk-men to leave Gokula and proceed to Vṛndāvana, on the other side of the river Yamunā, close to the city of Mathurā.

There are pious people who implicitly believe in the above stories, as there are pious people who consider them to be mere parables. Thus, according to the latter, Pūtānā is no real creature, but represents materialistic education, which teaches infidelity and atheism; the whirlwind, fruitless discussion; and the heron, a humbug or a hypocrite. In Sanskrit literature, a heron is made to represent a hypocrite, because it has, like a holy Hindu, a tuft on its head, and rests in the posture of a religious man engaged in meditation, its object being, however, to catch its prey, and not to purify its soul. As for the donkey, he is, of course, no other than the priest who will neither enjoy the fruits of religion himself, nor allow others to do so. In short, according to a certain class of pious Vaiṣṇavas, the demons described

above, are only influences which smother the religion of love and *bhakti* to God.

The incidents, just related, have, however, very little to do with the life of Śrī Gaurāṅga. Śrī Kṛṣṇa grew up in the house of Nanda and under the care of his supposed mother, Yaśodā. His complexion was dark, but light shone through it. He was a child of dazzling beauty, and his mother dressed him with such consummate taste as to enhance his personal charms. He attracted all towards him and hence he was called Kṛṣṇa, that is, one who attracts. The frolicsome child played tricks on his mother, which only had the effect of increasing her love for him. In fact, he was loved by the people of Vṛndavana more than they loved anyone else; wives loved him more than they loved their husbands; mothers loved him more than they loved their own children. This was because Śrī Kṛṣṇa was the soul, the origin, the prime mover of everything, and, therefore, attracted the soul of all to him.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa passed eleven years of life in Vṛndāvana. He was employed by Nanda, his supposed father, in leading the cows to the grazing lands and back. Thither all the cowboys of the village accompanied him, as also Balarāma, his elder brother. Balarāma was the son of Vasudeva, the father of Kṛṣṇa, by another wife, who was called Rohiṇī. Vasudeva, the father of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and Nanda, his guardian and protector, were good friends. Fearing that his brother-in-law, Kāṁsa, might do harm to his son, Balarāma, and his wife, Rohiṇī, he (Vasudeva) placed them also under the protection of his friend Nanda. Thus Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma were sons of the same father by different mothers, and grew up together in the house of Nanda.

Now, Balarāma himself was likewise divine. He too was a manifestation of God Almighty; the Supreme Being, however, was Kṛṣṇa. It must be remembered that all the important characters in Vṛndāvana, who surrounded Śrī Kṛṣṇa, were devotees of God, who had attained salvation and been highly blest, and who had taken human forms to help Śrī Kṛṣṇa in carrying out his great work in this world of man.

This great work was to teach mankind how he should be loved by them—disinterestedly, not in expectation of favours, but for himself alone—to enjoy his companionship in Goloka, which is the highest heaven. He had implanted in man the feeling of love, and given him friends and relations with whom to cultivate it, so that by this means he should at length learn to love Him. Thus, Śrī Kṛṣṇa's work in this world was to show how this feeling of love, cultivated in human society, might be ultimately directed towards God for the purpose of securing man's salvation.

Now, what is salvation? It is not extinction, nor the merging of man's soul in the Great Fountain of Energy, but the securing of a higher existence and the everlasting companionship of God.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma, with other young lads, led their herds every

morning to the pastures which were surrounded by the forests of Vṛndāvana. His mother always parted with Śrī Kṛṣṇa with tears in her eyes; for, she could not easily bear being separated from her son even for the few hours that he would be out of her sight. On their way to the fields the boys were accustomed to amuse themselves with dancing and the blowing of horns. In the jungles they would spend their time in all sorts of sports, in which, sometimes, Śrī Kṛṣṇa was defeated, and sometimes he won. They would sometimes swim in the Yamunā, and sometimes gather wild fruits and eat them. The young lads had no notion whatever that Śrī Kṛṣṇa was God Almighty. They regarded him only as one of themselves. Yet they all loved him so intensely that they were ready to give up their lives to meet his slightest wish. They were, in return, intensely loved by Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and so impartially that each thought that he was his particular favorite. When the time for returning home came, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who carried an ordinary bamboo flute in his hand, played upon it, whereupon any of the cows that might have wandered out of sight, as man oftentimes does forgetting his sweet relationship with God, would immediately gallop toward him with uplifted tails, and on their approaching him, would lick his hand, smell his body, and show, by these and other signs, their love for him, and their intense pleasure at being summoned by him.

Even the vegetable world showed its love and veneration for him. When Śrī Kṛṣṇa stood under a tree, it immediately burst into blooms and shed its blossoms on his head. The wild deer had no dread of him, but would lovingly follow him; and peacocks, in like manner, would dance before him, to express the pleasure which his presence gave them. In the evening, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, returning with his friends, would find his mother waiting at the door with open arms, to clasp him to her bosom.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa was eleven. But yet his mother, his father, his uncle, and other elder relations, saw in him only a boy of some five years. His friends regarded him simply as a boy of about their own age, only a little younger. Young women saw in him a youth of surpassing beauty. Wise men regarded him as wisdom personified; and wicked men feared him as an exacting judge.

It happened one day that Śrī Kṛṣṇa was seen by Rādhā leaning against a Kadamba tree, on the bank of the Yamunā. She went every day to bathe in the Yamunā, bathing in that river being one of the ways of attaining to Śrī Kṛṣṇa.⁵ Rādhā is the fountain of all beauty. She was married to a man, who had a physical deformity, unfitting him for marital intercourse.

Rādhā saw Śrī Kṛṣṇa on the bank of the Yamunā, and Śrī Kṛṣṇa saw Rādhā. Rādhā was bewitched by the charms of Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Śrī Kṛṣṇa was bewitched by the charms of Rādhā. Rādhā was so affected that she could only with

⁵Yamunā represents *bhakti*, and this bathing in the Yamunā thus means purification of the soul by the cultivation of *bhakti*

difficulty return home leaving him behind. She adopted all sorts of excuses to linger on the way, that she might have yet another glance at “the thief of her heart.” When she did come home, she was found to be a changed girl; and by degrees she became listless, pensive, meek, reserved and careless about her personal appearance and comforts. She no longer bestowed her former care on dressing herself, was indifferent respecting her food, and hardly slept at night. Sometimes she smiled and sometimes she wept, why she did not know; she looked up to the heavens, and it seemed as if she saw somebody there. For, she would look up and then hang down her head, her cheeks suffused with blushes, as if she had seen her beloved. Sometimes she would look up and pray with folded hands; while tears trickled down her cheeks. If she heard the name of Śrī Kṛṣṇa she swooned away. In short, she was overwhelmed by her love for Śrī Kṛṣṇa.⁶

At night, Śrī Kṛṣṇa played his flute, with which he never parted; and when he played, none heard but those whom he meant to hear. Those who heard it, however, found themselves entranced by the sound, and were attracted irresistibly towards him.

Rādhā heard the flute and found her name uttered in delicious sounds, as if she was being implored to approach them; and thus she was irresistibly drawn towards Śrī Kṛṣṇa. She forgot her duty to her husband, to herself, and to her relations, and sought the player, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, accompanied by her maids. She found Śrī Kṛṣṇa on the bank of the Yamunā, in the midst of wild flowers, in a secret and lonely place, far away from human habitations. There they met, and greeted each other with a loving embrace.

They sat, side by side, on a cushion of flowers, under a flowery canopy, each rivaling the other in personal beauty.

Peacocks danced before them, and in the trees about them Koels, Moynas and other birds sang for their pleasure, while at their feet flowed the Yamunā, which, being disturbed by a gentle breath of wind that was blowing, sent forth a thousand reflections of the moon shining above, and made the lotus flowers, that bloomed on its surface, wave to and fro, as if to express the joy of the occasion.

The maids, overcome with joy, sang glory to Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa; and, eventually, Rādhā herself knelt before her Lord and uttered this prayer:

“What can I give thee, my beloved? The only possession I have is thyself. So I shall give thee thyself and be thy servant. Thou art mine and I am thine for ever and ever. Whatever I possess comes from thee. I lose nothing, therefore, by giving thy property to thyself. Listen, my beloved. Thou hast many like me, but I have only thee.”

⁶This state of the devotee is called *pūrva-rāga* or attraction for the beloved before union.

God Almighty is made up of negative and positive principles. Rādhā is no other than the negative principle of the God-head. She was born to help Śrī Kṛṣṇa in his work in this world, which was to show to mankind the nature and scope of Rādhā's love to Śrī Kṛṣṇa, so that man might try to imitate her, and thus learn to love him and possess him.

One day, when Rādhā, with her attendants, was entering Vṛndāvana, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, with his companions, obstructed their passage. Rādhā was given to understand that into Vṛndāvana, the abode of peace and love, where reigned Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the God of love—the God whose only strength lay in his flute, by which he bewitched men and women—no one might enter without paying a toll. “Pay the toll and then enter Vṛndāvana,” said Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Rādhā replied that she was absolutely poor and had nothing to give. “Then,” said Śrī Kṛṣṇa, “give yourself, body and soul.” Thus when one wishes to enter Vṛndāvana and to attain to Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the God of love, he must first of all pay the required toll which is himself, absolutely, unconditionally, unreservedly, ungrudgingly and gratefully to Him.

It was on the clearest and fairest night of the year that Śrī Kṛṣṇa began to invoke the Gopīs, that is to say, the women of Vṛndāvana, otherwise called Vraja. Vraja was the place where Nanda and the other milk-men and their families resided. Vṛndāvana was a beautiful forest tract in the vicinity of Vraja. In the midst of this forest, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, with his flute in hand, was enjoying the beautiful moon-lit scenery around him. After a little time he played upon his flute, and the Gopīs, who heard him, were enchanted by the strains.

They were, at that moment, engaged in various household duties. Some were eating their supper; some attending on their husbands; some suckling their infants; some cooking their food. But one and all left their occupations and prepared to fly to Śrī Kṛṣṇa in Vṛndāvana. The women who were suckling their babes, cast them aside as one might a disagreeable burden, and prepared to depart. In such haste did they dress themselves for the flight, that they put their earrings on their noses, and their nose-rings on their ears, wrapped their vests round their heads, and their veils round their breasts. Thus ludicrously attired, they prepared to start. Their husbands, parents, children, and friends barred their passage; they were advised, implored, and threatened to remain. But they would not acquiesce. A couple of strong-minded husbands went so far as to tie their wives to posts. Thus prevented from going in the flesh, they began ardently to pray to Śrī Kṛṣṇa for their release. The result was that their souls left their bodies and fled to Śrī Kṛṣṇa. The absence of those who fled to Śrī Kṛṣṇa was not, however, perceived by their husbands and relations, for their bodies were still with them.⁷

The Gopīs proceeded on foot to Vṛndāvana as fast as they could go. They

⁷This implies that it was only the souls of the Gopīs that went forth to Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

took no notice of each other. Having arrived at Vṛndāvana they surrounded Śrī Kṛṣṇa, whom they found standing, gracefully leaning against a tree, and illuminating the whole forest with his dazzling beauty.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa received them with a fascinating smile and addressed them thus: “What brings you, beautiful creatures, here? Were you not afraid of the dangers of the way in coming hither at this time of night? Or, have you come for protection from any danger? Please say, what is the matter? Here are my arms willing and ready to attend to your wishes. Or, perhaps you have come to enjoy the beautiful scenery and the pleasure which Vṛndāvana affords. If that be so, you are welcome.”

The Gopīs, in reply, said that they were not in need of protection, nor had they come to admire the beauties of Vṛndāvana. They had no property which they cared for, and therefore they had no fear of losing anything. As for pleasure, they could have no other than what came from him (Śrī Kṛṣṇa). They then added, forgetful of their wonted modesty: “After having drawn us away from all that we held most dear, by thy irresistible flute, why dost thou now want to know why we have come to thee? We have come to surrender ourselves unreservedly to thee.” Śrī Kṛṣṇa replied: “A woman must for ever remain attached to her husband. Do as other wives do, and refrain from committing sin and bringing upon yourselves the scandal of accepting a lover who is not your husband.” To which the Gopīs answered: “It is futile to attempt to teach their duty to simple-minded women whom thou hast bewitched by thy beauty and thy flute. We have lost our sense of duty and all fear of scandal and its consequences. If it be a sin to yield ourselves to thee, we will suffer for it. Better hell with thee than the highest heaven without thee. Moreover, as regards the sin against which thou dost warn us, it is true, we have a duty towards our husbands. But art thou not the Lord of all, the Lord of our earthly lords? Art thou not the centre whither all tend? Do not, therefore, try to deceive us, simple and ignorant women as we are, by an argument of that kind.”

Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who could read their hearts, was moved almost to tears by the ardent love displayed towards him by these devoted women. Yet he made one more effort to test the fidelity of the Gopīs. “Do you not know,” said he, “that I am above all human emotions? How is it possible for me to gratify you by accepting the position of your lover?”

The Gopīs began to weep, and said: “If thou holdest thyself above human emotions, how are we to love thee and make thee love us in return? How are we, who are women, to associate with thee, if thou remainest above the influence of human emotions? Pray, do not trifle with us. If thou refuse to satisfy our irresistible craving for thee, we shall die at thy lotus feet.”⁸

⁸It is perfectly true that God is above all human emotions, but if he does not assume human emotions, then man's association with him becomes an impossibility and religion is reduced to

Śrī Kṛṣṇa was deeply affected by this further expression of their devotion to him. He was thus moved to assume human emotions for the purpose of fulfilling the aspirations of the Gopīs.

The Gopīs, thus blessed in a manner above all other women, became suddenly inflated with the idea of their own importance. They considered themselves as the most exalted of all beings. This hurt Śrī Kṛṣṇa who desired that the Gopīs should be absolutely meek. He, therefore, disappeared from their midst!

The Gopīs, not finding Śrī Kṛṣṇa among them, were overwhelmed with sorrow. They began to search for him with loud lamentations, and gradually their reason became affected. They began to ask of the trees, whether they had seen Śrī Kṛṣṇa coming that way. Thus they addressed every creeper, shrub, bird and animal. Sometimes, they looked up heavenward, and with tearful eyes, prayed to him to show himself to them again, “for life is dreary without thee, O beloved!” Their souls being solely occupied by the image of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, some gradually came to think that they were themselves Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and some, that they were his followers, and so they began to enact his *līlā*.⁹ Thus, one became Pūtanā and another infant Kṛṣṇa, and the former began to suckle the latter; and yet another, fully believing that she was Śrī Kṛṣṇa who had deserted them, stood, leaning against a tree, in the elegant manner he was accustomed to do; and, making a piece of stick do duty for a flute, began to play on it!

When they had almost despaired of ever seeing Śrī Kṛṣṇa again, He suddenly appeared in their midst, dressed with exquisite taste, which seemed to enhance His ravishing beauty. The Gopīs all rushed towards him in a state of rapture, and were received by him with a divine and bewitching smile. They surrounded him; some caught hold of his hands and the touch sent a thrill of joy to their hearts; some touched his feet, some his neck, some seemed to devour his beauty with their eyes riveted on his face; some began to smell his body, which emitted a delicious fragrance of perfume that attracted the bees to him, mistaking his body for sweet-scented flowers.

The Gopīs, feeling hurt at the conduct of Kṛṣṇa, asked him a few questions, by way of charging him with ingratitude. Said they: “How dost thou regard the conduct of those, (1) who, having received a service, give one in return; (2) who bestow a service without having received one; (3) who, having received a service offer nothing in return?” The object of the questions was to insinuate that though they had served Śrī Kṛṣṇa, heart and soul, he had ungratefully abandoned them.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa replied: “Those who serve in return for a service, do not serve a farce. In the same manner, it is all quite true that he is as big as the universe, but unless he assumes the form of human being there cannot be any tender relationship between him and man.

⁹*Līlā* (play or sport) is an incident on earth in which God Almighty has had a direct hand.

me but serve themselves. Those who serve without having been served, are either philanthropists who serve others because they cannot help themselves, or they bear a disinterested love such as parents do for their children. Those who do not serve in return for service are either ungrateful, or are persons who have conquered all their desires. But, dear creatures, do not fancy for a moment that I do not serve those who serve me. It is true that when people serve me, I do not always immediately serve them in return, but I act thus, simply with a view to whet their love for me. If I disappeared and gave you the trouble of searching for me, my object was to make your feelings more ardent towards me. You have left everything which women hold dear for my sake, and my immortal life will not suffice to discharge my debt to you. Meanwhile, let your own goodness be the payment of the debt I owe you.”

Having said this, Śrī Kṛṣṇa began the *Rāsa* or the ecstatic dance. Each Gopī had a Śrī Kṛṣṇa by her side. They held each other's hands and began to sing and dance. Each thought that she was alone with Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and was not aware of the presence of the others. Sometimes the Gopīs sang the glories of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and he praised their skill; and sometimes Śrī Kṛṣṇa sang of the goodness of the Gopīs, and they glorified Him.

After having described the *Rāsa*, the *Śrīmat Bhāgavata*, the Old Testament of the Vaiṣṇavas, raises the question whether it was meet that God Almighty should be found in the act of making love to the wives of others. It disposes of the question in these terms: “Little mortals have no business to criticise the actions of the Almighty. He takes the form of man to do good to men. It was with this object that he condescended to assume human emotions. He is the Soul of souls—not only of the Gopīs but of their husbands as well, and therefore, he is the real husband of the Gopīs, as also of their husbands. Besides,” says the *Bhāgavata*, “the husbands never perceived the absence of their wives. They all felt that they were by their side.” It must also be borne in mind that Śrī Kṛṣṇa left Vṛndāvana when He was only eleven, so he was then only a boy.

Well, about this and other matters we should have something to say hereafter. Suffice it to observe now that when Śrī Gaurāṅga performed the *rāsa-līlā* to explain what it was, there was not one woman in the assembly.

When Kāṁsa came to know definitely that the being who was to destroy him was no other than Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the adopted son of his subject, Nanda, he resolved to murder his enemy by a stratagem. He organized a military tournament, and invited all the warriors in the land to take part in it. Nanda was invited to come and witness the ceremony. A separate letter was sent to Śrī Kṛṣṇa though he was but a boy. Akrūra was the party charged to carry the invitation letter to Vraja, and persuade Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma to come. Akrūra readily undertook the mission, for he hated Kāṁsa as a tyrant, and he, as a pious man, knew that Śrī Kṛṣṇa was God Almighty himself, and that his brother

Balarāma, was also like him a divine being. When Akrūra had reached Vraja and explained his mission to the inhabitants of Vraja the news was received by them with great heartburning, for they could not bear to part with Kṛṣṇa even for the couple of days which, it was thought, was about the time that would elapse between his starting on and returning from his mission. The entire community at Vraja grieved sorely, while Yaśodā, Rādhā, and the cow-boy friends of Śrī Kṛṣṇa fainted away as Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Balarāma, Nanda, and their attendants left the place for Mathurā. Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma attended the tournament and succeeded in killing all the athletes and monsters brought forward to compete or fight with them, and finally Kaṁsa himself. Immediately after Kaṁsa's death, Ugrasena, the rightful sovereign, was installed on the throne by Śrī Kṛṣṇa who, however, retained all the real power in his own hands.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa remained at Mathurā, and Nanda was obliged to return to Vraja without him. When the people of Vraja saw Nanda coming alone weeping, they surmised that Śrī Kṛṣṇa was not with him. This was a terrible grief to the inhabitants of Vraja, who loved Śrī Kṛṣṇa more than they did themselves. Yaśodā, in the agony of her grief, lost her reason, and Rādhā and the cow-boys were similarly affected. Yaśodā could be seen going about searching for Kṛṣṇa in every nook and corner of Vraja, forgetful of the fact that he was not there, but far away in Mathurā. Similarly Rādhā would often enter the forest of Vṛndāvana, hoping to meet her beloved there. Sometimes she would mistake a *tamāla* tree for the lord of her heart and address it in endearing terms; sometimes she would fancy that she had discovered the foot-prints of Kṛṣṇa, and, sitting beside them, would worship them with flowers, and bathe them with her tears. The cow-boys in the same manner became mad with grief. Everyone in Vraja wept for Kṛṣṇa and gave vent in various ways to the agony they felt on account of his absence.

At Mathurā Śrī Kṛṣṇa likewise passed his days pining for his friends in Vraja. Mathurā did not please him. The hollow, insincere manifestations of loyalty that he received there only led him to hanker more for the disinterested love and sincere devotion that he had received in Vraja. But he did not return to Vṛndāvana, knowing as he did that if love is sincere, it is intensified by separation, and he wanted to intensify the love of the inhabitants of Vraja for him, because love for him is the greatest of his blessings to man. He, however, sent one of his devotees, Uddhava, to Vraja to let his friends there know that he was well, and as attached to them as ever. Now, this Uddhava was a devoted servant of Kṛṣṇa, and worshipped him according to the rigid forms prescribed in religious books. He held in scant esteem the intelligence, devotion, and reverence of the ignorant milk-men and milk-women of Vraja, with respect to whom he had heard that Śrī Kṛṣṇa was so devoted to them that he had wept with them, implored them to forgive him when angry, and

loved them more than he loved his own life.

Uddhava, in short, was jealous of the simple people of Vraja. He fancied that he, being the most devoted and strict observer of all forms, must, in every respect, be the most worthy devotee of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and, therefore, more deserving of his favours than the milk-men and milk-women of Vraja. “His ways are a mystery,” thought he, “and certainly his sense of justice must be different from ours.” Uddhava was sent to Braja in order that he might be convinced of his folly, by realizing why the milk-men and milk-women had won his [Kṛṣṇa’s] heart, which even he had not been able to do.

When Uddhava reached Vraja he saw the entire village in mourning; so great was their misery because Śrī Kṛṣṇa was not among them. They had, of course, no knowledge of the forms and rules of worship which Uddhava knew, and which he so rigorously followed. But the name of Kṛṣṇa threw them into an ecstasy of emotion. Their whole soul was occupied by him. They had nothing to ask of him. They only loved him—loved him for his own sake. Uddhava fell at the feet of Rādhā, and admitted that if she had won Śrī Kṛṣṇa she deserved it. He came back convinced that if there was any method by which that great Being—impartial, incorruptible, undeceivable—could be won, it was by such purely disinterested love as the inhabitants of Vraja felt towards him. He noticed with surprise that the milk-men and milk-women of Vraja, though they had no knowledge of philosophy or of the forms of worship prescribed in religious books, and practised no sort of austerity, had yet made God Almighty their own, by loving him as a child, as Yaśodā and Nanda did; by loving him as a friend, as the cow-boys did; by loving him as a master, as the common people of Vraja did; and by loving him as a husband or lover, as Rādhā and her attendant Gopīs did.

It should be observed that Śrī Kṛṣṇa was regarded as their master by the inhabitants of Mathurā just as he was by the simple people of Vraja. But while the latter obeyed him as their master for no motive of self-interest, the former, for the most part, served him for gain. In Mathurā Śrī Kṛṣṇa was regarded with respect and awe because of his regal power and the pomp which surrounded him. His subjects there, who were Kṣatriyas or men of the warrior class, respected him for his unlimited powers, and they served Śrī Kṛṣṇa accordingly. There Śrī Kṛṣṇa wore a regal crown, the symbol of greatness, on his head, and held a sceptre, the symbol of power, in his hand. There he dressed superbly, his royal robe being embroidered with gold and glittering with diamonds and pearls. But in Vraja, the people, who were all of the cowherd class, lived only to love each other. They desired neither wealth nor power nor any worldly greatness. They loved Śrī Kṛṣṇa because they could not help it; and there Kṛṣṇa showed himself as a most beautiful boy, with a head-dress made of flowers and peacock feathers, and with a garland of wild flowers round his neck.

Rādhā was inconsolable because of the absence of her Lord. Sometimes she would fancy that Kṛṣṇa was come, and great would be her joy. But soon she would feel that he had again forsaken her, and thereupon would swoon away. Sometimes she would feel that Śrī Kṛṣṇa was coming to see her, and then she would tastefully decorate, with the choicest of flowers, the secret bower in Vṛndāvana where she and Śrī Kṛṣṇa had been accustomed to meet. There she would wait and wait, and often ask her attendants to look out to see if he was coming. At the slightest sound, she would joyfully exclaim, “Ah! He is coming at last.” But where was Śrī Kṛṣṇa? He was then in Mathurā! And when at length she came to realize the fact that he was not near and that it was delusive hope which had led her to make preparations for his reception, she would fall into a swoon once more.

Eventually, seeing that Rādhā was at the point of death, her attendants went to Mathurā, where they found Śrī Kṛṣṇa seated on his golden throne. They addressed him thus: “Thou hast now become a King and hast adorned thyself with jewels. Thou art now surrounded by mighty courtiers, who sing thy praise; while learned pandits chant to thee difficult texts from the religious books, all from motives of self-interest. They all try to deceive thee by calling thee merciful, though, in their heart of hearts, they neither love nor honour thee. But we are simple villagers; the only tribute that we can give thee is our spontaneous love, and the only throne we can offer thee is our simple and guileless hearts. In Vṛndāvana we had, at one time, a Lord in the person of a most beautiful youth, who sat under a *kadamba* tree and ruled our hearts, while we washed his feet with tears of joy.”

Śrī Kṛṣṇa wept on being reminded of the devotion to him of the inhabitants of Vraja. He at once started for Vṛndāvana with the attendant ladies of Rādhā, to see and console the latter, who had been described to him as being nearly bereft of her reason from grief such as no woman had ever felt before.

In Vṛndāvana, the milk-men and women worshipped *prema* and *bhakti*; in Mathurā the Kṣatriyas worshipped sovereignty. If Rādhā was the beloved of Kṛṣṇa in Vṛndāvana, Kujā was his queen in Mathurā. When Śrī Kṛṣṇa rose to proceed to Vṛndāvana, Kujā protested. She said, “Why dost thou forsake me?” Śrī Kṛṣṇa replied: “The people of Vraja want me, and I must go there. You wanted my wealth and position and you have got them. Let me go to them who want me. Be you satisfied with my gifts, for which you wanted me, and which have been showered upon you.”

When Śrī Kṛṣṇa returned to Vraja, Rādhā was roused by her attendants with the joyful tidings: “Thy life, thy Lover has come.” Rādhā started up with joy, and looking round, saw Kṛṣṇa in the garb of a king. Immediately she covered her face with her veil, and turning her back upon Him, said: “I loved a youth of my rank; I cannot love a king. The crown on his head

and the royal staff in his hand frighten me. I want my lover back; I do not want a king, or an avenger of wrongs.” Śrī Kṛṣṇa hastily cast aside his kingly apparel and arrayed himself in the simple dress he had been used to wear at Vraja, and then Kṛṣṇamayī, that is to say, she who is always in and with Kṛṣṇa, clasped him to her bosom.

We have, in the above, noticed some of the salient features of Kṛṣṇa’s sports (*līlā*). One important sport, however, which occurred before Kṛṣṇa had left Vṛndāvana, remains to be told. It was performed when Rādhā turned away from her lover in a fit of jealousy. We will here give a short yet complete account of the repugnance which Rādhā on this occasion displayed towards Kṛṣṇa, because of her jealousy, in order to give the reader a clear idea of the part which the divine pair played, the object of which will be explained later on. It happened on a certain day that Rādhā was aware that Śrī Kṛṣṇa would meet her at night in the seclusion of a sacred and secret bower in Vṛndāvana. Thither she proceeded with her maidens. This procession is called the rendezvous (*abhisāra*) of Rādhā. Having arrived at the bower she directed her attendants to make the necessary preparations to give Śrī Kṛṣṇa a suitable reception. They accordingly gathered the choicest flowers, with some of which they decorated the bower and with others made garlands. They carpeted the bower with flowers and young leaves, and filled the air with freshly distilled perfumes. These preparations for the reception of Śrī Kṛṣṇa are known by the name of *vāsaka-sajjā*.

But Śrī Kṛṣṇa failed to put in an appearance, at which Rādhā was dreadfully disappointed. Sometimes she offered her prayers to him to come and soothe her burning heart; sometimes she recounted his mercies, and by this means tried to procure consolation for herself. Her disappointment and consequent despondency are known as the *utkaṇṭhitā* of Rādhā. When she had passed the night there in this condition, Śrī Kṛṣṇa made his appearance, just as morning dawned and Rādhā had almost reached the point of death from his separation.

Now, Śrī Kṛṣṇa had been detained by Candrāvalī, a maiden of Vṛndāvana and the rival of Rādhā herself. She was not possessed of the absolutely pure and intense love of Rādhā, but she was a great deal more artful. What had occurred was this: while he was on his way to Rādhā on the previous night, Candrāvalī waylaid him and almost forcibly conducted him to her bower. Though unwilling to accompany her, Śrī Kṛṣṇa could not command the rudeness to refuse, and so consented to pass the night with her.

When he now approached the disappointed Rādhā, he stood before her with folded hands and trembling with agitation. Rādhā seeing him thus affected would have excused him but for one incident, viz., the discovery of the marks that Candrāvalī’s teeth had left on his cheek.

This so incensed Rādhā that she refused to have anything further to do

with Śrī Kṛṣṇa. She said that he did not deserve the love which she had bestowed upon him, and that she would henceforth never think of conquering his affections by love, but would stoop to the device of gaining his favours by hollow and insincere words of praise. Śrī Kṛṣṇa fell on his knees, and clasped her feet with both his hands—those divine hands, as delicate and soft as newly budded leaves of the mango-tree—with which he is wont to bless man. But Rādhā was inexorable. This part of the sport is called *māna*.¹⁰

When Śrī Kṛṣṇa left Rādhā, she tried for some time to compose her mind; but she saw Śrī Kṛṣṇa in everything, for her intense love for him remained. She again began to long for his company, and Śrī Kṛṣṇa himself also became disconsolate, because he knew that there was not a soul in the universe who loved him, for his own sake, as Rādhā did. So a re-union was soon brought about. Then Rādhā confessed to him the cause of her anger. She told him that she knew that he was beloved of all—that everyone should desire to possess him, and that Candrāvalī, she was aware, had done nothing wrong in enticing him away from her, but that the mark of her teeth on his cheek had offended her. “I thought,” said Rādhā, “that a woman who, like Candrāvalī, served thee for her own pleasure, had no right to possess thee, and it was to instruct thee in this matter that I thus suddenly cast thee off.”

The grand idea that underlies the Vaiṣṇava philosophy is that there are two principles in existence, namely, (1) the positive male or creative being, and (2) the negative female or created being. The positive principle attracts, and the negative is attracted. Hence, according to the Vaiṣṇavas, the highest form of worship is that in which the devotee spiritually transforms himself into a female, united by pure love with the Supreme Being, or the only male Being in existence, and Rādhā is the perfect model of such a worshipper. The sport that we have briefly sketched above, though apparently material, is essentially spiritual and all Vaiṣṇava works are at one on this point. To the Vaiṣṇava it is not myth, no creation of the imagination, but presents an ideal of the love of God for man, and of man for his maker—an ideal which the follower of any system of sound religion must have in view.

When Mirabāi, the Rajput princess, who left every thing for her love for Kṛṣṇa, visited the renowned Rūpa Gosvāmin of Vṛndāvana, one of the chief *bhaktas* of Śrī Gaurāṅga, Rūpa, an ascetic of the highest order, refused to see her on the ground that he was precluded from seeing the face of a woman. As a fact, Mirabai was a most beautiful young princess, and he had not much faith in her pretensions. Hearing the message of Rūpa, Mirabai replied, “Is

¹⁰When the celebrated saint and poet Jayadeva was composing the *Māna-līlā*, he was inspired to write that Śrī Kṛṣṇa had fallen at the feet of Rādhā to ask for forgiveness. But he could not bring himself to recount such a humiliating action in connection with the Lord Almighty. He left his writing materials and went to bathe. Śrī Kṛṣṇa, it is stated, took that opportunity of assuming the form of Jayadeva, and of putting down the couplet which the saint had refused to indite.

he then a male? If so, he has no access to Vṛndāvana. Males cannot enter there, and if the Goddess of Vṛndāvana comes to know of his presence she will turn him out. For, does not the great Gosvāmin know that there is but one male in existence, namely, my beloved Kanāi Lāl [an endearing name of Kṛṣṇa], and that all besides are females!” Rūpa now understood that Mirabāi was really a staunch devotee of Kṛṣṇa, and so agreed to see her.¹¹

Observations on Kṛṣṇa-līlā

In India there are philosophers who consider that the soul of man is a spark from the Great Soul, wherein it again merges after it has attained due purification. This profession of faith is conveyed by the affirmation: “He and I are one and the same.” They, therefore, deny the utility of worship, or prayer, or what are called pious acts. They say that God can do neither any good nor any harm to man. Man is the arbiter of his own destiny; he builds his own future. If he acts righteously he can purify himself without the help of God and thus attain salvation. If he does not, God can do him no harm; he must suffer for the consequences of his own acts. These are the Advaitavādīs, who practised austerities for the sake of purifying their souls.

There are others, the Dvaitavādīs, who believe that man is a separate being from God, and that his paramount duty on earth is to attain to the lotus feet of God, and thereby secure an everlasting happy future. This was taught by Christ, Mahomed, and Śrī Gaurāṅga. The question that now remains to be considered, is the way in which to attain to him. The following is the Vaiṣṇava view of salvation. A Vaiṣṇava is one who is a follower of Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Śrī Gaurāṅga.

God, according to the Vaiṣṇavas, is infinitely wise, infinitely good, and infinitely merciful, and loves man with an intense love. That being the case, it is foolish in the extreme for man, who, in his ignorance, cannot possibly know what is really good for him, to pray to him for favours. It is equally foolish to try to please him by insincere flattery, or by offerings which must be worthless to him. On the other hand, sincere praise and worship of God and communion with him, are, according to the Vaiṣṇavas, the sole object of human existence. These, however, must be done, not for favours to come, but for the ecstasy that attends their due performance, and for the virtue of purification which they possess. This purification makes man fitted for the companionship of God. And when he has been able, by this means, to create in himself a love of God, he is by a natural process drawn towards him.

Thus, man must not only pray to God but also try to keep himself in touch

¹¹ One hears this story in relationship to Śrī Jīva Gosvīmin, Rūpa’s nephew, but not of Rūpa. (ed.)

with him in all possible ways. Hence it is that every Vaiṣṇava keeps by him an image of God, made either of metal or stone, which he tends with loving care. He bathes his image, gives it good things to eat, decks it with flowers, lulls it to sleep, prays to it, talks to it, and sings before it, as he would do to a dear companion.

Now, as the great source of this universe is invisible, unapproachable and inconceivable, this is the manner in which a Vaiṣṇava tries to bring himself into touch with his creator. When he has progressed thus far, he casts away the material accessories, and does all these things in his heart. He then worships and communes with the spiritual image of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, which he has enshrined in his heart of hearts, and presents him with offerings of spiritual flowers, spiritual scents, and spiritual food.

A man, by thus keeping himself constantly in touch with God, not only purifies, ennobles and develops his soul, as we said before, but enjoys an ecstasy which is above all earthly pleasures. But then, the worshipper must first learn to revere God, and thereafter to love him; in other words, he must first of all try to create in himself an attraction for the Supreme Being. A man who has purified himself but who has no reverence or love whatsoever for God, will gain very little; mere purity will not secure him the companionship of God.

The Vaiṣṇava begins with the premise that God, as the Soul of his soul, is nearer to him than any mortal may be; that he loves man more than a mother loves her child, or a wife her husband; and that when, in return, man has trained himself to feel a greater love for God than for his nearest and dearest object on earth, he then begins to be united to him. According to this view, the love of God for man is an ever-constant quantity; but, in order to realize it, man must first learn to love God; and the amount of divine love that he will be able to realize, will be commensurate with the love that he will have trained himself to feel for Him.

But how is one to acquire this love for God?

Before we proceed further we must say a word about what is called “sin,” which exercises such a potent influence on the human heart. There are men who try to purify themselves by austerities and the subjugation of their passions; they reduce themselves to skeletons by fasting; they live in the wilderness, far removed from the scenes where trials and temptations beset their fellow-men, and thus attempt to attain to perfection. But such practices are not encouraged by Vaiṣṇavas, as they are unnatural, and, therefore, cannot possibly be pleasing to God. They contend that human passions are necessary for the harmonious development of man. It is, they think, undoubtedly his will that we should not only live in society, but enjoy all its legitimate pleasures, with this condition, however, that the sole object of our existence should be our salvation or the attainment of God.

There are others who shed tears of repentance for their sins, and by this means try to wash them away. But this practice, the Vaiṣṇava contends, can hardly be expected to accomplish fully the object it has in view. Artificial repentance is like washing charcoal with water. No amount of washing with water will make a diamond of the charcoal, which, on the contrary, will retain the same black hue as it did before.

The self-infliction of pain by the penitent, as an atonement for sins, presupposes that God is something in the nature of a cruel master. But since God loves man with an infinite love it cannot be that the self-infliction of pain by man, no matter for what purpose, can be pleasing to him. We may, perhaps, please a tyrant by mortification, by the mutilation of our bodies, and by passing our days and nights in praising and glorifying him, forgetful of the comforts and even necessities of life. But God is not a tyrant. He is too great to derive any pleasure from the submission of a puny creature like man.

God only expects from man that he should develop his spiritual nature. This he can best accomplish by constant intercourse with holy beings. But the holiest of all beings is God Himself. Seek his company therefore, and it will improve your nature and ultimately enable you to attain to moral perfection, so far as is attainable by man on earth. And when, at length, you have come to feel even the least fraction of real love for him, this ray will act upon your soul as a spark does upon a piece of charcoal, that is to say, will change its very nature. The spark converts the charcoal into glowing fire, and the particle of real love converts the man who feels it into a being immeasurably more beautiful than he was before.

The adoption of any other means than this for the sanctification of the soul is, in the Vaiṣṇava's view, unnecessary, and he has but a mean opinion of those devices for ordering man's conduct—hard and fast rules under which he is threatened with the wrath of God if he does evil, and bribed with the promise of future reward if he does well. This he considers insulting to God and derogatory to man, who has only to develop within himself an affection for the Supreme Being, and his sins will disappear as mist before the sun's rays, and with them the desire and even capacity to err in the future.¹²

The highest blessing of man is Kṛṣṇa *prema* or love for God. Śrī Kṛṣṇa in the *Gītā* says: "I serve as I am served,"¹³ or, in effect, "If men serve me as

¹²Of course austerities have their uses, as for instance, a man who gives up society has more time to devote to God and better opportunities of keeping himself pure than one in its midst. But austerity, as a means to the attainment of God, it is contended, is inferior to *preman* and *bhakti*. Repentance is an effort of nature to free the soul of its impurities, but, as in the case of bodily ailments, nature alone is not always sufficient to purge out the poison that has entered the system and a drug is oftentimes necessary, that drug in the case of the soul being *bhakti*. What is called "the seed of sin," *bhakti* alone can eradicate.

¹³*Bhagavad-gītā*, 4.11: *ye yathā māṁ pradyante tāṁs tathaiva bhajāmy aham.* (ed.)

a giver of bounties, I present myself to them as such. If I am loved, I love in return. If I am loved as a master, I love the devotee as a master loves a devoted servant. If I am loved as a friend, I love in return as a friend. If I am loved as a lover, I love as a husband loves his wife.”

The significance of the above passage in the *Gītā* may be illustrated thus: Suppose a king has two wives. To the one he says: “My dear, I am very wealthy. All my wealth is at your command. Rich robes, bright jewels, servants, carriages, in fact, whatever you may express a wish for, shall be given to you.” The queen thanks the king, and says that if she were gratified in these respects she would desire nothing further. To the other he makes a similar offer, and she replies that she cares not for his wealth, but only for his love. The king gives each of his wives what she desires most. But few will doubt that the one who preferred the king to his wealth, made the wiser choice, for even from a business point of view, the possession of the king himself necessarily includes his wealth also.

Which is to be preferred,—the acquisition of the good-will of a king, that is to say, material prosperity, or himself personally, that is, as an object of love? Most people, if not all, will prefer an object of love to property. To the great majority, life would be dreary without an object of love, and there are a few that, if they had an object of love, would not mind facing poverty and neglect. For such is the nature of man, that the very fact of falling in love creates in him a state of ecstasy and heroic resignation.

It should never be forgotten that there is no real happiness in the enjoyment of wealth and power. The acquisition of wealth or power only begets a thirst for more. The wealthiest men in the world consider their wealth a burden rather than a source of happiness to them. The lot of the most powerful sovereign is far from being a happy one. He envies the peasant for the contentment and security he enjoys. Besides, the possession of wealth and authority tends to harden the heart, to make a man selfish, cruel and, in other respects, quite unfit to associate with the holy and loving God. Hence the really good man, who desires to be the servant or companion of God, never seeks him merely as a dispenser of worldly gifts.

The worshipper who asks God for wealth and power, indirectly requests the position of a master for himself, and that of subordinates for his fellow-men, thereby to provide him with slaves; in other words, to enrich him at the expense of others. But one who understands the universal fatherhood of God will never be guilty of such arrogance as this. How can a man who has realised the fatherhood of God, ask him to make him a master and his other children his slaves? For, to ask God to give him wealth, is to ask him to make others poor, so that he, by his wealth, can make the poorer men serve him as their master. In the same manner, for a man to ask for authority is to ask God to procure him slaves,—from among his children.

Thus, love is the supreme motive power in man. While its object is merely human, a man's love is not without its trouble, for human beings must necessarily have many defects. The purer the object of love, the more durable and sweeter is the enjoyment. Thus, a man who has been able to transfer his love to him, who is absolutely without a flaw, and whose love for men is disinterested, secures for himself the best object of love and, therefore, the highest blessing open to him.

Now, how is this love for God to be attained? First of all, God must become man in order to be loved; a man can love only a man. Dissimilars can never love each other. A man may feel an ardent desire in regard to some winged *hourī*, but he must feel, at the same time, considerable anxiety about her safekeeping, lest she should fly away. For a man to love God either God must become man, or the man must become God. But a man can never become God, so that if there is to be such a thing as love between God and man, it is necessary that God should come down to earth and appear in the shape of man, for the purpose of this union.

But God is unknowable and limitless as space. The Bible, however, says that he made man after his own image.¹⁴ The Hindu sacred texts (*śāstras*) say that the real figure of God is like that of man. Let us, however, assume that God is man *plus* something. But it is beyond the power of man to conceive of a rational and sentient being who is not a man.¹⁵ If you make him something in the nature of space or light, you only utter words which you cannot realize in your mind. You require something substantial,—a man, or you cannot love Him. If then God is man *plus* something, that additional something is beyond the comprehension of man, and, therefore, for practical purposes, of no concern to us.

Of course, if God is served as a bounty-giver, it is of no moment what shape or form is given to him. To a worshipper who asks for the forgiveness of his sins, or for the removal of some misery, or for wealth or favour, God Almighty may be a mere abstraction like light or space, but to those who would seek him for his own sake, it is not so.

To sum up: Love exercises the greatest influence upon man. This love is

¹⁴If it is sacrilegious to make an image of God, is it blasphemous on the part of the Bible to declare that God made man according to his own image? The “grossest” of idolators, however, know that God is as vast as the universe. An image of God is necessary only for that man who cannot worship him in his heart. But to *realize* him in the heart—and there cannot be any worship without realization—is a task which is exceedingly difficult, and very few people can do it. An image of God enables even an ordinary man to keep himself constantly in touch with God. The Vaiṣṇava is required to spend most of his time in the company of God, and this he is enabled to do by keeping with him an image of Śrī Kṛṣṇa whom he bathes, feeds and talks to.

¹⁵Anyone can see for himself that it is impossible for a man to conceive of a rational being who is not a man. To make God, therefore, as vast as space is to put him beyond our reach. Astronomy says that our sun has a sun of its own. This latter must be much bigger than the one which gives us light. But our direct concern is with our own sun and not with the sun of the sun we see.

only a source of happiness when the object is worthy. The fortunate man, therefore, who has been able to transfer his love to God, who is in every way perfect, acquires the highest blessing which it is possible for man to enjoy. But to enable men to love him, he must appear before them in the form of a human being.

The Vaiṣṇavas invest God mainly with two attributes, namely, power and loveliness. He is almighty and he is all-sweet. As an object of love we have nothing to do with his might. On the other hand, the idea of his might, chills the love of the worshipper.¹⁶ Let them, therefore, who serve for selfish purposes, contemplate him as all-powerful and worship him as such. They can make him boundless as space, and call him infinite, almighty and unapproachable. But the worshipper who wants to love him, has only to do with the human aspect of god. We said that God is man *plus* something: this something represents his power. It is this something which makes him almighty. The worshipper, who is desirous of making God an object of love, rejects the superhuman portion of his nature, and worships him only as the all-sweet man. And thus Śrī Kṛṣṇa is a beautiful youth to women, and a child to his parents, with only a flute in his hand, who makes every man and every woman a slave by his irresistible attractions.

We have already seen that Śrī Kṛṣṇa, in the *Gītā*, says: “I serve as I am served”; that is to say, if he is regarded as a bounty-giver, he appears as such to the worshipper: If he is loved, he returns the love of the worshipper. The chief object of the existence of man is to secure his love by loving him. Śrī Kṛṣṇa again says: “I appear to the worshipper in the same form as that in which I am worshipped by him.” Thus, to a man who gives God the form of Jesus Christ, he appears in that form; similarly, a man who worships God as Śrī Kṛṣṇa, discovers him as such. To those who worship God as a formless being, he is without any form. To those who regard him as light, he is only light, and so forth.

Let us assume for the present that Kṛṣṇa’s sport is a myth and the whole story a fiction of the sages, invented for the purpose of a rational, easy and delightful system of worship. Be it so. But if love for God is the highest blessing possible to man, we cannot love him unless he assumes the form of a man. Secondly, we cannot love him unless he gives us some occasion for our love. Man can feel an attraction for another on account of his or her personal appearance. He can also entertain a similar feeling for his or her works. Thus, a man may admire a woman simply for her beauty. Everyone admired

¹⁶God is both kind and seemingly terrible. There are Hindu devotees who worship the terrible aspect of the deity. They make his image most fearful to look at, and he is worshipped with blood. But love of God is the highest object of the Vaiṣṇavas. To love any being who is terrible is impossible, so they do not admit that there is anything to be afraid of in God. According to them his thunderbolts are witnesses of his mercy. They therefore make his image beautiful, give him a flute, worship him in moon-lit nights and with the choicest flowers.

Washington, even those who had never seen him, because his works charmed his fellow-creatures. God, therefore, to be loved, must appear before man as a lovely being, or he must present man with some of his lovely works.

A man with a comely appearance and eminent qualities naturally secures the love of his fellows by his character. God was an abstraction before. He took the attractive form of Śrī Kṛṣṇa and appeared in Vṛndāvana. There he won the hearts of all by his lovely qualities. By this condescension the Lord God gave men an opportunity of acquiring a love for him.¹⁷

That great work, the *Śrīmad Bhāgavata*, when discussing the ethics of the *Rāsa-līlā*, observes that God Almighty is above human passions and sentiments, and that if he, when he assumed the form of man, had remained so, men would never have loved or associated with him. He, therefore, took a human form and assumed human feelings solely for the good of his creatures on earth. This condescension on his part enabled people on earth to love him and to be able to associate with him. If Jesus had not appeared as a Messiah, the Christians could never have entertained that tender feeling for God as they do now.

The distinctive feature of Vaiṣṇavism is that it teaches man how to attain to God by what may be called worshipping him domestically. Man is a domestic being and he forms different relationships. Human beings are related to one another as father and son, brother and brother, wife and husband, and as friend and friend. Thus originates paternal and filial love, fraternal love, conjugal love and friendship. Man has this four-fold attraction in his domestic life, and God has made him a sociable being, with a view to giving him an opportunity to cultivate these four kinds of love. What man has to do is to direct one, or more than one, or all these kinds of love to God; that is to say, he is to love God, as a father, a son, a friend or a husband; or, he may feel some sort of mixed love without being able to distinguish what it is. So that to love God, what the worshipper has to do is to regard him as one of his nearest relations.

One who can do this is a fortunate man. But it is difficult for a man to give God such a tender place in his heart. The inhabitants of Vraja were, however, able to accomplish this. God was there as a master¹⁸ to the people, a son to Nanda and Yaśodā, a friend to the cow-boys, and a lover to the Gopīs. Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa came down upon earth with his heavenly attendants to teach mankind how he should be loved. Follow in the wake of the men and women of Vraja for the purpose of cultivating your love for Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and you will thereby win the supreme object of life.

¹⁷The hero of a fiction wins the heart of its readers. Śrī Kṛṣṇa or God Almighty is the hero in *Kṛṣṇa-līlā*. Assuming for the sake of argument that *Kṛṣṇa-līlā* is a fiction, it yet creates an attraction for Śrī Kṛṣṇa, that is to say, God Almighty.

¹⁸The Vaiṣṇavas declare that the love of a son for his father is similar to that of a dutiful servant for his master.

It is the easiest thing in the world for a man to call God, “my beloved son” or “my dear lover,” but it is very difficult, if not impossible, for him to realize it. If one, therefore, addresses God in endearing terms, such as “Come, my dear boy, let me dress your hair,” he either utters a blasphemy, or a jargon of meaningless words. But a devotee can make Yaśodā say so. In the same manner, it is blasphemy for a man to address God thus: “Let me kiss thy cheek,” but he can make Rādhā speak such language. God is so great and so erect in his holiness that sincere men have always tried to avoid addressing him directly. The Christians cannot venture to approach him unless introduced by Christ. The Catholics invoke Mary to gain favour of Jesus.¹⁹ So Yaśodā is requisitioned by the Vaiṣṇavas to call him a son.

In the same manner, though the devotee makes Yaśodā fondle the baby Kṛṣṇa, and Rādhā embrace him as her lover, it is the devotee, who, by the law of sympathy, obtains the advantage. The advantage is that the devotee by constant training, and by constantly meditating on the sport of Kṛṣṇa, gradually acquires an attraction for him. Indeed, a devotee who follows in the wake of Yaśodā, may eventually attain something like the love which she entertained for her son, and a devotee who follows in the wake of Rādhā, may similarly feel something like what she felt for her lover. Assuming that Kṛṣṇa’s sport is a work of the imagination, constant practice in devotion gives shape to Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Rādhā, and Vṛndāvana, etc., in his mind, and the devotee at length realizes the ecstasy of a direct communion with God Almighty.

A religion is to be judged by its fruits. Men inspired with the least particle of love for Śrī Kṛṣṇa are to be found here and there, though, of course, their number must always be small, who are so pure, so happy, so elevated and consequently so attractive, that their very presence is like the light of the full moon on a cloudless night. The love for God, which a devotee acquires by the contemplation of the sports of Kṛṣṇa and Gaurāṅga, is sufficient to fill the on-looker with wonder and awe. The very appearance of such a man has oftentimes the effect of softening the heart of hardened sinners, and leading them to amend their lives.

We have hitherto assumed that Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and, therefore, his sports are myths. But the the sport of Śrī Gaurāṅga is a reality, and is in itself enough for the purpose of acquiring love for God. As a matter of fact, however, Śrī Kṛṣṇa is not a myth. He is a historical character, as much as Jesus is. His sayings and doings are susceptible of as much proof as those of Jesus are. But yet we cannot consider that the proofs upon which Christianity is based and the proofs upon which the sports of Śrī Kṛṣṇa are founded are conclusive. This defect of Vaiṣṇavism, however, was satisfactorily removed by the advent of

¹⁹A Christian gentleman while going through the above sentences was pleased to remark: “This, of course is not correct, ‘Our Father who art in heaven,’ etc., being included in the daily prayers of all Christians.” We presume, the Christians hold that a prayer is more acceptable to God when conveyed through the medium of Christ than when conveyed direct to him.

Śrī Gaurāṅga. He came to bear witness to Śrī Kṛṣṇa and his sports. Indeed, all the sports performed by Śrī Kṛṣṇa were repeated by Śrī Gaurāṅga to explain their significance to mankind. If it is accepted that Śrī Gaurāṅga is God Almighty himself, or even if it is conceded that he is a messenger from God, then Śrī Kṛṣṇa and his sports must be accepted as realities. A review of the Vaiṣṇava philosophy and a further analysis of Kṛṣṇa's sports will be attempted as we proceed with the life, and we shall also notice certain other points which we are obliged to pass over for the present.

We said in the Preface that all religious faiths founded upon the descent (*avatāra*) philosophy agree in essentials. Thus, for instance, the Christians, Mussulmans, and Hindus believe in an almighty and all-good creator; in the utility of worship and prayer; in a moral and virtuous life; and in a future state. They also agree that God Almighty sends messiahs to this earth for the good of humanity. They further admit that Jesus Christ is such a messiah. So it can be seen that they are in perfect accord in regard to the essentials of their religions. But the Christian, having gone so far with the Hindu and the Mussulman, parts company with them. He says that Jesus Christ is the only messiah from God—the first and the last. The Mussulman, however, keeps by his Hindu brother and goes a step further with him, for he says, along with the Hindu, that there must be other messiahs than Jesus Christ, as, for instance, Mahomed. Here, however the Mussulman parts company with the Hindu, for though he admits Jesus Christ as the first messiah, and Mahomed as the second, yet he will not admit the advent of a third. The Hindu declares that God sends messiahs to this world at different periods and in different ages.

The last sports of Śrī Kṛṣṇa were performed in Dvārakā, where his father Vasudeva was king. Now, if Vṛndāvana was the abode of love, and Mathurā the abode of knowledge, Dvārakā was the abode of work. There are three ways by which men may secure for themselves a better future after death. The first is by winning over God by *prema* and *bhakti*, and those who follow this method belong to Vṛndāvana. The second is by purifying the soul by *yoga*, austerities, penance, formal worship, and so forth, and those who adopt these methods belong to Mathurā. The third way is by performing good works, such as tending the sick, feeding the hungry, etc., and those worshippers who rely for their salvation upon these practices, belong to Dvārakā.

During the *Rāsa-līlā* the Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa said: "Those who serve me for reward do not serve me but themselves." Thus the people of Dvārakā, though they may attain to virtue and get their reward in the after-life, have yet nothing to do with God. Says Śrī Kṛṣṇa, "I serve as I am served," i.e., if a man performs a good work for reward he gets his reward from God, and loses further claims upon him. In the same manner, the man who passes his life in the wilderness, engaged in *yoga*, and the performance of different

kinds of austerities, doubtless serves thereby to purify his soul and develop its inherent powers, but having never sought God he can never attain to his lotus feet.

“I serve, as I am served,” says Śrī Kṛṣṇa. “Seek me and I shall seek you,” “If you feel an attraction for me I shall feel an attraction for you.” The only way by which to attain to his lotus feet, is, therefore, *prema* and *bhakti*, says the Vaiṣṇava. A Sādhū who has made himself absolutely pure but has no *bhakti*, is like a beautiful maiden who has no heart. As she cannot expect to win a loving husband, so the Sādhū who is without *bhakti* cannot reasonably expect a loving God to cherish him.

The philosophies in which India is so rich have, no doubt, their uses as the sciences have; but if religion means the art of acquiring God, a philosophy, which is not based upon *bhakti*, can never be said to be religious.

Of course, what a worshipper generally does is to combine all the methods for the purposes of salvation. A true *bhakta* is one who has realized the fatherhood of God and brotherhood of man, and he naturally feels an abhorrence for evil deeds and an impure life, as he feels a natural inclination for good works. To a real *bhakta*, therefore, the other methods are not necessary, though an absolutely sincere *bhakta* is a very great rarity.

References

In this volume I give only an extremely short account of some of the books and authorities referred to in the compilation of this work. As the incidents described in the book happened only four hundred years ago, at a time of the greatest literary activity in Bengal, the evidence that can be brought forward to prove them is simply overwhelming.

1. *Ananta-saṃhitā*—this book is supposed to have been written by Nityānanda himself. It has frequently been quoted by the earliest of Vaiṣṇava authors and is written in Sanskrit verse.
2. *Kṛṣṇacaitanya-caritāmṛta*, or *Murārigupta-kaḍacā* (Notes of Murāri)—the author of this Sanskrit poem, Murārigupta, was a near neighbour, constant companion, and disciple of Lord Śrī Gaurāṅga. He was older than the Lord by about fifteen years. He put down in this book what he saw with his own eyes from the very birth of the Lord. This book was begun at Nilācala (Purī) when the Lord was only twenty-eight years of age.
3. *Advaita-maṅgala*—written in Bengali by Īśāna Nāgara, a constant companion of the Lord. The author testifies to what he saw personally of the sports of the Lord.
4. *Gaurāṅga-udaya*—by Paṇḍita Mukunda, a follower and constant companion of the Lord.
5. *Caitanya-caritāmṛta-mahākāvya*—written in Sanskrit verse by Kavi Karṇapūra, a contemporary of the Lord who was specially blessed by him.
6. *Caitanya-candrodaya-nāṭaka*.—a Sanskrit drama by the same author.
7. *Jagadīśa-carita*—by a disciple of Jagadīśa. Jagadīśa was a near neighbour of the Lord.
8. *Caitanya-bhāgavata*—written in Bengali verse by Vṛndāvana Dāsa, a disciple of Nityānanda, the grandson of Śrīvāsa's brother, and the son of

Nārāyaṇī. This poem was written under the auspices of Nityānanda, Śrīvāsa, and Nārāyaṇī, the mother of the author, all constant companions of the Lord.

9. *Caitanya-maṅgala*—by Locana Dāsa, written under the auspices of Nara-hari, a dear and intimate companion of the Lord.
10. *Caitanya-śataka*—by the great savant Vāsudeva Sārvabhauma.
11. *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*—written by Paṇḍita Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja, under the auspices of Gosvāmī Raghunātha, one of the most intimate of the Lord's followers.
12. *Svarūpa-dāmodara-kaḍacā*—decidedly the most intimate of the Lord's followers.
13. *Notes of Rūpa Gosvāmin*.
14. *Notes of Sanātana Gosvāmin*.
15. *Notes of Ṭhākura Narahari*—alluded to above.
16. *Songs of Vāsudeva Ghoṣa* and other constant companions of the Lord, composed generally on the spot to describe the sports of the Lord.
17. *Caitanya-candrāmṛta*—by the great savant and *saṅgyāsīn* Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī, who was converted by the Lord at Benares.
18. *Vaṁśī-śikṣā*—by Vaṁśīvadana, a companion of the Lord.

Glossary of Terms

Ārati To worship God by light. It is a form of welcome or parting ceremony.

Avatāra An incarnation of God, or a being whom God Almighty sends to earth to perform a mighty action.

Abhisāra It is the progress of Rādhā to Śrī Kṛṣṇa from her home to him in the secret recesses of Vṛndāvana.

Bhakta One having *bhakti*. In this book those following Lord Gaurāṅga are generally meant.

Bhakti I do not know if this word has an English equivalent. *Bhakti* is not reverence; it is more than that. It is not faith, for faith is altogether a distinct thing. The nearest equivalent of *bhakti* seems to me “loyalty.” Men who have a feeling of loyalty for their sovereign, have similar feelings for their masters as men having *bhakti* for God Almighty.

Guru Master; teacher; one who initiates.

Haribala (pron. Haribol) Literally “say Hari,” uttered to express a strong feeling such as joy, or to express approbation.

Harināma *Nāma* is name. *Harināma* is the name of Hari which may be simply Hari, or Kṛṣṇa, or Govinda or any one of the thousand names which the *bhaktas* have given to God.

Līlā The works God performs on earth assuming a form.

Māna When in a feeling of anger the heroine refuses to have anything to do with her lover, she is under the influence of *māna*. Of course, here, the hero is God as Kṛṣṇa and the heroine Rādhā.

Mantra Charm consisting of some mystical words.

Māyā Delusion or illusion.

Prema Love. The feeling which a wife has for her husband is not love properly so called; for her feeling is based upon interest and proceeds from a sense of ownness. True love must be disinterested, which is more akin to the feeling of a woman for her lover for whom she is prepared to sacrifice all she holds dear: reputation, children, etc. It was thus Kṛṣṇa was the lover and not the husband of Rādhā.

Pūjā Worship.

Pulaka The excess of feeling of man is oftentimes expressed in the hairs standing on end.

Pūrvarāga The hankering which one feels for God before attaining to him.

Sannyāsī One who has absolutely forsaken the world.

Tulasī A sacred plant, with which Śrī Kṛṣṇa is worshipped; under its seal oaths are taken.

Vṛndāvana The place where Śrī Kṛṣṇa flourished; a town in the state of Uttar Pradesh, India.

Chapter One: The Full Moon

On the night of the full moon, in the most delightful month of the twelfth Phalgun (February-March), in the year 1407 of the Śaka era (1486 C.E.), the Lord Gaurāṅga was born, in Navadvīpa (Nadia),—a city situated on both sides of the sacred Bhāgīrathī, the river on which Calcutta now stands, and famous for its eminent men of learning. The sun set in the west, and the full moon rose in all her glory. Just then an eclipse of the moon took place, and the occasion being considered holy, the citizens began, as usual under such circumstances, to proclaim the event by loud shouts of *haribala* (pron. hari-bol), which means, “cry Hari,” Hari being a name of God dear to Vaiṣṇavas.

Astrologers say that the moment was also eminently auspicious according to the calculation made by them.¹

Nadia, situated on the holy Bhāgīrathī, was then perhaps the first city in the world both spiritually and intellectually. Phālguna (February-March) is the most delightful month in the year; the fairest night in all the year is that on which the full moon rises in that month, and the most sacred moment possible is when an eclipse takes place, as then, more than at any other time, the entire people vie with one another in chanting the name of God. The devotees of Gaurāṅga, referring to the above combination of favourable circumstances which attended his birth, declare with natural satisfaction, that it was only what might be expected, as befitting his unapproachably exalted position.

His devotees further declare, that those who were, in their joy, shouting *haribala*, fancied that they were doing so to proclaim the eclipse. But though they did not know the secret, they were really doing so to proclaim the advent of him whose name they were uttering. Why was it that Śrī Gaurāṅga was born just when the learned city of Nadia had attained the zenith of its intellectual eminence? Why was it that this advent took place at a time when the great Vāsudeva Sārvabhauma (whom he subsequently converted) flour-

¹The astrologers, proud of the truth of their science, are accustomed to refer to the birth of Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Śrī Gaurāṅga, who were both born into this world at moments pre-eminently auspicious according to the reckonings of their system.

ished? His devotees answer the above questions thus. They say: he came at this period of supreme literary activity to show that the end of all knowledge is the attainment of God. He came at the time of Sārvabhauma to show that he was not afraid of submitting his credentials to a thorough examination, even by men of the highest intellect and culture.

There was a large *nimba* tree near the house of Śrī Jagannātha Miśra. Under it, in a hut prepared for the purpose, Gaurāṅga was born. The attending midwife perceived no sign of life in the new-born babe. Various means were adopted to revive him but for a considerable time with no success.² He, however, at last began to breathe, and there was joy in the heart of the father and the mother, and those who attended on the latter. The child was of an unusually large size on account of his being born in the thirteenth month, having been a full twelve months in the womb.

His skin was fair as molten gold. His father gave him the name of Viśvambhara, but his mother called him Nimāi. The name, Gaurāṅga, was given him on the occasion of his assuming the sacred thread. His worshippers called him Śrī Gaurāṅga, or the “yellow-white bodied,” as well as Gaura. His last name was Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya, that is, he who awakens God (Śrī Kṛṣṇa) in the hearts of men.

The form and disposition of Nimāi were very much unlike those of other children. In stature he was very tall for his age. He was perfectly healthy, and so strong and restless that women could hardly keep him in their arms. One peculiarity of the boy, which seemed more striking than the rest, was that the mere uttering of the name of Hari could pacify him when he cried. His parents had lost eight daughters successively, and then there was born to them a son called Viśvarūpa. When this boy was about ten years, Nimāi was born. Being the youngest he was naturally the pet of the family and of their relations, a fact which it seems the boy soon came to know, for he was wont to betray, on all occasions, the stubbornness and waywardness of the spoilt child. When he cried, it was difficult to soothe him, and the cry oftentimes ended in a swoon, which gave his parents much trouble and anxiety until they came to know the secret as to how the boy could be soothed on such occasions. They repeated the name of Hari, and this acted like a charm upon the stubborn and wayward child.

When he had learnt to crawl on his hands and knees, it became necessary to keep a constant watch on him, for he would otherwise steal away into

²The account of his early *līlā* or sport is to be found in many books and songs written and composed either by his personal attendants and immediate followers, or at their bidding, by others. We can mention here the names of some of the most important books: *Ananta-saṁhitā*, *Notes of Murāri* (Kṛṣṇacaitanya-caritāmṛta, or *Murārigupta-kadacā*), Mukunda Paṇḍita's *Gaurāṅgodaya*, *Caitanya-carita*, Vṛndāvanadāsa's *Caitanya-bhāgavata*, Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja's *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, Kavi Karṇapūra's *Caitanya-candrodaya*, Locanadāsa's *Caitanya-maṅgala*, Īśāna Nāgara's *Advaita-prakāśa*, etc.

the street or to the bank of the Ganges, *i.e.*, the *Bhāgīrathī*. If he saw anyone following him, he scampered off on all fours as fast as he could, to avoid being caught. The sight was, indeed, pleasant to see him moving about on his knees and hands, and Śacī would often set him down in the yard, and, with her companions, stand motionless to enjoy the spectacle.

As soon as he had learned to walk, Jagannātha, Śacī, and Viśvarūpa, together with their relations and neighbours, were in a state of constant anxiety on his account, fearing that he should steal away and be lost in the crowded streets. One day he actually seized a serpent (cobra), after which he was guarded with still greater care. Nevertheless, on another day, a great danger befell him. A thief named Mekh Mallī, finding the child alone, with gold ornaments on his person, carried him away with the intention of robbing and murdering him. Search was made for the child, but he was nowhere to be found. Eventually, when they were about to give up the search as being hopeless, he returned suddenly and ran into the arms of his father. On being asked where he had been, he replied that someone had taken him away, and then brought him back. The carrying away of the child formed a turning point in the life of the fortunate thief. As soon as he had placed the boy on his shoulders, an uncontrollable influence came over him. The idea of killing such a lovely being sent a shudder through his frame. He gradually came to perceive clearly how wicked and heartless a wretch he had been all the days of his life. His first impulse was to leave the child at his father's house. Having done this, he resolved to atone for his previous sins by a life of rigid penance and austerity. His earthly desires all forsook him, and he relinquished the world to lead the life of a religious recluse. He was afterwards regarded with great veneration as a saint.

The boy, it is true, was in human form, but he was not, as has been said before, quite like other children. A complexion resembling molten gold is a poet's creation, but in the case of little Nimāi, it proved to be a reality. The palms of his hands and the soles of his feet were, as it were, painted with fresh vermilion. When he ran about, it seemed as if blood was oozing out of the soles of his feet. His features were beautifully formed. The contour of his body was simply perfect. The movement of every limb, the glance of his eyes, his smile and his speech were all equally graceful. His fascinating face, free from the slightest defect, was, as it were, the masterwork of a sculptor of the highest genius. His lips were ruddy, like the ripe *bimba* fruit; but his eyes were perhaps more lovely than any other part of his body. No one, who had not seen the boy, could believe that a human being could have eyes so divinely beautiful. His eyes, elongated like the petals of a lotus, slightly tinged with red, seemed as if "moist with lotus honey." Everyone who looked at the child, felt an attraction towards him, and instinctively asked himself: "Is he a human child, or a child of the Gods, fallen from heaven?"

There was another charm possessed by the child, which made anyone that caressed him, feel a thrill of joy pass through his frame. On this account anyone who happened to take him in his or her arms, was unwilling to set him down again. Śacī, therefore, was allowed but limited opportunities of enjoying the pleasure of keeping the boy in her arms.

Besides, from the time of the child's birth, Jagannātha, Śacī and other near relatives began to witness many supernatural incidents. While the boy slept, something like a moon was, now and then, seen shining on his breast. Sometimes he was seen enveloped with a light which looked like lightning or electricity. Sometimes Śacī would see the room filled with luminous figures, and in her alarm call her husband. She would sometimes think that they were thieves or evil spirits. In order that the latter might do no harm to the child, she would tie a knot on his head with a thread as a charm, or, blowing with the mouth on his body, pronounce *mantras*, invoking divine protection for every part thereof.

One night, as the boy slept in her room, Śacī beheld luminous figures surrounding and apparently caressing him. Accustomed to such sights, she was not as alarmed as before, but rousing the child she told him to go to his father who was lying in another room, and sleep there, hoping that no mishap would occur to him if he were with his father. She called out to her husband to take the boy to his room. But as the boy proceeded to his father's she heard the sound of musical anklets such as are worn by children, but which Nimāi, was not wearing. She eagerly ran to see whence the exquisite sound proceeded, and found that Jagannātha was coming out to take the child to his own apartment. He too had heard the sound. Thus both Śacī and Jagannātha heard the music proceeding from the bare feet of Nimāi. Śacī followed Nimāi, and the father and mother then lulled him to sleep. They began to talk about him. Jagannātha said that these sounds of musical anklets indicated that Gopāla³ (God in the form of a child) was present in the person of the boy. But Śacī, actuated by motherly affection, did not think herself at all honoured by the suggestion, and replied, "Whatsoever it may be, may no evil betide my little Nimāi!"

Whatever might happen in his sleeping room, the boy Nimāi was quite like other boys when engaged in play. He used to play all day long. He would not learn the alphabet, though requested to do so by his parents. He would do nothing but play. Śacī was pained, and her motherly vanity was hurt. She would neatly dress her beautiful child, but the restless boy would proceed immediately to play and besmear his whole body with dust. Again would his mother wash him and adorn his person, and again, in an instant, he would do as before.

Nimāi is not in the house. After much search Śacī discovers him, his face

³Gopāla is Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who is always represented as wearing musical anklets.

pale from hunger and thirst, and covered with drops of sweat from exposure to the sun. She says to her son, "My foolish child, you must be famished with hunger, and your face is discoloured from the heat of the sun. When will you learn to take care of yourself?" But Nimāi does not give up his play. Either Śacī gets hold of the boy and drags him home or else the boy runs away. In the latter case, she pursues the child, but it is not in her power to catch swift-footed Nimāi. Desisting from the pursuit, she gives way to tears. Thereupon Nimāi runs back to her and throws his arms round her neck. He could not bear to see tears in the eyes of his mother.

In the evening, before Nimāi went to sleep, Śacī enjoyed a few moments of supreme happiness, for then the mother had sole possession of her child.

There was extraordinary skill in the way Nimāi danced. Men and women of the neighbourhood offered him sweetmeats and fruits simply to induce him to dance for them. When he danced, it seemed as if some invisible influence impelled him and that he had no control over his movements, in which there was a grace not earthly but divine. The sight had an extraordinary effect upon the beholders. It imparted a thrill of joy, so intense as to bring tears to their eyes; and it filled their hearts with religious feelings of the purest kind, such as reverence and love for God, together with a sense of the nothingness of worldly things.

Those who saw him dance, felt an inclination to join with him, but were dissuaded from it by a sense of shame, for dancing was not permitted in genteel society. There was, as has been stated, something divine in the dance of Nimāi. A boy but four years old, perfectly healthy and exquisitely beautiful, with faultless limbs, a countenance bright as the moon, a well-formed chest, a slender waist, tightly wrapped round with a piece of cloth, his cheeks and forehead elegantly painted with white *alakā*, his hair carefully combed and tied into a knot and adorned with golden flowers, Nimāi was accustomed to dance in the yard of Jagannātha Miśra's house while Śacī and her female friends enjoyed the spectacle, keeping time with their hands. Presently tears of joy would appear in their eyes. They were enraptured with the sight, and at length losing all consciousness of the material world, beheld nothing but a graceful figure of gold dancing before them. Their hearts moved with the graceful motions of Nimāi, and they felt that there was nothing but joy in the world, and that the whole universe was dancing with the golden child. They then unconsciously found themselves overpowered by a feeling of reverence for God. They came to feel that it was joy everywhere, that God himself was joy, and that the dancing Nimāi was a witness to that fact.

In the midst of his playmates he would dance sometimes of his own accord. When Nimāi danced, elderly people, men and women, felt, as we said before, an impulse to dance with him, but resisted the influence. Children, however, did not, for they could not, resist. They felt the impulse and al-

lowed themselves to be led by it. They danced with Nimāi, with uplifted hands, as Nimāi did, exclaiming “Hari, Hari!” They themselves and those who witnessed the scene, were overpowered by devotional feelings. Sometimes Nimāi would roll on the ground in the ecstasy of his feelings, and some of his playmates would follow his example, as if inspired by an uncontrollable influence. Those who had succeeded in resisting the impulse to join in the dance, fell and rolled upon the ground, if Nimāi embraced or even touched them! Whenever Śacī heard shouts of Haribala, she knew that Nimāi was engaged in his wild play, and running to him, would take him up in her arms, rub the dust from his body, and bring him home.

One day he was seen to dance with unusual excitement. He was then four years old. Nimāi and other boys, at his bidding, adorned themselves with garlands of wild flowers. They danced keeping time with their hands and shouting “Haribala.” They began without method, but soon a definite system marked their dance. Nimāi stood in the middle, and his companions danced round him holding each another’s hands.⁴ A learned and grave old man, who chanced to be passing at the time, stopped to witness the fun, but strange to say, losing his self-control, immediately began to dance, precisely in the same manner, with uplifted arms, and exclaiming “Haribala.” Śacī hearing shouts of “Haribala” immediately came to the spot and took her child away. On her lifting up the child, the spell was broken, and the learned old man fled abashed, not knowing how to account for the temporary aberration that had seized him!

Śacī, blinded by motherly affection, believed that her son was naturally a quiet boy, and that it was his turbulent playmates who made him wild. One night she failed to lull her child to sleep. He stood on his mother’s breast, and taking hold of her hands began to swing his body like a pendulum. Śacī asked: “Are you not a mad boy to behave in the way you do?” “No, mother,” replied Nimāi, “everyone is mad save myself.” Śacī was struck with the answer, as coming from a boy of four. She called her husband and addressed him thus: “Hear what the mad boy Nimāi says, that everyone is mad except himself!”

Nimāi was not yet five years old. At that age almost every child in Nadia was at school, except Nimāi, and this the father did not relish. One day Jagannātha, with a stick in his hand, rushed in an angry mood to the riverside, where the boy was engaged in play. Śacī ran after him to protect Nimāi. At the sight of his angry father, with a stick in his hand, the child concealed himself behind his mother. Frowning at the child, Jagannātha said to Śacī: “Let him go. You are spoiling the boy.” Śacī snatched away the stick from the not-unwilling hand of her husband. Nimāi kept on crying. Jagannātha’s heart was touched. He opened his arms to him, and taking the boy, pressed

⁴Of course, this reminds us of the *Rāsa* or ecstatic [circle] dance of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, a short description of which has been given before.

him to his bosom, and kissed his face over and over again, and said: "I must be a very cruel man to make Nimāi cry thus." Thus indulged, as a matter of course, Nimāi continued to neglect his studies.

Nimāi cherished some fear for his father and elder brother, but none for his mother, whom he seemed to treat more as a child than as the venerable lady she was. Though only five years old, he now and then gave evidence of possessing the wisdom of a sage. On such occasions Śacī would be seized with the suspicion that Nimāi was somebody else and not really her child; that his childish demeanour was all assumed to deceive her; and that his tricks on her were played with a purpose. But this suspicion never lasted for a very great length of time.

His mother was, like all Hindu ladies of high caste, a keen observer of outward purity. But to tease her, he would touch a thing or person which or whom it was an abomination to touch. Śacī would at this be sorely annoyed. Sometimes she would scold him, but Nimāi was not to be persuaded out of his unruly ways. Used earthen cooking-pots are considered impure and should not be touched. Nimāi having made a pile of them stood upon it. Śacī, who was greatly scandalized, reproved him, saying, "Are you not ashamed of yourself—you who, being a Brahmin's son, have allowed yourself to come in contact with such foul things?" Nimāi gravely answered: "The idea of external purity is a delusion."

Śacī was surprised to hear such a remark from a boy of five. At that moment Nimāi did not seem to her to be a boy of five, but a sage advanced in years. She felt for the moment that she was only a witless woman, and her son her wise preceptor. But soon the boyish conduct of Nimāi made her forget her mistake.

Śacī often gazed at her child with a tender look as if to devour his beauty, and whenever Nimāi perceived this he wantonly and deliberately turned his face away from her. As Nimāi continued the practice, simple-minded Śacī at last came to understand that her son, knowing her intentions, was playing tricks on her. She of course, felt hurt. The voice of Nimāi was sweeter than music; and Śacī, whenever she found an opportunity, tried to make him speak. Simply for this purpose she would tease him with questions. Nimāi, knowing his mother's object, would close his lips and would refuse to utter a word. "Now, what is the matter, Nimāi?" asks Śacī. "Why don't you speak?" But Nimāi replies by a provoking smile. Śacī returns to the charge. "Nimāi," says she, "you don't speak to me now; I am sure you will not maintain me when I am old." Nevertheless Nimāi does not speak. Śacī continues, "Nimāi, when I am dead, you shall be an orphan and walk the streets hungry and uncared for." Thus they contended incessantly, mother and son.

Sometimes when Nimāi sorely taxed her patience Śacī would pursue him with a rod in her hand. The naughty child, thus pursued, would run into

the midst of cast-away earthen cooking-pots, where, of course, Śacī could not follow him. The fact was, the great importance that Śacī attached to external purity, did not meet with the approval of Nimāi, child though he was. And mother and son lived in a state of constant discord in regard to this matter. A Chamar is a man of low caste, whose touch is considered an abomination; but Nimāi would touch such people in spite of the loud protestations of his mother. After thus polluting himself, Nimāi would pursue his mother. One who has touched a Chamar and not bathed, remains unclean, and is not permitted to touch one of a clean caste. Śacī would, under such circumstances, fly before the pursuit of Nimāi, and entering the house, close the door against him. One day he actually brought a puppy home. A dog is an unclean animal according to Hindu notions, and Śacī was scandalized.

Another cause of discord between mother and son was that the former wanted her child to deport himself as quietly and decently as the child of a learned Brahmin and *savant* was expected to do. But Nimāi was unruly, and loved all sorts of sports. His energy was untiring, and he did many things that shocked his mother's notions of propriety. She gradually came to believe that either her son was a little wrong in the head or was possessed by some evil spirit. One consolation she had, namely, that her child loved her intensely and devotedly.

While yet not more than five years old, he one day began to cry, and his father and mother tried to quiet him. They uttered the name of Hari, which, though it usually acted upon him like a charm, produced no effect on this occasion. The parents were alarmed, for they feared the child would soon fall into a swoon. The mother, in an agonising tone, asked the child: "Why do you break our hearts thus? Tell us what it is that you want." Nimāi, in the midst of the sobs, gave his reply: "I want all the offerings which Jagadīśa and Hiranya, have prepared for presentation to God."

Now, Jagadīśa and Hiranya were two neighbours of Jagannātha who had, on the eleventh day of the moon as was the custom, prepared some offerings for Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and Nimāi now wanted them all!

The request of Nimāi surprised them. How could a child of five know that it was the eleventh day of the moon, and that on that particular day some Brahmins made offerings to God? And how could he know that the two Brahmins had prepared the offerings? For, all Brahmins did not observe the ceremony. Now, it would have been a sacrilege to give to a child offerings intended for Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Śacī and Jagannātha, therefore, did not know how to get out of the difficulty. They suggested that they should fetch for him better articles than the offerings for which he was crying. But Nimāi would have those things, or nothing at all.

The affairs came to the notice of the two Brahmins, who hastened to see what the real matter was. They saw that the child, with his exquisite beauty,

had become still more beautiful under the excitement of his feelings. They felt that it was impossible for a boy so young to play of his own accord the part he was doing; and the idea took possession of their minds that the infant Kṛṣṇa (who is named Bāla-Gopāla), must have been struck with the beauty of the child and made his body his tenement. It was no doubt Bāla-Gopāla who was demanding the offerings, thought they. They had prepared the offerings, for him (Śrī Kṛṣṇa), and it was he who was now claiming them through the child! The notion thrilled them with emotion. They returned, and placing the offerings before Nimāi, said: "Take them, beautiful Nimāi! And let Gopāla partake of them through you." Let it be noted here, that those two Brahmins subsequently became two of the most ardent followers of Nimāi.

Of the offerings, Nimāi ate a portion, threw away some, and distributed the rest. Śacī watched the career of the child with anxiety. The idea was gathering strength in her mind, that Nimāi was either partially insane, or was under the influence of a spirit. But she did not like to express her suspicions to outsiders. She therefore sent for her sister to consult with her. When that lady came, Śacī thus unburdened her heart to the former. She said: "Sister, I do not understand why a child so good in every way, and so fair of aspect, should act so whimsically at times. Advise me what to do." The sister failed to give any advice, but suggested that she (Śacī) should take the opinions of some of the wise matrons of the neighbourhood.

This suggestion Śacī was obliged to adopt, though much against her will. The matrons came at Śacī's invitation and assembled in her house. Now, these matrons had *savants* for their husbands, and they themselves had passed their days in the midst of intellectual conversations. That being the case, they fancied that they were competent enough to settle the matter, and so, without any misgivings, sat in judgment on the naughty acts of Nimāi.

Śacī related the tale of her sorrow, with an abundance of tears. She said that her boy was very affectionate, and that he appeared to be very intelligent also. "Nor do I blame him," she added "for smashing the domestic utensils now and then, for every child does it. But alas! He has no reverence for the gods, and is sacrilegious enough to partake of offerings intended for them. He has, besides, no idea that cooked food is impure. Indeed, ridiculous as it may appear, the child would seem to have an opinion of his own on this point. He has an utter contempt for the notion that it pollutes a man to touch impure men or things. If I scold him for the outrages he commits, he stops me by declaring that he is the Lord, and that anything impure becomes holy by his touch!" Everyone present perceived that it pained the good lady very much to prefer, to outsiders, such serious charges against her beloved child.

The elderly ladies at once voted that the question before them was a serious one. They inquired how and when this change had come over the boy. Śacī answered, "I must tell you all. On a certain night some luminous fig-

ures were bending over Nimāi while he slept as if caressing him. The change was apparently brought about by their influence.” The matrons, after some consultation, unanimously came to the conclusion that it was all the work of evil spirits. As chance would have it, Nimāi just then appeared on the scene, and the matron who was presiding over this assembly of ladies accosted him. “Nimāi,” said she, “you are the son of a Brahmin and a learned man: how is it that you have no respect either for the gods or for the Brahmins?” Thereupon Nimāi, with a mocking smile, replied, “I revere none, everyone should revere me!”

Śacī was shocked, especially as the blasphemy was committed before so many witnesses. She exclaimed, “Listen to what he says”; and feeling that Nimāi must have highly offended the gods, she tried to appease them by appealing to their mercy, saying, “All the gods are like jewels on my head. I revere them all.” Then casting her eyes upward and joining her hands, she addressed all the gods in the universe in these words: “O, ye dwellers in Heaven! Take no offence at the words of my wild boy. He knows not what he says.” She then burst into tears. The fact is, Śacī would not have been so alarmed had she been able to satisfy her conscience that her boy was not responsible for his actions. But she suspected in her heart of hearts that her boy, though so young, had full knowledge of what he was doing!

After prolonged deliberation, the wise matrons, having come to the decision that all this was the work of evil spirits, recommended that a ceremony should be duly performed for the reformation and future welfare of the child, and that the goddess Śaṣṭhī (protectress of children) should be induced by offerings to pay special regard to his protection.

Śacī approved of the advice. But what if Nimāi should commit the further sacrilege of partaking of the offerings prepared for the goddess? And if Nimāi saw the offerings and ate any portion thereof, would not Śaṣṭhī, instead of doing him any good, do him all the mischief she was capable of? She therefore, undertook to prepare the offerings with the utmost secrecy. This she succeeded in doing, and then with the offerings concealed in the folds of her *sārī*, proceeded by a private path towards the place of worship. When she had gone a long way from home, she began to think she had succeeded in eluding Nimāi. But lo! No sooner had the thought crossed her mind than she found the child before her. Whether it was her confusion that betrayed her, or that Nimāi, being all-knowing, knew all, he confidently confronted his mother and asked her to declare what she was carrying concealed in the folds of her *sārī*. Śacī found herself in an inextricable difficulty. She could only stammer out, “My dear child, go home.” “But what are you carrying with you?” re-iterated Nimāi. “Sweet-meats, no doubt. I am very very hungry, mother, give some to me.” Śacī, in anguish of her heart, exclaimed:

“My boy, you ought not to say so, for the sweetmeats are meant for the

goddess Śaṣṭhī. When I have offered them to her, I promise I shall give you sweetmeats and fruits in plenty.” “But I am hungry, mother. I can’t wait so long.” So saying, he snatched away a portion of the offerings and ran off!

A thunderbolt, as it were, fell upon Śacī’s head, and she cried out in sorrow and anger: “Are you not a Brahmin’s son? I shall throw myself into the Ganges, and thus put an end to my life.” “Console yourself, mother,” said Nimāi, “I assure you, Śaṣṭhī will be highly pleased if I eat them.” Śacī said: “Your conduct, little rogue that you are, will bring ruin upon you.” Then weeping, in the bitterness of her heart, she repaired to the Goddess Śaṣṭhī, knelt before her and prayed to her that her son, wicked as he was, might yet be forgiven his sacrilegious audacity.

Whether the sacrilegious conduct of Nimāi really offended Śaṣṭhī or not, cannot be determined, but it is certain that the offerings for the goddess did the boy no evident good. Neither the grace of Śaṣṭhī, nor the ceremonies performed by Śacī changed his wayward disposition in the least. Murāri Gupta, an inhabitant of Śrīhaṭṭa (Sylhet), was at this time residing in Navadvīpa. He was a student in the grammar *ṭola* of Gaṅgadāsa, though he also practised as a physician. He had already obtained a footing in that great city, at the early age of twenty. He was a kindly-disposed, quiet youth of great worth and physical strength. He had studied the Sanskrit work *Yogavāsiṣṭha*, and imbibed the doctrines inculcated therein.⁵

One day Murāri, while proceeding on his way, was discussing with some friends the philosophy of *Yogavāsiṣṭha*. He was speaking with some warmth, and gave emphasis to his ideas by shaking his head and waving his hand. Just at this moment, he heard a peal of laughter behind him. He looked back and saw that he was being followed by Nimāi and his companions. The former was imitating the student’s voice and gestures, while his companions were being thrown into fits of laughter by his audacious mimicry. Murāri doubtless resented the impertinent conduct of Nimāi; but, being of a serious turn of mind, he said nothing, and immediately resumed the discussion. But as soon as he did so, Nimāi returned to his mimicry, and the result was the renewed merriment of the other boys! Murāri losing his patience, turned to his ridiculer and remarked: “How rude and unmannerly of Jagannātha’s son! What a perverted child!” Nimāi being offended by these observations, said, addressing Murāri, “I will teach you a lesson at your dinner time.” Murāri, of course, did not pay any regard to this threat. Indeed, he forgot all about it in a few minutes.

When Murāri sat down to eat his meals, he heard a child’s sweet voice calling him by name from outside; and in a moment afterwards, the charming little figure of Nimāi stood before him, looking down at his plate of rice.

⁵This highly philosophical work taught the seemingly atheistical doctrine of the Advaitavādins which is, he [God] and I are the same.

Murāri having just glanced at the intruder, unconcernedly resumed his meal. But Nimāi was there with an object in view. When the physician had almost finished it, the child in the execution of his threat uttered in the morning, performed a certain natural office upon the contents of the philosopher's plate!

For a moment, Murāri was stunned with surprise and indignation. But Nimāi, after a short pause, aroused him from his stupor by addressing him in these unexpected terms: "Murari," said he, "give up teaching your false and dangerous philosophy and learn to worship Śrī Hari with your whole heart and soul. Thus do I treat the plate of rice of him who pretends to believe that he is the self-same with God Almighty." So saying, quick as a flash of lightning, he vanished!

The conduct of Nimāi had a wonderful effect upon Murāri. He was scandalized and enraged for a moment. But a little reflection enabled him to realize the situation, namely, that it was simply impossible for an ordinary child of five to administer so weightily a lesson.⁶ A thrill passed through his frame; a sudden idea seemed to have overtaken him, and he felt a joy, such as he had never experienced before. The idea filled his mind that it was Bāla-Gopāla, that is, the Child Kṛṣṇa, who had spoken to him through his little visitor.

Impelled by this conviction he hastened to the residence of Jagannātha Miśra and prostrated himself at the feet of the boy! But Nimāi retreated behind his mother and screened himself within the folds of her clothes. Jagannātha was no less astonished than shocked to see a full-grown man and one so universally respected, doing reverence to his child. He therefore protested with vehemence against this act of Murāri, saying, "What are you doing, my good physician? Do you mean to bring evil upon my boy by prostrating yourself before him? For, as you are aware, when a superior bows down before an inferior he brings misfortune upon the latter." "Miśra!" said Murāri, "you will soon know who your son is."

⁶Let it be borne in mind that one of the cardinal doctrines of the religion taught by Nimāi (Śrī Gaurāṅga) was love and reverence for God, and as Murāri's teasing was quite the opposite, viz., that man being equal with God could gain nothing by revering him, Nimāi wished to show his utter contempt for the philosopher's doctrine by what he did.

Chapter Two: Viśvarūpa and Advaita

We have already alluded to Viśvarūpa, the elder brother of Nimāi. He was now sixteen and Nimāi six years of age. His surpassing personal attractions, his acute intelligence and profound learning, made him the observed of all observers in Nadia. Coming in contact with Advaita Ācārya of Śāntipūra, he attached himself to him. He, with Advaita, deplored the wickedness of men, and prayed for the advent of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Unlike the frolicsome youngsters who surrounded him, Viśvarūpa was of a serious turn of mind. He ate and slept but little, and in the company of Advaita and the latter's followers, he was accustomed to pass his days and nights in devotional exercises. From Advaita the others had imbibed the notion that the All-merciful Śrī Kṛṣṇa, seeing the pitiful condition of his children, was coming, or was already come upon the earth.

Before Nimāi's birth Viśvarūpa having no brother or sister, his whole affection was centered on a cousin, younger than himself, named Lokanātha, the son of his maternal uncle and grand-child of Nīlāmbara. When Nimāi was born the joy of Viśvarūpa knew no bounds; and, as a matter of course, he grew very fond of his younger brother. As Nimāi grew older, he too became more and more attached to his elder brother.

After his acquaintance with Advaita, Viśvarūpa soon became a great favorite of that saint, and of the other members of his religious fraternity. Viśvarūpa, on his part, was highly pleased with the religious truths propounded by Advaita. He therefore passed the greater part of his time in the company of that great believer in the religion of faith, reverence, and love.

When Viśvarūpa studied at the *ṭola* he came home every afternoon; but when he became a member of Advaita's association, he oftentimes forgot to come home for his mid-day meals. Nimāi, then a boy, was often sent to Advaita's house to call his brother home. The child Nimāi was so engaging and attractive that Advaita and his companions would often gaze at him with admiration. "This boy draws my heart towards him; I wonder, why," thought

Advaita.

When Viśvarūpa was about sixteen, Jagannātha contemplated having him married, which coming to the knowledge of the young lad, the intelligence literally stunned him.

A worldly life had lost all attraction for him, and he had resolved not to marry. “Why should I, by marrying, chain myself to the earth?”—said he. “Life is short; I have scarcely sufficient time for devotion. Certainly I have no time to marry and thereby perhaps forget God.” On the other hand, should he disobey his father and mother it would be a serious breach of duty, of which Viśvarūpa could never be guilty. What then would he do under the circumstances? He determined upon leaving home and relinquishing the world altogether.

His quitting home would certainly be a great blow to his affectionate parents; but he felt that, though his desertion must make them unhappy for a time, it would eventually tend to their real welfare, since, as the *śāstras*, sacred texts, teach, if one individual in a family becomes a *sannyāsin* the whole family is saved thereby. There was yet one more great objection to his going; the thought of leaving Nimāi behind him weighed heavily on his heart. Besides, in his absence, the education of his younger brother would be neglected and he would be literally without a guardian. But leave the world he must, being convinced that his remaining in it would lead to his spiritual ruin.

Having made up his mind to go, he called his mother aside and said to her: “When Nimāi grows up kindly give him this book,” saying which he attempted to hand it over to her. But Śacī, startled by his words, replied, “What do you mean? You may give him the book yourself.”

Whereupon Viśvarūpa said: “I would prefer that you should keep it for him, mother. If I live and the opportunity offers, I shall ask you for it at the proper time and myself give it to him, but, mother, life is insecure.” The simple-hearted Śacī was thus prevailed upon to accept the book, which she kept by her in a safe place, wondering what her son meant.

Viśvarūpa having told his cousin, Lokanātha, of his intention of retiring from the world, the latter, who had the highest respect for Viśvarūpa on account of his many superior qualities, expressed his determination to accompany him, and to this Viśvarūpa reluctantly assented.

Viśvarūpa, then a boy of sixteen, and his cousin, Lokanātha, younger than himself, occupied the same room in the house of Jagannātha. Having fixed upon a certain night for their departure, they retired to their bed-room at the usual hour, but did not sleep, and at midnight got up and went forth to the compound. From there Viśvarūpa, having bowed to his sleeping parents, and prayed to Śrī Kṛṣṇa that he might protect his younger brother, started off in the cold, star-lit air, accompanied by his boy-companion, and proceeded

fast towards the river. A ferry boat at that hour was not to be had. Besides, the lads had no wish to leave a clue to their movements behind them. They, therefore, swam across the river, and thence, with their wet clothes on, walked in a westwardly direction rapidly, in order to elude pursuit. The only property that Viśvarūpa carried with him was a copy of the *Bhagavad-gītā* which, while crossing the river, he held above water with his left hand; while he swam with the right! Viśvarūpa was prepared for even a greater sacrifice. Day after day they journeyed on, still in a westerly direction, now passing through wilderness, and now through inhabited plains, relying for their subsistence on the charity of the villagers, and suffering untold hardships and privation, until they became acquainted with an ascetic of the Purī sect, by whom, after a short time, Viśvarūpa was initiated as one of the order with the title of Śaṅkarāraṇya Purī. The initiation of Viśvarūpa entitled him to initiate others, and Lokanātha was in due course initiated by him. Lokanātha thus became the bearer of his *guru*'s (Viśvarūpa's) staff and water pot. These two young lads, who had never before known what misery was, now suddenly found themselves cast upon the world, without a home, without friends, and without any means of support.

On the day after they left, Śacī and Jagannātha came to know that Viśvarūpa had left home and society to lead a life of austerity in the wilderness. The news stunned the parents. They, however, admired the sacrifice, and loved him the more for it. A young lad of sixteen, without food or shelter, in the wilderness,—a tender youth, reared in comfort, now an ascetic,—formed a picture which moved the entire town of Nadia. They reflected on his surpassing loveliness, his uncommon learning, and his unblemished and noble character, and keenly felt the loss of such an estimable model young man. As for Śacī and Jagannātha, they hardly knew how they should live without their beloved son.

Friends came to console them, who suggested that one ascetic in a family ensured the salvation of all; but not even the recognition of this fact could succeed in calming their anguished feelings. Their hearts were chastened by the affliction, and Jagannātha prayed to God that his child might have the grace to keep his vow! Reader, do you understand what this means? Viśvarūpa had taken the vow of renunciation, which means that he had sworn never to possess any property, or hold communication with women or worldly men. He was prohibited under his vow from residing in his native village, and from taking any food that he might specially like, or which was particularly good to taste. To this hard life Viśvarūpa had consecrated himself. If, after having taken the vow of renunciation, a man returns to society, he becomes an apostate, or what is called a “fallen” man, forsaken both of man and God. Very naturally, if Jagannātha had listened to the dictates of his heart, he would have directed his son to return; but then that would have

been doing an injury to the latter. So Jagannātha sacrificed his own feelings for the benefit of his son, and prayed to God thus: “O merciful Lord! My heart yearns after my boy. I, a frail man, cannot overcome nature. But do not, I beseech you, listen to me. Let not my son break his vow by returning home, thereby destroying his prospect of salvation in a future life.” Śacī had, at one time of her life, uttered a similarly disinterested prayer. The saintly chroniclers of the sports of the Lord Gaurāṅga describe the raptures in the character of both Śacī and Jagannātha, and attribute to both the possession of mental and physical graces of the highest order. As simple as children in their manners, they were yet wise and intelligent. With hearts as soft as the Śrīśa flower, they never quailed before duties which required uncommon firmness of mind. They were esteemed universally in that great city of Nādiā for their unattainable excellence. No wonder that they had such a son as Nimāi. No wonder that God Almighty should enter the womb of such a virtuous and pious woman as Śacī.

Nimāi was then about six. Hearing wailing from outside where he was playing, he came to his mother. He heard that his brother had gone away and would never return. Nimāi fainted away!

In their anxiety for Nimāi, Śacī and Jagannātha, for the time, forgot Viśvarūpa. After much tending, the child recovered his consciousness. The father and mother were deeply moved at the depth of the brotherly love displayed by Nimāi. Nimāi’s condition gave them fright; they therefore gave up their lamentation to take care of their little child. They began to console him with endearing words, and imprinted a thousand kisses on his cheeks. Nimāi was seated on the lap of his father: he seemed then to be fully aware of the circumstances which surrounded them. After much effort he said in halfchoked accents, “Oh father, oh mother! Grieve no more. I will take my brother’s place and do my duty towards you.”

Viśvarūpa became an ascetic in his sixteenth year. He departed this life, as it is stated, in a very wonderful manner at Pandarpur near Puna, two years after his initiation. Śivānanda, (more of whom hereafter) was present at the time. His son, Karṇapūra, in one of his works, writes:—“Viśvarūpa, surrounded by his disciples, disappeared from their midst in a wonderful manner. His soul took the shape of a mass of light as strong as a ‘thousand suns’ and mounted up. My father saw it.” Śivānanda came to Navadvīpa with the news; but, for obvious reasons, it was not communicated to Śacī and Jagannātha. Nineteen years later Nimāi himself visited the place where his elder brother had disappeared.

Chapter Three: Nimāi Sees Spiritual Viśvarūpa

The grief that overtook his parents led Nimāi to give up his sports and childish pranks. He was now rarely out of their sight and, believing that if he minded his books it would please them, he began to bestow attention on his studies. His father taught him while Nimāi sat on his lap, and Śacī watched him with tender interest. The parents were very much consoled by this change in the wild boy, and by the ardent solicitude that he displayed in assuaging their grief. But an incident, fraught with important results, spoiled the happy arrangement. One day Nimāi chewed a betel which formed a part of the offerings that had been presented to the household deity, and he instantly fainted away! His parents, however, accustomed to such fits, were not very much alarmed. They did all that lay in their power to bring him back to his senses. On coming round Nimāi told a very strange story. He said, “My brother Visvarup took me away and asked me to relinquish the world like him. I answered by saying to him that, ‘Being a mere boy I do not understand what it is to become a Sannyasi. I shall remain and serve my father, mother, and above all, God.’ Thereupon he said to me, ‘Very well, return and tender my salutation to our parents.’ Thus saying he brought me home, and then left me.”

Śacī and Jagannātha heard him with joy, not unmixed with sorrow. They were glad, because it was to them like news from their lost son, and they were glad that he continued to love them. They were, however, alarmed at the attempt made by Viśvarūpa to take Nimāi away from them. Śacī soon forgot this cause of alarm, but Jagannātha Miśra brooded over it day and night, and at last resolved to stop the education of Nimāi! He urged the matter in this wise: “Education opened the eyes of Viśvarūpa to the vanity of the world, and drove him from home to devote himself exclusively to the culture of his spiritual nature. Education will similarly affect Nimāi, and he may, like his brother, leave this world when quite a boy.” One morning he said to his son,—“Child, put an end to your studies. If you have the least

affection for me, do not disregard my injunction.”

Dutiful Nimāi did not disobey his father’s command: he stopped his studies and returned to his previous wild habits. Formerly he played at or near home, but now he extended his range to the whole town. Formerly his play was like that of a little child, but now it was that of a boy. He went out to bathe in the river, and did not return soon. Decent people were much annoyed by his frolics in the river. He would dive into the water and pull even elderly people by their legs. He would take away the flowers meant for religious purposes and worship himself with them; he would also sometimes himself worship the gods with the flowers intended for religious ceremonies; and sometimes he would actually eat up the offerings intended for the gods.

If Śacī bore his frolics patiently, the neighbours refused to do so. Complaint after complaint against him reached Jagannātha, who appeased the complaints by entreaties. Women and young girls likewise besieged Śacī with similar complaints, and she humbly asked them to excuse the wayward child. Sometimes Śacī chided Nimāi; sometimes she threatened him with punishment. On such occasions Nimāi replied—“Why, you are determined that I should be a dunce, and I must act as such.” This retort from the child cut Śacī to the quick, and she suggested to her husband that the child was wild simply because he was not permitted to read. But Jagannātha was inexorable in his determination.

It must be stated, however, that though Nimāi played all sorts of pranks on his neighbours, he never did any serious mischief to anybody. On the contrary, his pranks caused more merriment than anger. His jokes made his victims laugh with him. But, as has been stated, complaints were constantly reaching Śacī about her son’s conduct, and the proud mother did not like it. Besides she had no faith in the policy of her husband, though she did not venture to expostulate with him for it.

One day Śacī was so angry that she actually took a cane in her hand to punish her boy and this led Nimāi to fly before her and seek refuge in the midst of cast-away cooking pots. In that impregnable fort sat Nimāi defiant! “Come, you naughty boy,” said she, half threateningly and half coaxingly. Without deigning a reply Nimāi began to sing a song. Śacī then wept. This sight Nimāi could not bear. He felt that he was defeated. Said he: “Why do you weep, mother? You wish that I should not misbehave. Is it not so? But how am I to distinguish evil from good without education! You are determined to make me a dunce, and I will show you what a happy life the parents may expect who have a dunce for a son.”

Said some other ladies who had now joined Śacī, “How foolish you are! Most children require to be driven to school, while your child is fretting his life away because you do not allow him to read. You will best serve your own interests and his by letting him have his way in this matter.”

Śacī pondered. She too agreed with this view. She promised to procure, if possible, the desired permission from her husband, whereupon Nimāi agreed to come forth from his position among the midst of the earthen pots, the touch of which was an abomination.

Agreeable to the wishes of his neighbours and his wife, Jagannātha allowed Nimāi to resume his studies. Nimāi at once gave up his wild habits and devoted himself to his books. His intellect surprised everyone. He read and mastered in a surprisingly short time whatever he was taught.

When Nimāi was nine years of age, his father proposed to invest his boy with the sacred thread. The ceremony was performed with some pomp. For the purpose of the ceremony he was, as is usual, made a juvenile *sādhū*, and initiated as a Brahmin with the sacred *gāyatrī* by his father himself. With his head shaved, his body scrupulously clean and dressed in the garments of a servant of the Lord, he looked the personification of *bhakti* itself. People gazed at him with reverence and admiration. Was he Bāla-Gopāla himself?—was the idea which presented itself to the minds of many, while others thought that he was some other god who had taken human shape with some unknown object in view. While in this state of mind, the spectators beheld a wonderful sight. For, as soon as the father breathed the sacred verse of initiation into his ears, Nimāi fainted away with a scream! His every hair stood on end, and a supernatural effulgence shone forth from his body and limbs. Tears began to stream from his eyes in such a manner as to wet the ground beneath him.

As the boy fainted away in the midst of a large number of people, there was some confusion at first. But the wonderful spectacle soon hushed them into silence, and gradually moved them to tears. They were overpowered by a feeling of *bhakti*, i.e., loving devotion to God. At that moment, it appeared to most of the spectators that the boy was no other than Bāla-Kṛṣṇa or the boy-Kṛṣṇa himself. The learned Brahmins present had a consultation amongst themselves as to the cause of the phenomenon before them. It was agreed amongst them that Śrī Kṛṣṇa, seeing the boy so divinely beautiful, had taken possession of his body in order to manifest himself to men. All available means were adopted to bring the boy back to his senses; and when eventually he had regained consciousness, the spectators felt disposed to question him as to the cause of his swoon. But the appearance of the boy was so awe-inspiring that they did not venture on the familiarity.

He was then taken to a secluded place and kept there, as was the custom. When the period of seclusion was over, friends, according to custom, came to present him with alms or presents. A poor Brahmin, having nothing else to present, gave him a nut to chew. Nimāi accepted the nut and began to chew it. While doing so he called his mother to him. She came at once; but the appearance of her child bewildered and somewhat frightened her. She

had no doubt in her mind that it was her boy who was sitting before her. But, at the same time, she could hardly venture to think that he was her son. For the child was enveloped with a halo of powerful light, observing which Śacī stood awe-stricken and trembling before him.

Nimāi addressed his mother with exceeding gravity: “I am leaving this body. I shall come again. The body I am leaving behind me is your son, whom you should tend with great tenderness when I am gone.”¹ So saying, Nimāi made an effort to bow to his mother; but before he could fully perform this act, he became unconscious. The boy then, to all intents and purposes, seemed dead. Śacī, alarmed, sprinkled water on his face, called him loudly by his name, and by this and other means succeeded in restoring him to consciousness. As soon as Nimāi had fallen down in a swoon, the light which had shone from his body, left him, and the halo which had surrounded his head disappeared, and with it disappeared his awful and reverence-inspiring aspect. Śacī was relieved to find her son restored again to his natural state.

This incident is recorded in Murārigupta’s notes, and he discourses on the matter at some length.² The incident suggests the following questions: Who was Nimāi, the son of Śacī? Who was he that came and disappeared? We shall leave these questions alone for the present, and take them up hereafter in their proper place. We shall here only mention the fact that he who said, “I shall come again” did come, and did then disclose his identity. Jagannātha, who was absent, when informed of this wonderful incident, asked Nimāi to explain it. Nimāi replied that he knew nothing of the sayings attributed to him; and Jagannātha was convinced that Nimāi did know nothing of the matter.

It was now a happy time with Jagannātha. Nimāi thought of nothing but his studies, and was a very well-behaved boy. He was taught by two learned men, Paṇḍitas Sudarśana and Viṣṇu, in whose opinion, there was not a student in the world so intelligent and so keen.

¹This may either mean “always take care of the body of your son” or “revive him when I leave this body, for he will fall into a swoon.” The latter is most probably the meaning of the expression.

²Murārigupta, *Śrī Kṛṣṇacaitanya-caritāmṛta*, 1.7.18-21. Says Murāri:

ततः कदाचिन्निवसन् स्वमन्दिरे समुद्यदादित्यकरातिलोहितः ।
स्वतेजसापूरितः देह आवभावुवाच मातर्वचनं कुरुष्व मे ॥ १८ ॥
तर्ह्येव युक्तं स्वसुतं स्वतेजसा विलोक्य भीता तमुवाच विस्मिता ।
यदुच्यते तात करोमि तत्त्वया वदस्व यत्ते मनसि स्थितं स्वयम् ॥ १९ ॥
तदित्यमाकर्ण्य वचोऽमृतं पुनस्तां प्राह मातर्न हरेस्तिथौ त्वया ।
भोक्तव्यमाकर्ण्य वचः सुतस्य सा तथैति कृत्वा जगृह प्रहृष्टवत् ॥ २० ॥
विवेदितं पूगफलादिकं यत् द्विजेन भुक्त्वा पुनरब्रवीत्ताम् ।
ब्रजामि देहं परिपालयस्व सुतस्य निश्चेष्टगतं क्षणाद्धौ ॥ २० ॥

A stronger light than that of the rising red sun was emitted from and surrounded the body of young Nimāi. Seeing this godly light surrounding her son, Śacī was terrified and bewildered. Nimāi said to his mother: “Mother, I am going. Take care of the unconscious body of your son.”

Nimāi was now about eleven years old, and Śacī about fifty-two. Jagannātha had become old. He got an attack of fever, which proved fatal. The critical moment came, and the soul of Jagannātha was about to quit his body. Then Nimāi, losing his self-control, caught hold of his father's feet and wept. Said he:—"Father is a sweet word which I shall never more utter. To whose care do you leave your orphan? Who will take charge of my education?"

Jagannath, recovering for a moment, held Nimāi on to his bosom, and said: "I am going away with my desire unfulfilled: I leave you to God, my child. Pray, do not grieve at my departure." As the last word was uttered, Jagannātha departed from this world, resigned to the will of the deity.

Chapter Four: Paṇḍita Gaṅgādāsa

The knowledge that she, with her twelve-year-old child, had been left utterly unprovided for, so engrossed the mind of Śacī that she had little leisure to mourn for her departed husband. Besides, knowing the affectionate nature of her son, she endeavoured to suppress her feelings lest by giving way to them she should remind her son of his bereavement. She therefore refrained from indulging in the grief she felt for the loss of her husband. She resolved upon giving him [Nimāi] no opportunity of dwelling upon their helpless state. She had been thrown into a state of destitution, and she had to provide for them both. She therefore devoted all her energies to furthering the welfare of her boy. The household expenses were small, and she managed, one way and another, to provide for herself and her son. But she felt especially anxious about his education. After much deliberation she, with the advice of her kinsmen, placed the child under the tuition of Paṇḍita Gaṅgādāsa.

Gaṅgādāsa Bhaṭṭācārya, absolutely irreproachable in character, was unrivalled in his knowledge of Sanskrit grammar. Śacī, taking her son to him, said, with pathetic earnestness, “I make over this fatherless child to you. Teach my son. You will earn more fame and religious merit by teaching him than others, for he is an orphan.”

Gaṅgādāsa replied: “I shall think myself fortunate in having Nimāi for a pupil. You need not be anxious about his education. I shall teach him all that I can. Rest assured, fatherless as he is, that circumstance will not in any way interfere with his studies.” Nimāi bowed to his teacher, who thereupon pronounced this benediction upon him—“May you be blessed with knowledge!”

From this time Nimāi regularly prosecuted his studies at the *ṭola* of Gaṅgādāsa. Nimāi’s mental powers were extraordinary. He understood his lessons as soon as they were explained to him, so that in a short time he actually became the first student in the school, though he was not yet fourteen years.

Now, it must be borne in mind that the pupils in the foremost places were generally grown-up young men of from 25 to 30 years of age. Kamalākānta was a class-mate of Nimāi and renowned for his extraordinary knowledge of rhetoric; so was Kṛṣṇānanda, the author of *Tantrasāra*; Murārigupta also discussed with them, but none of them would condescend to argue with a boy of fourteen. Nimāi was not, however, thwarted thus. He began to tease Murāri at every opportunity in order to provoke him to an intellectual fight. In this way Murāri was at length led to hold a discussion with him. The result was that Murāri, the grown-up *paṇḍita* of some twenty summers, was defeated by the lad of 14! Murāri was surprised and stared at his antagonist. Nimāi met his gaze with a smile, and putting forth his whole hand touched his person, when, lo! the young physician, who felt a thrill of ecstasy passing through his whole frame, presented the appearance of one under the influence of a supernatural spell. This unusual experience added still more to the surprise of Murāri. He suddenly recollected the many wonderful incidents in connection with the boy which he himself and others had witnessed. He looked at Nimāi's face and found that his eyes, resembling lotus petals, beamed with love and intelligence. He thus considered: "Who may this boy be? Is he really more than human?" Be it remembered, Murāri was, by nature, a sceptic.

When Nimāi was at his studies, he went through them in right earnest. He attended school in the morning. His afternoons were devoted to the preparation of his lessons for the following day. Whenever he met a scholar out of school hours he held intellectual conversations and discussions with him. When he went to bathe in the Ganges, he had similar discussions with the students whom he came across there. After having worsted his competitors at one *ghāṭa*, he would remove to another for fresh encounters. Sometimes he would swim across the broad river to the bathing places on the opposite bank in search of new opponents.

We have stated above, that whenever he met a student in his walks he entered into argument with him. But he did not behave in exactly the same manner with every student. A Vaiṣṇava was the particular object of his attack. He never spared a Vaiṣṇava, even if he were as old as his father. It is, however, a remarkable fact that those with whom he was in apparent hostility in his youth, became his devoted adherents in after-life, and the greater had been the intensity of this apparent animosity the greater became the devotion of his victims. Kamalākānta, Kṛṣṇānanda and Murāri were his companions at school, but it was with Murāri alone that he was constantly at strife.

It was at this early age that he wrote his commentaries on the Sanskrit grammar, which gradually became popular among men of learning even at Navadvīpa, where it was no easy matter to make a new book acceptable to the public. Only the foremost amongst thousands of the most learned men

could do it.

After completing the study of grammar, he devoted himself to the study of logic, at the school of the celebrated professor of Nyāya,¹ Vāsudeva Sārvabhauma.

Nimāi, being only a boy, did not attract the notice of Vāsudeva, who was surrounded by thousands of the brightest intellects of the time. But he soon became known to the students, especially to Raghunātha, the author of the celebrated book on logic called *Didhiti*.² Anything uncommon naturally attracts the curiosity of man, and the extraordinary intellect of Nimāi attracted Raghunātha's attention. He was amazed to find in Nimāi, though much younger than himself, a rival. He had believed that he himself was the most intelligent youth in the world, even more intelligent than Sārvabhauma, his teacher; but he found his master in Nimāi, though the latter was only a very young lad. The goal of Raghu's ambition was to be the first man of learning in the world, and he had thought that the road was clear before him. But little Nimāi threatened to baffle his hopes in this direction, and the closer became their acquaintance, the more he was confirmed in his fear. It was solely owing to the amiable disposition of Nimāi that they nevertheless continued to be intimate friends.

One day Vāsudeva asked Raghunātha to explain a most abstruse and subtle logical fallacy, and it took the latter a whole day to arrive at the right answer. "Why are you cooking your food so late?" asked Nimāi of Raghunātha. In reply, Raghu said that the professor had given a very difficult problem to him to solve, and that he had determined to solve it before breaking his fast. The solution had taken him a whole day to work out, and that was the reason of his cooking late. Nimāi, with a mischievous twinkle in his eyes, said: "The problem must be a very complicated one to require a whole day for its solution from a giant of intellect like yourself. What is it, pray?"

Raghu having told him what the problem was, Nimāi gave the correct solution there and then! Raghu gazed at him in wonder and bewilderment. "This boy must be a god!" thought he. While Nimāi was studying the Nyāya philosophy he was led to write a commentary upon it. Raghu was engaged on a similar work, being busy with the composition of his great *Didhiti*. He, however, came to know that Nimāi was employed in a like undertaking. This made him nervous, and he wanted to see Nimāi's production. But he doubted whether Nimāi would agree to show it to him, knowing that he himself would not be so generous under similar circumstances. He, however, ventured to ask Nimāi, who, to his surprise, promised to read it to him when they were crossing the river on the ferry, which they had to do every day when coming

¹Nyāya is the study of logic and logical syllogisms. It is one of the six orthodox *darśanas*, or schools of Hindu philosophy. [ed.]

²This is, as mentioned before, Raghunātha's commentary on Gaṅgeśa's *Tattva-cintāmaṇi*. *Didhiti* means "ray of light." [ed.]

to the *ṭola*.

The next day, as they were crossing the river, Nimāi read out his commentary to Raghunātha. While Nimāi read, Raghunātha listened with undivided attention. Poor Raghu found, to his dismay, that Nimāi's was a masterly exposition,—concise, clear, and original. The more he heard, the more despondent he became. All hopes of occupying the first place in the world as a Professor of Nyāya faded before him slowly and surely, till, at last, in the height of his mortification, he burst into tears! Nimāi had not the least suspicion of what was working in the mind of his friend. Seeing him in tears, Nimāi, anxiously holding him in his arms, affectionately said: "Brother, what means this? What makes you weep?"

Raghunath, who could no longer conceal the cause of his vexation, replied: "Brother Nimāi, do you not understand why I am weeping? I was ambitious of obtaining the first place as a Professor of Nyāya and had put forth all my powers in an attempt to give to the world a work on that philosophy which should beat all its predecessors. But that hope is completely blasted, for my poor book must give way before yours."

Nimāi was almost moved to tears. His decision was soon made. He clasped Raghunātha's neck and said: "And is that all? Then weep no more, my brother! This Nyāya is after all a fruitless philosophy, and, as such, can neither be bad nor good. Here it goes." So saying, he flung his manuscript into the river!³ And from that moment he gave up the study of the philosophy of Nyāya. Thus Nimāi's Nyāya was lost to the world, and the *Didhiti* of Raghunātha came to be regarded as the first authority on the subject.

Nimāi now found himself strong enough to be able to start a *ṭola* for himself, and this he did in the worship-hall of a rich Brahmin named Mukunda Saṅjaya. He was then only sixteen years old, and was the youngest professor who had ever taken charge of a *ṭola*, certainly in Nadia. Nimāi's *ṭola*, however, flourished. His fame as a successful and learned teacher spread far and wide, and students flocked to him from all parts of the country. Nimāi made grammar and philology⁴ the subjects of study in his institution. About this time Nimāi was married, young as he was, to Lakṣmī, the daughter of Vallabhācārya. The arrangements made for the wedding were on a humble scale, and only relations and intimate friends of the family were invited thereto. The wedding day having come, the guests arrived, and Śacī felt

³*Advaita-prakāśa*, ?

⁴Generally speaking, only one branch of study was taken up in a *ṭola*. Occasionally a professor took up more than one subject, as in the case of Vāsudeva Sārvabhauma whose title Sārvabhauma indicated that he was versed in every branch of knowledge. But those who took up many subjects were considered, generally speaking, masters of none. In starting a *ṭola*, a professor had not only to provide accommodation for his students but also their food. Of course, they were taught free. Society maintained the professors by gifts made during festivals and social ceremonies.

happy for the first time since the death of her husband. She welcomed the guests with becoming humility. She explained to them that her son being an orphan, and as yet too young to acquire a fortune by his own exertions, was not in a position to receive them in a manner befitting the occasion. They would, she felt sure, excuse his shortcomings in this respect, in consideration of his poor circumstances, and because his father was dead.

Śacī was addressing her guests in this fashion, when she was suddenly interrupted by the sight of her son shedding a profusion of tears from his downcast eyes. "What means this, Nimāi?" she asked in amazement. "Do you want to break my heart by shedding tears on a happy occasion like this? What ails you?" Nimāi recovering himself with difficulty, replied: "I am weeping for my dead father, whose memory you have just recalled, and for my lost brother. If they could have been with us to-day how happy we all should have been." When her son had done speaking, she was overcome with grief for having, in her folly, thoughtlessly reminded her tender-hearted son of his sad bereavements. Nimāi then endeavoured to soothe her with his caresses.

As a professor, Nimāi was expected to be serious in all his movements. But alas! He was as playful as ever, and this scandalized his brother professors. He swam in the river like an ordinary man. He was sometimes seen running up and down the streets. He played with his students, many of whom were older than he. His brother professors, a little jealous of him for his learning, spoke ill of him for his want of gravity, behind his back; but they ventured not to utter a word before him. His personality was such that any undue familiarity with him was not possible. Indeed, the foremost professors quailed in his presence. Although he played with his students they nevertheless always regarded him with becoming reverence and awe.

Nimāi used to indulge in pranks of his own at the bathing *ghāṭas*, where he came across thousands of students. In the same free manner he conducted himself when he met them during his afternoon stroll. Dressed with exquisite taste, in a silken *dhuti*, the savant of seventeen was accustomed to emerge from his house followed by his pupils and friends. Men and women gazed admiringly at his charming figure. His brother professors regarded him with various feelings, some with admiration and respect, and some with envy and jealousy. But he attracted notice wherever he went. An impression prevailed that a sooth-sayer had predicted the installation of a Hindu *rāja* on the throne of Gauḍa, then occupied, as said before, by Hussein Shah, a Mussulman. The people of Nadia were almost unanimously agreed that the man destined to regain Gauḍa for the Hindus was no other than Nimāi, the youthful *paṇḍita*, for he looked every inch a prince. Such was his commanding character that no one ever ventured openly to cross Nimāi. But amongst those who were jealous of his genius and extraordinary attainments he had, as already stated,

many detractors who, always respectful in his presence, were in the habit of saying many unkind things about him in his absence. Says one: “He comports himself as a prince; but his father Jagannātha’s poverty was a by-word.” Says another: “He is arrogant and proud, qualities which are intolerable to God, and must some day bring him to grief.” Says yet another: “His cleverness is mere precociousness; such levity as he displays is incompatible with great ability or profound learning. Fishes make a great deal of noise in shallow water.”

Nimāi seemed quite unaware of the comments passed upon him by friends and foes. He really roamed about just like a prince, conscious of his intellectual powers, of his integrity, and of his goodness. He never quailed but when he was in the society of ladies. Naturally as modest as a girl of fifteen, the presence of ladies brought a blush to his cheeks, and made him hang down his head!

His conversation was always intellectual, and he interspersed his more serious remarks with lively sayings which made both him and his hearers laugh. He was always in high spirits, as if he had never known what care was, or had found the secret of invariable content. His jokes being always innocent never offended his victims; but, on the contrary, endeared him the more to them. His principal objects of attack, as before stated, were those who professed the Vaiṣṇava faith. Mukunda Datta of Chittagong, a young Vaiṣṇava, a sweet singer and a follower of Advaita, comes across Nimāi. Mukunda tries to avoid his tormentor, and goes to the other side of the crowded street to escape from the clutches of Nimāi. But Nimāi perceives his intention and accosts his followers thus: “Is not that Mukunda? Why does the fellow avoid me?”

“Perhaps because he has urgent business,” replies a follower.

“No,” rejoins Nimāi, “it is not that. He is a pious Vaiṣṇava, He thinks, man is born to pass his days in devotion. But my conversations are always ungodly, and it is therefore only natural that he should avoid me.” Having said this, he loudly addresses Mukunda thus: “Why do you avoid me, Mukunda? Is it because you believe that I am an infidel? You shall never escape me, however. In time, Mukunda, I shall be a Vaiṣṇava also; but not a humbug like you. I shall be such a Vaiṣṇava as the gods themselves shall come to my doors. Mind, I shall then enslave you, compel you to follow me like a shadow, and make your escape impossible.” Those who are following Nimāi laugh, and some of them think that Nimāi is really a little bit of an infidel.

Gadādhara, another Nyāya student, younger than Nimāi, and almost as beautiful in person, was much given to prayer and devotion. He followed Nimāi like a shadow; nevertheless, one of the greatest delights of the latter was to provoke him to a literary contest. Gadādhara would excuse himself,

but Nimāi was not to be cheated out of his sport in that way. He used all the arts of a cunning lad to provoke him to a polemical discussion. Gadādhara was good nature itself, and bore the taunts, sneers, and challenges of Nimāi with inexhaustible good humour. But Nimāi by his persistence always in the end succeeded in entangling him in some argument or other, from which he refused to release his victim until he had made him cry!

After having disposed of Gadādhara, Nimāi perhaps finds himself face to face with Śrīvāsa. This pious Vaiṣṇava was next in importance only to Advaita. He had been a friend of Jagannātha, and he and his wife Mālīnī had tended Nimāi in his infancy. Śrīvāsa loved Nimāi as a son, and the latter was bound to obey him as a parent. On meeting Śrīvāsa, Nimāi, therefore, salutes him and stands before him in an attitude of respect, with bent head. Śrīvāsa is deceived by the submissive attitude of Nimāi and addresses him thus: “Well, where are you going to now, restless and unruly youth? On no pious errand, I am sure. Pray, what is the use of all your learning and polemics? They merely nourish your pride and vanity. They are wise who acquire only that knowledge which secures salvation. What are you doing, day and night? Such intellectual exercises as you indulge in will do you no good. Learn to be a pious man and a servant of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and thereby fulfill our earnest wishes.”

The fact is, Śrīvāsa, as a pious Vaiṣṇava, desired that Nimāi would join his sect, to which his (Nimāi’s) father had belonged. His sect was not in power, rather in disgrace, in Nadia. He fancied that if Nimāi joined the Vaiṣṇavas, so influential was the young paṇḍit, that the sect would flourish under his auspices. Nimāi’s intellectual triumphs seemed to him only a dissipation of his energies, and he therefore addressed the former in all earnestness.

Nimāi heard him patiently, maintaining the same reverential attitude, and appeared as if he were taking to heart every word of Śrīvāsa. When Śrīvāsa had finished, Nimāi said: “You see, *paṇḍita*, I have become a professor at an early age. Let me enjoy my triumphs for a time. When I am tired of them, I shall send for some very good Vaiṣṇava and from him learn how to worship Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Rest assured that when I have once made up my mind to be a Vaiṣṇava, I shall—.” But Nimāi could not finish the sentence, being obliged to give vent to the laughter which up to then he had, with the utmost difficulty, suppressed. Śrīvāsa laughed too; but he was nevertheless disappointed, and not a little pained.

About this time, Nimāi came across Īśvara Purī, a *sannyāsin*, i.e., one who has renounced the world. Originally an inhabitant of Kumarhaṭṭa, not far from Calcutta, he was a disciple of the celebrated *sannyāsin*, Mādhavendra Purī, the most pious man of his age. He was known throughout India for his piety, and he, therefore, found a warm welcome in the city of Nadia. If love for Śrī Kṛṣṇa could be likened to an ocean, Īśvara Purī day and night

swam therein. Nimāi one day suddenly meeting him in the street, respectfully saluted him. Īśvara Purī had heard of Nimāi and was glad to meet him. Nimāi invited him to dinner, and Īśvara accepted the invitation, apparently unconsciously. For, the sight of Nimāi engrossed his whole attention. Thought he in his mind: “Who can this being be? Everything in him betokens divine influence. Is he more than human, a higher being in disguise?” Nimāi broke in upon his reverie with pleasantries. Said he: “Svāmi, why do you inspect me in this manner? Do you find anything worth inspection in my person? If you come to my place you will have ample opportunities of satisfying your curiosity.” The dinner came off in due course, and in a very short time, the old *svāmin* and the youthful *paṇḍita* became intimate friends. The *svāmin*, who was then writing a book on the love of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, requested Nimāi to help him with corrections and suggestions. Nimāi agreed, and together they spent their nights in the study of the new work of the Purī. Nimāi was then barely eighteen. Īśvara soon after quitted Nadia, but six years later he and Nimāi met again, and the *svāmin* played an important part in the sport of Nimāi.

The *ṭola* of Nimāi prospered, and he was getting more and more marked out from his fellows. Just at this time he was suddenly overtaken by that mysterious malady which had affected him when he was being invested with the sacred thread. He suddenly swooned away, and showed all the signs of some supernatural influence working upon him. Some said that he was possessed by a devil, and some by a good spirit. But the rival professors, who regarded him with extreme jealousy, declared that it was a case of madness, pure and simple, brought on by over-exercise of the intellect, and they recommended that he should be kept in chains, and otherwise treated in a rigorous manner. Nimāi being beside himself, they were thus given an opportunity of endeavouring to sway the mind of his unfortunate mother, whom they would fain convince that her son had become a hopeless lunatic.

Weeks passed and Nimāi slowly recovered, none the worse for the attack and the treatment to which he had been subjected. When he had recovered, it was found that he had gained in every way by the seeming accident which had befallen him. One very salutary change was observed in him, namely, that he had become more sober and restrained.

Nimāi, who had completed his eighteenth year, now conceived the idea of proceeding to the eastern districts. His mother's permission was obtained after much persuasion; and he went thither with a large number of followers. His fame had preceded him, and he was welcomed everywhere. The news having spread that the great boy-*paṇḍita* Nimāi, who looked more like a golden figure than a man of flesh and blood, had arrived among them, the people flocked from all sides to have a look at him. The object of Nimāi's expedition to the eastern districts was not known. It was generally believed

that he had gone there with a view to collect donations for his institution.

Nimāi crossed the broad river Padmā and settled temporarily in a village on the other bank. Thither thousands came to him for instruction. The details of how he spent his time there are not precisely known. They were recorded in a book called *Tapana-vijaya*, but though we are assured of its existence, we have not yet been able to get hold of a copy. This book gives the story of a Brahmin, Tapana Miśra, who, being a man of superior position, suffered from doubts as to the nature of God and the best means to attain to him, but was subsequently converted by Śrī Gaurāṅga. In other books we get a short account of this saint, and that to the following effect:

One day, while Nimāi sat surrounded by his students, Tapana Miśra pushed his way through them and fell at his feet. An elderly man, highly respected, Tapana's submissive attitude not only surprised all the students who were present there, but even Nimāi himself, who, hurriedly helping him to rise, begged that he would not again prostrate himself before one who was young enough to be regarded as his son. Tapana said in reply: "First hear me, and then reprove me if you think fit. Death is approaching, and I have not made provision for the future life. It is not entirely my fault that I have not done so, for I do not know how to go about it. I have applied to many, but found every sage with an opinion of his own on the subject, and their advice, instead of helping me, has only served to bewilder me still more. I had constantly prayed to God to give me the light, when suddenly last night a divine apparition came to me in a dream, who directed me to run to Nimāi Paṇḍita, fall at his feet and seek his protection, for he was no other than the Supreme God come down upon earth to help his children. Well," continued Tapana Miśra, "I awoke and ran to thee; and now, dear father, I throw myself at thy lotus feet!"

Nimāi, apparently unaware of his divinity, was abashed by the speech of the old Brahmin. When he had overcome his embarrassment, he said, "It was only a dream, *paṇḍita*. Pray do not act in that manner again. I shall do my best to help you. Our sages have laid down the path of righteousness for us, which we have only to follow; and that even a blind man can do." He then proceeded to give Tapana instructions in religious matters. Then we find Nimāi bidding him proceed to Benares with his wife and wait there till he should come to him.

Tapana immediately left home with his wife and proceeded to Benares, a thousand miles away, where he waited for Nimāi. Eleven years elapsed before Nimāi visited the famous city and met there his faithful disciple

Tapana Miśra, even after his first interview with Nimāi, believed him to be an incarnation of God; and he is known to have been the first who formally accepted him as such. Nimāi returned to Navadvīpa, having been away for almost a year, with a large number of pupils. On his arrival his mother told

him the melancholy news that his wife Lakṣmī had died during his absence.

While Nimāi was staying in the eastern district he passed as a professor, and when he returned to Nadia he appeared in the same character. But yet he left those districts in a state of convulsion. The state of mind in which he left the people of those districts is given expression in the following song which represents their feeling concerning him: “Listen, for the Lord Nimāi invites us! Come, let us follow him. He has constructed for us a boat made of the name Hari in which he pilots men to the other bank (salvation). He is so universally merciful that he does not charge any fee for his services, but saves souls out of pure love. Come, therefore, all,—sinners, saints, the fallen and the *sādhus*, the depraved and the pure!”

From the above song one can form some idea of how the people had been moved by his presence in the East.

The means by which Nimāi made numerous conversions in Eastern Bengal, is still a mystery. For, while there, he did not preach the love of Kṛṣṇa. He did not even allow it to be known that he had a religious turn of mind. He was simply there as a professor of language and grammar. But he left behind him numerous *bhaktas*, whose descendants even now form perhaps the strongest community in those districts. The fact must strike every attentive reader as very strange—that Tapana, an elderly man of good position in society, leaving his home, his property, and his kindred, should exile himself thousands of miles away, for several years, at the bidding of a professor of grammar who had barely reached the age of eighteen. Again, how was it that Nimāi knew beforehand that he would go to Benares eleven years later and meet Tapana there?

After his return to Navadvīpa, Nimāi’s *śola* grew in strength every day. With those who accompanied him to Nadia from Eastern Bengal, and with many of his former and numerous new pupils, his school in a short time became one of the most important in the city. As a teacher Nimāi was unrivalled. He loved his pupils and his pupils loved him. He was revered by them as a divine being. He, on the other hand, treated his pupils as if they were his own children, and though he would allow no undue familiarity during school hours, or indeed at other times, yet he was as sprightly as the youngest of his pupils during play hours. Nimāi now found himself in comfortable circumstances, donations in various shapes being showered upon him from all sides. These, however, he never touched. His mother was absolutely mistress of the household.

About this time came the “world-conquering” Keśava of Kāśmīr in his career of victory to Nadia. As a savant he had defeated every professor in every learned city in India. Nadia alone, the last city in the course of his triumphal march, and the first in importance, remained to be conquered. He came to Nadia in great pomp, accompanied by numerous attendants, tents,

elephants and horses. On his arrival he proclaimed his loud challenge, which was to this effect, that if there was any learned man in Nadia, he should come forward to try conclusions with him. If he should be worsted, all his property would be forfeited to Nadia. But if he should win, Nadia would be at his disposal.

Now the learned men of Nadia were not the parties to be cowed by the vapourings of a pretender, having come from a far-off province, considered outside the pale of civilization. They had seen many a *paṇḍita* with equal pretensions worsted in their city. They felt, therefore, that they had nothing to fear from Keśava. But unfortunately a rumor was circulated and believed to be true, which took a firm hold on the public mind that Sarasvatī, the Goddess of Learning, had herself blessed Keśava and promised to preside over his speech during his intellectual combats. Now, although the *paṇḍitas* of Nadia never quailed before any man, however learned, hailing from any part of the world, they hesitated to meet Sarasvatī herself, to whose favour they themselves owed all their learning. The rumour noted above had thus a very demoralizing effect upon the savants of Nadia, and so Keśava moved triumphant through the city.

It was a moonlight night and Nimāi and his numerous pupils were sitting on the river bank engaged in literary discussion, when Keśava, who happened to be passing by, stopped to listen to the conversation. After a while, becoming interested in the discussion, he joined the company and announced himself through his followers. Nimāi rose, bowed respectfully, and welcomed him. The stranger then sat down with the young professor and his pupils.

“You are Nimāi pandit, I believe,” said the stranger. “I am glad to make your acquaintance. I am told, in that junior branch of knowledge, grammar and philology, you have attained great proficiency; and you have further the credit of having become a professor while yet a young man.”

Nimāi replied with becoming modestly, considering the position of the conqueror: “I am only a young student while you are a conqueror; compared with you, I am as nothing. True I teach grammar; but I assure you that I neither understand what I teach, nor do my pupils understand me.”

To this the conqueror replied that such modestly became him well, but he must repeat that he had heard him well-spoken of everywhere in the city.

Nimāi then addressed the conqueror thus: “You are a poet of world-wide reputation. Pray recite to us a description of the Ganges, so that our sins may be washed away.” It should be borne in mind that the Ganges is a sacred river, and is worshipped as such. The conqueror was pleased at the request, and there and then began simultaneously to compose and recite his poem. He composed and recited one couplet and immediately followed it up by another, and then another. In this manner he composed a hundred

couplets in a few minutes and recited them. His power amazed the students, who cried “Hari, Hari” in a chorus of admiration. They trembled for the fate of their beloved professor.

They feared that their professor would prove no match for such a giant of learning and intellect. Nimāi was the only person there who seemed to be unconcerned. He requested the conqueror to take up one of his couplets for paraphrase and analysis, “So that,” continued Nimāi, “we may appreciate its beauties.” The conqueror asked him which couplet he wanted him to paraphrase, and Nimāi thereupon repeated one from the middle for the purpose. At this the conqueror was amazed. The current belief at the time was that although a man might acquire the power of retaining in his memory anything which he happened to hear once, this extraordinary gift can only be attained by propitiating the Goddess Sarasvatī by incessant devotion and prayer. The conqueror felt a suspicion that probably Nimāi was one who had been thus favoured, and so he inquired: “How is it, *paṇḍita*, that you have been able to repeat this couplet from the middle of a hundred such, recited by me as quickly as my tongue would permit?” It would seem Nimāi divined what was passing through the mind of the conqueror, for he replied with a mischievous smile: “You see, *paṇḍita*, that as some persons become poets through the favour of Sarasvatī and can compose without premeditation, there may possibly be others who can retain in their memory anything that they have heard repeated but once.”

This reply confirmed the conqueror in the opinion that Nimāi was *śrutidhara*, that is, one gifted with the power of retaining in memory what he had but once heard. He now naturally entertained a more respectful opinion of the boy-*paṇḍita*, and therefore took some pains to analyse the couplet and point out its beauties. When this had been done, Nimāi praised him for his poetical powers and thanked him for the pains he had taken to enlighten and instruct them. “But,” said he, “let us now examine the couplet for blemishes, if it has any.”

“Blemishes in my couplet, and the boy-*paṇḍita* wanting to know them!” thought the proud and insulted conqueror, who immediately assumed an attitude of haughtiness. He replied, “*Paṇḍita*, you teach grammar, which is only the a, b, c of knowledge, and you have not studied rhetoric. How then can it be possible for you to understand either the beauties, or blemishes, if there be any, in my composition?”

Nimāi replying said: “True, I am a very ignorant youth, but that does not cover the blemishes of your composition if there be any. To me the composition seems to have five defects which somewhat mar its undoubted beauties.” So saying he proceeded to criticise the couplet very minutely.⁵

⁵A report of the whole discussion, the beauties pointed out by the conqueror, and the defects by Nimāi, are all omitted for obvious reasons. (Vide *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* for a full report.)

The conqueror was obliged to defend his couplet. But the defects were so glaring and pointed out by Nimāi in so forcible a manner, that the author, utterly confounded, gave vent to his feelings in a storm of irrelevant exclamation.

The scene had collected a crowd. The confusion of the conqueror naturally gave rise to some hilarity among the by-standers; for most men find a pleasure in the humiliation of a vain and aggressive person. Nimāi, however, did not encourage it; on the contrary, he tried to suppress it. Then addressing the conqueror, he said, in the politest manner possible: “Why, *paṇḍita*, should you take the matter so seriously? It is enough that you possess the divine gift of poesy. As for limitations, men must have them. Had not Kālidāsa and Bhavabhūti⁶ theirs? You are an intellectual conqueror, a man highly favoured by the Goddess Sarasvatī. Pray, let us go home for night is advancing, and tomorrow, with your concurrence, we shall have a discussion upon more solid subjects.”

Somewhat mollified by this speech the conqueror left the place, humiliated to the utmost. He could neither eat nor sleep after his discomfiture, and spent the night in prayer. Early on the following morning he repaired to the house of Nimāi, and as the latter issued from his room, prostrated himself at his feet with the deepest humility.

Nimāi, surprised and pained at the spectacle, asked him to get up and said, “What is the matter? Why this deference to a youth who would be proud to become your pupil? You pain me by your attitude. Pray, arise.”

Keśava, with folded hands, replied: “Pray, hear me! Last night, after leaving you, humbled by my defeat, I spent many hours in prayer and meditation. At length the Goddess Sarasvatī was pleased to answer my prayers and remove the film from my eyes. She made me understand that the true object of knowledge is salvation and not the satisfaction of vanity. ‘You have served me faithfully,’ said she, ‘and you have been rewarded for it. What you consider a humiliation is in reality the highest blessing. For the being, before whom you felt humbled, is no other than Śrī Kṛṣṇa, my Lord. Go to him, fall at his feet, and give yourself up to him.’ Thus spoke the Goddess to me, and in obedience to her command, I now come to thee, and ask thee to accept me in thy infinite mercy.”

What Nimāi did or said to him is not known. But the conqueror went away a changed man, converted and purged of all the baser passions. He distributed his vast wealth to the poor of Nadia, assumed the garb of an ascetic, and disappeared from the gaze of men forever.

The discomfiture of Keśava created a profound sensation in Nadia. Relieved of his chilling presence, whom the savants of Nadia had been persuaded to regard as a favourite of Sarasvatī herself, the people began more

⁶Considered to be the two greatest poets of India.

clearly to realize the intellectual pre-eminence of Nimāi. Śacī was in raptures over her son's position in the city. His friends congratulated her on being the mother of such a learned son. There was but one flaw in her happiness, and that was that her son was without a wife, and she knew not where to find a suitable bride for him. The bride must not only be a beautiful and well-disposed girl, but must also come of a high family, and above all, she must belong to the same sub-division of caste to which Nimāi belonged. Nimāi belonged to that section of the Brahmins who call themselves the Vaidics. Their number had always been small, especially in Nadia. She could expect no help in this matter from her son, who apparently was even unconscious that there remained for him a duty to perform, namely, to marry.

Śacī, however, by accident, found a suitable bride for him at one of the bathing *ghāṭas* where numbers of men and women were accustomed every day to perform their ablutions. Whenever Śacī went to bathe at the *ghāṭa*, she encountered there a girl very beautiful and modest, who always appeared as if she were waiting for her. At the sight of Śacī she would advance towards her and salute her. This action on the part of the girl extorted the admiration of Śacī, who, in return, always blessed her in these words: "May you find a good husband." When Śacī blessed her thus the girl never failed to blush profusely. One day Śacī, feeling a strong curiosity about the girl, asked her for her name. She replied that her name was Viṣṇupriyā. On further enquiry Śacī learned that she was the daughter of Sanātana Miśra, a wealthy and highly respected *paṇḍita* of Nadia.

According to caste rules, Śacī might make Sanātana's daughter her daughter-in-law. In fact, Sanātana belonged to a higher rank than she, and so would be honouring her if he should agree to the alliance. But would Sanātana, higher in rank and position than Śacī, agree to marry his daughter to her son, who was the son of poor parents, of lower rank than himself and of a somewhat eccentric turn of mind?

But it so happened that Sanātana, who loved his daughter ardently, had already set his heart on marrying her to Nimāi, whom he regarded as the first *paṇḍita* in Nadia and the comeliest being in the world. But knowing the wayward nature of Nimāi, he had not ventured to make such a proposal to him either directly or through his mother. But Viṣṇupriyā herself, though only a very young girl, had been over-powered by love⁷ for Nimāi. Probably she had overheard the proposal of her marriage with Nimāi talked of by her

⁷*Vide Gaurāṅgodaya* by Paṇḍita Mukunda, as quoted in the *Vaiṣṇavācāra* by Navadvīpa Gosvāmin. I have not in this book cited the authorities for many statements, for, if I were to do so at all, I should be obliged to give my authority for every statement. This would make my task altogether impossible. Every statement, however, is supported by authority, and the reader can verify it by referring to the original sources. In matters concerning God incarnate, I have, as a matter of course, tried to avoid mistakes, and have refrained from making even doubtful statements as far as it has been possible for me to do so.

parents, and had had a glimpse of him at the bathing *ghāṭa*. It was probably owing to this that she had selected Śacī, though a stranger to her, for her particular regard. Śacī felt such an affection for the modest girl, who saluted her every day, that she was at length induced to send a match-maker to Sanātana to sound him. Sanātana was, of course, agreeable, and the marriage was at once arranged.

Nimāi, however, had apparently no knowledge of all these proceedings on the part of his mother. His mother arranged everything, and then informed Nimāi that he was to marry the daughter of Sanātana Mīśra on an early date. The news of his coming marriage created joy in the hearts of his numerous friends and pupils. Buddhimanta Khān, a rich Kāyastha landholder, said: "I shall bear all the expenses." "I shall share them with you," said Puruṣvatam, the wealthy Brahmin, in whose worship-hall Nimāi held his *ṭola*. But Buddhimanta declined to have any partner in the undertaking and added: "Perhaps you are not aware that we are not going to have the ceremony performed in the poor style of a Brahmin, but in that of a prince." Nimāi's pupils also took the matter earnestly in hand, and, everything was arranged on a grand scale.

Nimāi and the bride, as was the custom, were beautifully attired for the occasion. Nimāi shone as brightly as the "full moon in the autumn season" without her spots. The gaze of all was upon him, as if to devour his beauty. The ladies especially admired him, but so pure were the feelings with which he inspired them, that none of them felt in the least jealous of the bride or envious of her good fortune.

Nimāi proceeded to the house of the bride, accompanied by music, torches and fireworks, and followed by a large crowd of people. Sanātana, the bride's father, had also made preparations on a grand scale to receive them. Nimāi in his wedding dress is said to have eclipsed Cupid himself in beauty; and when Viṣṇupriyā was presented to the guests, dressed in silks and richly adorned with jewellery, she looked like some ethereal being. They were, according to custom, made to exchange a first glance at each other. Viṣṇupriyā having lifted her veil was so over-powered by her natural modesty, that she was unable to open her eyes to gaze upon her Lord. But according to the rules of the ceremony, this was a duty to be performed; and a screen was, therefore, erected round the bride and groom that they might gaze at each other without being seen by other people. So their eyes met; and the first tender glance thus exchanged united them for ever and ever!

Śacī was now the happiest woman in the universe. In her beautiful, good-natured and affectionate daughter-in-law, she found a fresh object of affection, which gave her, as it were, a new lease on life. Guests flocked to the house every day, and these being *sādhus* or pious people, were entertained and feasted by Śacī, assisted by her daughter-in-law.

Nimāi, though much sobered in his manner and conduct still retained

the light-heartedness which had always characterized him. "Let us go a-marketing," he would say to some of his friends and followers, and they, always feeling delight in being in his company, would, of course, assent to his proposal. Thus Nimāi had scarcely ever an opportunity of being alone, as his friends seemed never to be happy unless near him. Whenever, accompanied by friends, he walked down one of the streets, he was soon followed by an admiring crowd. His detractors, who happened to see him on such occasions, would give vent to their spleen by ironically exclaiming, "There goes the Prince!"

Well, as Nimāi was one day going to the market to make purchases, accompanied by some of his friends, one of these reminded him that he had not taken any money with him. "That is true," said Nimāi, "but the fact is, I have none." "Then you mean to purchase on credit," rejoined another. "No, not that," replied Nimāi, "to take things on credit is not strictly moral, and I never do it. Let me see if I can persuade the shop-keepers to part with their wares by argument, repartee, and Brahminical blessings." Having delivered himself of this pleasantry, he laughed, and just then they arrived at the market place.

First of all they enter the shop of a weaver, who politely welcomes his customers. Nimāi asks him, in his most bewitching manner, to show him a handsome *sarī*. The shop-keeper complies, and Nimāi expresses his approval of the article, and asks what the price may be. While the shop-keeper obliges him with the information he mutters to himself, of course loud enough for the weaver to hear, "What a silly thing for me to ask the price when I have not any money with me!"

Now, the object of Nimāi was only to create some amusement for his companions by testing the strength of the avarice of the shop-keeper. When Nimāi said that he had no money, the shopman said, "Certainly, you can have it on credit."

"That is all very good of you," said Nimāi, "but I am on principle opposed to purchasing things on credit." Here the weaver had to put his avarice on one scale and the charms of Nimāi on the other. He struggled but the charms of Nimāi won! Said the worsted shop-man: "Sir, you are more like a god than a man. Take the *sarī* as a humble token of my devotion, and in return all I ask of you is your blessing." From this shop Nimāi went to others, and eventually returned home with quite a load of things, which were all purchased originally by his charms alone, but were, of course, subsequently paid for.

Śrīdhara, though a Brahmin, kept a stall in the market place, where he sold plantian leaves, barks, and piths. He was extremely poor and made his living by the little business he did in these articles.

He, as a pious Vaiṣṇava, was made a special object of attack by Nimāi.

Nimāi enters his stall, and Śrīdhara immediately assumes an attitude of defense. “Paṇḍita, there are other stalls,” says Śrīdhara. “I am a poor man, and you should not annoy me.” Nimāi assumes the part of an injured man, and replies: “Is this the way you receive a customer? I shall pay for the things I take. But the worst of it is that you ask exorbitant prices for your very inferior articles.”

In truth Śrīdhara neither charged exorbitantly nor were his wares in any way inferior. But Nimāi wanted simply to provoke him, and make him lose his temper if possible. Śrīdhara replies: “Paṇḍita, most men as they grow older gradually sober down. But you are growing more and more frivolous year by year.” In this manner almost daily Nimāi had a tussle with Śrīdhara.

Śrīdhara being a pious man, Nimāi loved him, and this was his way of showing it. “Do you think it proper, Śrīdhara,” said Nimāi to him on another occasion, “that you should every day make an offering to Gaṅgā while you offer nothing to me? Do you not know that I am the father of Gaṅgā?” Śrīdhara was horrified at the blasphemy. He plugged his ears with his fingers. “Paṇḍita,” replied he reprovingly, “have you no respect even for Gaṅgā?” This Śrīdhara was destined to become one of Nimāi’s followers in later years.

Chapter Five: To Gayā

Nimāi had now lost much of his unpopularity. His ever smiling face, his joyous nature, his perfect simplicity, his generosity, his loving nature, and, above all, his unrivalled intelligence and personal magnetism, which had always fascinated his friends by dozens, now won over his enemies. About this time he asked permission of his mother to repair to the holy city of Gayā, to go through a certain sacred ceremony which every good Hindu is bound to perform for the salvation of the souls of his departed dear ones.

As Nimāi's object was the discharge of a pious duty, Śacī could not offer any opposition to his going, although it almost broke her heart to think of parting with her son. Gayā was three to four weeks' journey from Nadia, and the way difficult and dangerous. A good many people, however, agreed to accompany Nimāi, and amongst them his mother's sister's husband, Candrasekhara.

So Nimāi, with his friends, set out for Gayā in the month of Bhādra (August-September) of the year 1430 of the Śāka era [1509 C.E.]. They journeyed slowly, and beguiled the way with intellectual and religious conversation. Nimāi was evidently much affected by the nature of the pilgrimage he was undertaking for, as was noticed by his companions, his aspect and his manner became daily more serious and grave, and inspired with spiritual thoughts those who beheld and conversed with him. At Mandar, on the way, he had an attack of fever, the first and the last malady that ever assailed his divine person. His attendants were alarmed, for it looked as if the fever would prove obstinate, and the place was strange. At length, however, the fever abated, and they resumed the journey. This attack seemed to increase the gravity of his appearance and demeanor. His gait became slower. He engaged less and less in conversation with his comrades, and eventually he refrained altogether from speaking and gave himself up to profound thought, the nature of which those about him could not conjecture nor did they venture to inquire.

As he entered the city of Gayā, he saluted it with folded hands and with deep emotion. The sight of the holy place visibly affected him.

He proceeded at once to perform all the ceremonies usual on such an occasion. He went through them in a state of abstraction, for his mind was absorbed in meditation. At last he proceeded to witness the foot-print of Śrī Kṛṣṇa in the temple, called after one of his names, Gadādhara.

The foot-print was there before him. Hundreds were placing flowers upon it, and hundreds other gifts. Hundreds were offering themselves unto it for ever and ever, while thousands were singing the praises of the good Lord and of his infinite mercy and goodness.

Nimāi saw the foot-print, and his gaze became riveted thereto. He stood enthralled and motionless as a statue. His entry had created a stir, as his presence always did. The attention of everybody engaged in the worship of the foot-print was directed on him. They saw a young man of twenty-three, of Herculean proportions, graceful beyond comparison, with a skin as fair as molten gold, and eyes luminous and soft as the petals of the lotus flower, with which he looked on the foot-print with a steadfast gaze, unconscious of the presence of those who were watching him with such intense interest. Is that a prince? said one to himself. Is that a god in disguise? said another. Is he Śrī Kṛṣṇa himself? thought yet another.

So here is the foot-print of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, thought Nimāi, and he was overpowered by his feelings¹ This made him oblivious of the presence of others. Yet he struggled to restrain his tears, but he could not. Tears welled up in his eyes and by and by overflowed the lids. First one drop fell upon each of his cheeks, then another, and as his emotions deepened others followed, till, after a time, they coursed down his cheeks in continuous streams. These streams flowed from the inner angles of his eyes. but as the agitation of his soul waxed still greater, two other streams were formed, which started from the outer angles of his eyes; and before many minutes elapsed, yet another stream from each eye started and flowed midway between the other two. From his face these streams dropped on to his chest, wetting his clothes through, and thence to the floor beneath. The spectators who witnessed the strange spectacle were hushed into silence and gazed upon the god-like figure of Nimāi absorbed in the deity, as if they were spell-bound by his majestic aspect, and the pathos and sublimity of the expression which his features wore.

The floods which poured from his eyes appeared to the spectators to be supernatural, yet they flowed naturally enough. There was no contortion of the face, no sound in the throat, and no seeming effort in discharging them. Only there was a quivering of the ruddy lips. In his perfectly chiselled face beamed happiness that seemed divine, and this feeling was the source from which the torrents flowed.² It was now quite evident to the spectators that

¹Worshippers of a formless God are deprived of these inestimable advantages of cultivating their *bhakti*.

²Tears flow either from misery or happiness. Those caused by misery produce contortions of

Nimāi was only partially conscious and that his limbs were about to give way under him; but such was the reverential awe which he inspired that no one ventured just then to come to his assistance. Shortly after, as he was actually falling to the ground, one of those who were witnessing this sport of Nimāi rushed forward, and, by supporting him, prevented him from falling to the ground. This person was none other than the ever-memorable *sādhū*, Īśvara Purī, of whom we have already spoken.

The touch of Īśvara Purī restored Nimāi to semi-consciousness. He looked at the intruder and found him to be his old and revered friend, the Purī. By and by Nimāi, having recovered consciousness completely, addressed him thus: “I consider myself fortunate to have met you again, and more especially in this place, for the holiest shrines are rendered still more holy by the presence in them of saints and devotees like you. My eyes have this day been opened, and I find that I have been all along wading deep through the mire of ungodliness. I look to you and to the other *bhaktas* of God to extricate me, knowing that God exercises through you His compassion for sinners like me. To you I yield myself absolutely and entirely. Have pity on me, I pray, and grant me what is the supreme object of man in this world, namely, a glimpse, only a glimpse, of Rādhā’s love for Kṛṣṇa!”

The Purī, no less affected than Nimāi, replied: “The moment that I first saw you at Nadia, you entered into my heart and you have ever since been the chief occupant thereof. I worship Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, but whenever I invoke them, not them I see but you only in my heart. I am convinced that you are my beloved Lord who, taking pity upon his creatures here below, have come down upon earth to bless them; and if you be pleased to make use of me as an instrument in your work, be it so. Whatever you bid me do, I am bound to do with my whole heart.”

They parted, and Nimāi returned to his lodgings to prepare his meal. Īśvara Purī, however, could not keep himself away from Nimāi, so he followed him and found him engaged in cooking his meal. Nimāi joyfully welcomed him. Said the Purī, “You see how lucky I am. As you finish your cooking, I come hungry.” Nimāi replied: “Be it so. Kindly take the rice already cooked. I will prepare another plate for myself.” Īśvara Purī wished to decline the offer, knowing that Nimāi himself must be very hungry. But Nimāi would take no refusal, and obliged his visitor to eat the meal already prepared, while he set about cooking a fresh supply for himself. On an auspicious day Īśvara Purī breathed the *mantra* of initiation in the ears of Nimāi. This *mantra* consisted of ten letters meaning “Salutation to the Beloved of the Gopis.” When

the face. But tears produced by physical happiness, by excess of joy or by devotional feeling do not produce contortions of any kind, and they make the face divinely beautiful. Tears, according to the Vaiṣṇavas, from whatever cause they flow, purify and chasten the heart, and are one of the greatest of blessings from God to man. Tears that flow from devotional feelings have the effect of vivifying the divinity which every man has in him.

the ceremony was over, they embraced each other, and wept for joy.³

Nimāi had left, not only his levity, but his likes and dislikes behind him at Nadia. The idea that he was going to a holy shrine had led his thoughts into a quite different direction. The fever had a beneficial effect upon his soul. He entered Gayā with folded hands, in an attitude of devotion. The sight of the foot-print of Śrī Kṛṣṇa completed the revolution. It caused a flow of tears which softened and expanded his heart and prepared it to receive the divine influence instilled into it by Purī. Nimāi then became a man born again.⁴

It became quite evident that a mighty wave of feeling, pent up in his heart, was convulsing him and that he was passing through a crisis. His attendants did not understand him. If they asked a question, he did not seem to hear them, or gave some irrelevant reply. He seldom spoke, and passed most of his time in a state of abstraction. There was an inexpressible pathos in his countenance, which showed that some great sorrow weighed upon his heart. But what was it?

Sometimes he would be seen in an attitude of deep devotion; sometimes he would be seen gazing at something with vacant eyes, apparently unconscious of his surroundings; sometimes he would be seen in the position of meditation, with his eyes closed; sometimes he would look up and show that he was expecting somebody from heaven; sometimes he seemed to have found him whom he was expecting, and his face would brighten up with joy. He would then mutter something to this invisible being, but what he said nobody could know. Sometimes, as he sat thus engrossed, tears would trickle down his cheeks; and the expression which his face wore would reveal the anguish that was gnawing at his heart, but the nature of which he would communicate to no one. Indeed, he endeavoured as far as possible to conceal his feelings from his attendants, and on such occasions, if one of these interrupted him, he would manifest his discomfiture by blushing exceedingly. His constant abstraction and disregard of every worldly concern and comfort, the indelible pathos in his countenance, the silent tears which he always tried to conceal from his attendants, created the profoundest feelings of sympathy in

³The ceremony of initiation is of Tantric origin. The *guru* or the master breathes a few mystical words in the ears of the *chela* or the disciple, and also explains to him how the necessary ceremonies are performed. The Vaiṣṇavas adopted the above practice only to give a status to their cult. Of course, there is a great advantage in being initiated by a master; but to allow that it is essential is to assail the very basis of the Vaiṣṇava philosophy. That philosophy has no faith in any mystery, or in the supposed influence of mystic letters upon the human mind. Vaiṣṇavas admit that the different names given to God by his *bhaktas* have the power of purifying the soul when uttered with reverence. But beyond this, they admit no mysterious rites whatsoever. [This view is not that generally accepted among Vaiṣṇavas of Caitanya's tradition. Initiation is not just a formality performed for the sake of appearance, but an important first step in the cultivation of *bhakti*. It indeed does have Tantric roots and as in the Tantras, initiation is regarded as a kind of empowerment leading to transformation. (ed.)]

⁴It is in this manner, and usually on such occasions, that the powerful *guru* or master communicates the divine influence to his *chela* or pupil.

the minds of those who watched him.

One day his attendants heard him exclaim: “Where art thou, my Kṛṣṇa, my father?” and attracted to where the voice had come from, discovered him lying on the ground in a swoon! They were greatly concerned about their leader, and made many efforts to rouse him. At length regaining consciousness he endeavoured to sit up but his limbs refused to support him, whereupon he began to indulge in weeping and lamentation, muttering again and again, “My Kṛṣṇa, my father, I cannot live without thee. Until now I have tried to exist without thy presence, but I can do so no longer. Therefore conceal thyself no longer from me, and save the life of thy child.” Having thus spoken he swooned away again. After a time, regaining his consciousness he resumed his lamentations in a heart-rending voice, saying, “My Lord! My God. The world is a barren waste—a dark wilderness without thee!”

His companions naturally tried to console him, but they themselves caught the contagion of his grief and began to weep with him. However Nimāi was not in a mood to be consoled. His voice, his wailing, his sorrowful countenance, and the incessant flow of tears from his eyes, unnerved all who were present. The spectacle melted the heart of the stoutest among them.

Becoming at length somewhat composed he addressed his followers, saying: “I must ask your permission to proceed at once to Vṛndāvana, for I cannot endure the thought of returning to Navadvīpa until I have seen Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and I shall surely find him at Vṛndāvana. There is a void in my heart, which none but Kṛṣṇa can fill. Tell my mother to forgive me for not returning to her at once; but I am no longer independent. Kṛṣṇa takes me away from her. Indeed, I cannot live without him, and if you love me, my friends, do not restrain me.” So saying he actually rose to depart! His companions took hold of him, and it was by sheer physical force that they succeeded in keeping him in his place. Candrasekhara and the other friends of Nimāi found themselves in an exceedingly difficult position. Śacī had entrusted her beloved son to their care with injunctions to bear back her treasure to her. But Nimāi was not the man to be controlled by ordinary persuasion. Nevertheless owing to some sudden influence exercised upon him from within, it pleased Nimāi to agree to return with his friends, and very shortly after they set out on their homeward journey, returning faster than they had gone. Nimāi remained all the way in a state of almost complete abstraction.

Chapter Six: Back to Nadia

It came to be known in Nadia that Nimāi was coming home. His mother joyfully came out of the house into the public street to receive him. Viṣṇupriyā, impatient to see her lord, bashfully stood behind the folds of the door to have a look at him. Mother and son met, and Nimāi reverentially prostrated himself before her. The news soon spread all over the town that Nimāi had returned safe and sound, and his father-in-law, Sanātana, and his mother-in-law heard the news with joy.

Neighbours, friends, relations and pupils came to congratulate him. They were, however, amazed to see that he was no longer the same individual that they had seen before. His former mirthful countenance was now seen to be overcast with melancholy—a melancholy which seemed to have its source in some sort of ecstasy. His aggressive spirit had disappeared and left him the meekest of men in the world. His attitude was so submissive as to suggest that he felt himself to be under deep obligations to all those who had come to see him. It was clear that some mighty emotion was working in his heart, and that he was ceaselessly struggling to restrain the tears which poured involuntarily from his eyes, reddened by frequent flows.

Externally he was Nimāi, no doubt, but his mind seemed to have undergone a thorough metamorphosis. Was he a spiritual being, or a man made of flesh and blood? There was a spiritual lustre about him such as poets imagine but rarely see. He bowed to his elders with great reverence; to his friends he was deferential; to his inferiors, amiable; and to his pupils, affectionate. All those who came in contact with him were more than ever fascinated by the irresistible attractiveness of his person and manners. There was one, however, who was not pleased at the change; it was his mother Śacī.

Something within persuaded her to believe that her son was not actually in his normal state. With her motherly affection she perceived that her son was under the influence of something which made him indifferent to everything around him. What Śacī would have liked to see was that her son, like other young men, would interest himself in the affairs of the world, and enjoy all its legitimate pleasures. As a young man he ought to have liked good

meals, good dresses, and the company of his wife and friends. But he seemed to care for nothing or nobody in the world. Śacī could not draw him out from his abstraction even for a private talk. Sometimes she even suspected that the real Nimāi had fled from her and that somebody else had taken possession of the body of her son. There was nothing in the attitude of Nimāi towards herself to offend her; indeed, it seemed to her that her son had become still more affectionate in his regard for her; but she was alarmed to find that she could not entertain for her son the same feeling of ownership and treat him with the same familiarity as before. At length Nimāi took leave of those who had come to welcome him and entered into the inner apartment with his mother.

In the afternoon, Murāri, the young physician, Sadāśiva and Śrīmān came to Nimāi as they had been requested by the latter to do, to hear a secret which he had promised to tell them. They all four sat in the outer part of the house, and Nimāi, at their request, began to relate the adventures that he had met with in his pilgrimage to Gayā. He did this with his usual eloquence and unrivalled powers of conversation. His voice was always musical and his ordinary language was always poetry, interspersed with bright and sparkling gems of thought and imagination. His companions listened to him with rapt attention. Then he began his description of the temple of Gadādhara. Nimāi said: “The priests in charge of the temple showed me the foot-print of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Lord of the universe, and I gazed at it—.” Here Nimāi suddenly stopped.

Murāri and the others looked up to see what was the matter with him. They saw that Nimāi’s staring and motionless eyes had lost all expression. They wanted to rouse him from what they considered to be merely a reverie, but they soon discovered that he had hopelessly swooned away and was about to fall. Immediately afterwards he fell over, as if he were dead!

This was a strange experience to them all. Murāri, himself a physician, adopted all the means he knew of to bring Nimāi back to consciousness, and at last succeeded; or rather Nimāi recovered consciousness of his own accord. He sat up and struggled hard to say something, but could not, and fell down again, trying to utter the name of Kṛṣṇa in the midst of his sobs. It was clear that Kṛṣṇa had something to do with his sorrow, and that he was struggling to say something about him. At last he managed to say a few words to the effect that the great sorrow of his life remained stuck in his heart like an arrow, and this, for want of more expressive words, he emphasized by touching his heart with his fingers. Said he again, in half-uttered accents, “My dear friends, to whom shall I pour out the sorrows of my heart?” And finally he managed to make a proposal.

“Tomorrow morning,” said he, “I will tell you all, if you will kindly meet me at the house of Śuklāmbara.” This house was situated on the bank of the

Ganges, not very far from the house of Śacī. They, of course, all agreed to the proposal.

Nimāi, in going to speak of the foot-print, had fainted away, because the idea of the foot-print of God Almighty had caused a commotion in his heart; it produced, as it were, a current, and that current, finding no outlet, stuck in his throat, and he fainted away. Nimāi's heart was, after the fainting, relieved by a copious flow of tears from eyes which have been likened to a couple of syringes. These tears drenched the body and clothes of himself and his friends, and "wetted the flower garden close by."

Murāri and others had never before seen such a spectacle. Men are sometimes overpowered by feeling; but can the feeling of a man, under any circumstances, be so strong? Can a man die of feeling? Nimāi was all but dead when he fell down in a swoon. Can a man shed tears enough to be able to wet the earth as is done by a shower? *Bhakti* is a powerful feeling, no doubt; but can it be more potent than all others which move the human heart? Is it possible for men to feel so much attraction for God? Seeing the feeling of Nimāi they realized that there must be a God; for, a mere nothing could never have roused such deep feeling in a man. They further thought that God was bound to be attracted by such *bhakti* as Nimāi evinced!

The three began to whisper to one another. Said Murāri: "Who would have thought a month ago that Nimāi would turn out such a profound *bhakta*?" When Nimāi had sufficiently recovered to take care of himself, they left him to the care of his mother.

When night came, Nimāi retired to his bedroom. Viṣṇupriyā came soon after, with flowers and scents in her hands, to meet her lord. He had, by mighty efforts, restrained his feelings so long. But when his beloved wife came to him, he could restrain his tears no longer, and they began to flow silently down his cheeks.

The feeling of the poor girl can better be imagined than described. She had come to welcome her husband, who had been absent for upwards of three months from home. But lo! Her husband was receiving her literally with a flood of tears! She had then not the least idea why her lord was shedding tears.

The heart naturally melts at the sight of distress. Women are very much affected when they see men weeping. Fancy the condition of Viṣṇupriyā, who was not only a woman but a wife! She hastily ran to Śacī crying, "Mother, mother, come and see." Śacī, not knowing what the matter was, and understanding that her daughter-in-law was in an anxious state of mind, ran to Nimāi's room. Śacī found Nimāi weeping silently. As her presence remained unnoticed by him, the old lady tried to rouse her son. She placed her hand on his head and asked, "What ails thee, my son?" But Śacī's voice had no effect upon Nimāi. Śacī again asked, and this time more loudly, in these words:

“My son, your condition breaks my heart. What is the matter with you?” After repeated efforts, Śacī succeeded in making herself heard. The result, however, was that Nimāi was not soothed, but the flood-gates of his heart were, as it were, laid open by the question of his mother. If Viṣṇupriyā’s presence had increased the flow of tears, his mother’s query gave a further impetus to it.

At last, after great efforts, Nimāi succeeded, amidst sobs, in replying to her. Said he: “Mother, do not be alarmed. I had gone to bed and was sleeping when I saw a dream in which a most beautiful being appeared to me, and since then I feel myself unable to restrain my tears.” From his description it became evident to Śacī and her daughter-in-law that this being was no other than Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Then he began to describe the beauty of Śrī Kṛṣṇa as if to himself. In this occupation, by which both Śacī and Viṣṇupriyā found themselves enthralled, the first night of Nimāi was passed!

Early on the following morning, Śrīmān repaired with many others, as was usual with them, to gather flowers for worship, from a *kuṇḍa* bush that grew in Paṇḍita Śrīvāsa’s garden. Śrīmān had passed the night in great joy. The spectacle that he had witnessed of Nimāi in an ecstatic swoon, had created a revolution in his mind. It had impressed him with the truth that God himself must be very good to be able to inspire man with so much regard for him. The misery of man proceeds from unbelief in God or from an erroneous idea of the nature of God. Śrīmān unconsciously imbibed the idea, from what he had seen in Nimāi, that God and man were very nearly and dearly related to each other. He had thus been able to spurn all idea of misery from his mind, and to pass a really happy night, the first in his life, and he now appeared before his friends and neighbours with a face beaming with happiness. His changed countenance was marked by all. Śrīvāsa inquired of him the reason for this happy change. “You seem to be very happy,” enquired he. Śrīmān replied: “Yes, I have good reason to be so.” “What is that?” asked Śrīvāsa. Now Śrīmān himself was anxious to tell everybody what he had seen the previous evening. So he told those who had assembled to pluck flowers all that he had witnessed. He thus concluded: “From what I saw of Nimāi Paṇḍita, it seemed to me that he was something more than human. To see is to believe. It is not possible to describe what I saw.”

Everyone was glad to hear this, especially the friend of Nimāi’s father. Pious Śrīvāsa had always prayed to Śrī Kṛṣṇa to lead Nimāi to his bosom. His great wish was now satisfied and he ejaculated, “Let God Śrī Kṛṣṇa multiply our family.”

Now, it must be borne in mind that one of the most ardent wishes of the Vaiṣṇavas, followers of Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Śrī Gaurāṅga, is to see the kingdom of the beloved Lord extended. And why? It is because men libel God Almighty by their attempts to please him. All their so-called praise of him

indirectly means that he is a wrathful, revengeful, and weak-minded tyrant. The Vaiṣṇavas know that he is infinite times better than that, and they want to proclaim this to the world. The reader will know by and by what we mean by the statement that God is being libelled by his creatures. Śrīmān continued: “We three, that is, Murāri, Sadāśiva and I, have been asked by Nimāi to repair this morning to the hut of Śuklāmbara, the ascetic, where he has promised to tell of the sorrows that are eating into his heart. I am going there direct.” Saying this, he left the place.

Gadādhara, who was present, also wanted to go. But he had not been invited by Nimāi; so he went to the house of Śuklāmbara, and concealed himself there. Soon afterwards the other two, Murāri and Sadāśiva, came; and they, with Śrīmān, sat in the outer part of the house, while Gadādhara remained concealed within the inner room, expecting Nimāi.

They saw Nimāi coming. A tall young man in blooming health, of immense physical strength, he was seen to totter at each step. It appeared to them from some distance that the external world had almost disappeared from his view, and that he was feeling his way towards them. He came with the unsteady step of a drunken man. Slowly he ascended the steps, and seeing his friends there, stopped as if to speak. But their sight gave a further impulse to his feelings which overcame him, and while ejaculating “My Kṛṣṇa” he lost his balance with a shriek. He instinctively clutched one of the wooden posts which supported the roof; but it broke with his weight, and with it he fell flat on the verandah floor. The three friends hastily rose to offer him help. But what did they see? They saw that his eyes were half-closed and fixed; that the pupils had almost disappeared behind the upper lids; that he had almost ceased to breathe; and that his jaws were locked immovably, while froth appeared between his lips.¹ Murāri, the physician, was alarmed, because Nimāi now seemed to have actually stopped breathing. They all began to take energetic steps to rouse him. They loudly called him by his name, sprinkled water on his face, and shook him violently.

After a time Nimāi, by these means, was brought back to consciousness. He tearfully looked at his attendants with a countenance which betokened unutterable sorrow, and endeavoured to speak, but could not. He touched his breast and informed them by signs, that “Kṛṣṇa is not here; He has fled.” When the power of speech returned to him, he began to lament, and in heart-rending accents delivered himself thus: “I captured my Kṛṣṇa, but he has escaped me. There is a void in my heart and the whole world cannot fill it. It is all emptiness and gloom. Where is he? Can no friend bring him back to me?” And in the agony of his distress, he began to roll on the dusty floor

¹The condition of a man in a state of trance under the influence of *bhakti* is very much like that of one stricken down by epilepsy; only the sight of an epileptic creates unpleasant feelings, and that of a pious man, in a trance, elevates the soul and imparts joy to those who behold him.

like “one stung by a thousand scorpions.”

After a while he rose and sat up, his gold-hued body and dishevelled hair covered with dust, and his eyes red from incessant weeping. There was such an inexpressible pathos in his accents and such indescribable misery depicted in his face, that those who attended him felt as if their hearts were bursting with grief. Nimāi endeavoured once more to speak, but his voice died in his throat, and he fell down again, a senseless mass!

Thus he continued to fall and rise. When he wanted to speak out his secret, his consciousness again gave way; and when again he recovered from his trance he again made a further attempt to disclose his secret. Thus hours glided away, and so engrossed were they all that they forgot the day was passing away. If Nimāi wept incessantly, so did his attendants. He at last saw that it would be impossible for him to tell his secret in the then state of his mind, and so he desisted.

It was nearing evening, and Nimāi was getting calm and recovering the possession of his senses. He then heard sobs in the house, which he had not been in a position to hear before. “Who is he?” asks Nimāi. They tell him it is Gadādhara. “Gadādhara? Is it Gadādhara?” says Nimāi. “Yes, Gadādhara, thou art a lucky man, thou hast spent thy days in devotion, while I have frittered them away in vain pursuits.” Hearing this, Gadādhara came from his hiding-place and fell at the feet of Nimāi. Gadādhara then said in faltering accents, “You know I am your slave, for ever and ever.”

They all conducted Nimāi home, a little before evening; and Śacī washed him, and induced him to break his fast. They had all fasted the whole day. Thus, the second attempt of Nimāi to tell his secret failed.

In the presence of company and mere acquaintances not very closely connected, Nimāi tried to repress the strange influence working within him, by every means in his power. Before such people he tried his best to conceal “the arrow stuck in his breast.” Yet it was simply impossible for him to conceal the fact that he had become a totally changed man. After coming from Gayā, he was in duty bound to repair to the house of those who were his elders, for the purpose of saluting them. Nimāi went for that purpose to Gaṅgādāsa, his preceptor. The famous grammarian received him with open arms and spoke to him in paternal terms. Said he: “It is well that you have come back from Gayā. Your pupils are disconsolate without you. Their resolve is to be taught by yourself and none else. They are doing nothing in your absence, and perhaps are forgetting what they had learnt. Open your *ṭola* at once. It is necessary for the sake of your students, and for the matter of that, for your own sake, Nimāi; for, if you continue to neglect your old habits of study, you will forget most of what you have learnt.”

Early the following morning Nimāi opened his *ṭola* and his pupils appeared one by one. He had come to the *ṭola* purely from habit; for, on his

way thither, he managed to forget not only whither and for what purpose he was going, but even himself. He sat in the midst of his pupils, absorbed in his own thoughts. The pupils, as is the custom, opened their books with the ejaculation of "Hari, Hari." The sound entered into the ears of Nimāi, and he immediately fell into a state of mental abstraction. He did not fall down, but became almost entirely oblivious of every body and every thing around him.

It was soon evident to the students that their preceptor was beside himself, for he commenced addressing them thus: "How sweet the word Hari is." He proceeded on, in this manner, discoursing on the merits of Hari for several hours together. He explained to them that God was great and good; that the object of existence was the attainment of his lotus feet; and he said many other things besides. His pupils heard him with rapt attention. But when it was getting on to noon, Nimāi suddenly regained his senses. He then recollected that he was Nimāi Paṇḍita, who had come to teach his pupils, and not to preach a sermon. This discovery led him to hang down his head in shame!

He slowly addressed the students thus: "It is late, let us now go home. As we have re-opened the *ṭola* to-day, it is well that we have passed it in discoursing about divine matters."

This explanation seemed very natural to the students; for, it is customary with the Hindus never to begin a work without first offering thanks to God.

On the following morning Nimāi again attended the *ṭola*. He came with the determination to teach, and to suppress the feelings that might arise in his heart. Unluckily for him, these got the better of him again; and he began, as on the previous day, to talk of Hari, his goodness, and so on. Now, as a matter of fact, the sermons of Nimāi did not create any feeling of disgust, nor give rise to any ridicule in the hearts of his pupils. For when Nimāi spoke, his voice sounded sweeter than celestial music, his ideas sparkled like gems, and his thoughts not only carried conviction, but soothed the soul. The students who had never given much thought to spiritual matters, moreover, succeeded in gleaning many facts important to them from the sermons. They discovered that the command which their *paṇḍita* had over the Sanskrit language was superhuman, that he was a poet of the highest order and a philosopher who was absolute master of his ideas. Nimāi was startled to find that on this day also he had preached a sermon, instead of imparting education. Again he felt humiliated, and promised in his own mind to give more attention to his duties the next day.

The morrow came, and precisely the same thing happened. The students did not know what to make of their preceptor. They saw that he was as powerful, competent and kind as ever, or rather that he exhibited these qualities in a higher degree than he had ever done before. But they could make no

progress in their studies. They had been able to make no progress during the months their preceptor had spent on his pilgrimage. They had been determined to make up their lost time by extra efforts when he should return. Their preceptor had come back and yet they felt that they were doing nothing.

The grown-up pupils, therefore, waited in deputation upon Paṇḍita Gaṅgādāsa, the preceptor of their preceptor, and told him all their sorrows. They told him that their preceptor, since his return from Gayā, had taught them nothing, but had devoted all the hours set apart for education to discourses about Śrī Kṛṣṇa and his goodness.

Gaṅgādāsa was pained to hear such an account of Nimāi, from whom he had expected much. He smiled, however, at the spectacle that was presented to his mind of young Nimāi, that boastful and aggressive scholar, suddenly converted into a saint and religious teacher! He suggested to the students that they should bring Nimāi to him on the following day, when he would direct him to pay more attention to his educational duties.

On the following afternoon, Nimāi, accompanied by his pupils, came to pay his respects to Gaṅgādāsa, and saluted him with great humility. Gaṅgādāsa blessed him with the words, “Be you a learned man,” and then began to admonish him. He reminded him that he was the son of a *paṇḍita* and himself a *paṇḍita* of renown, whose great learning and success as a teacher had more than repaid him (Gaṅgādāsa) for the pains he had taken to educate him. “But,” continued he, “I am told, Nimāi, that you now devote all your energy and abilities to the cause of religion, that you have become a saint, and are alike neglectful of your own studies and of the intellectual progress of those committed to your charge. No one could be better pleased than I am to learn that you have bowed your haughty head to the mild yoke of religion. But your uncommon abilities mark you out for a great future as a professor; and while I would on no account ask you to become less ardent in your religious faith, I implore you for the sake of the young men who attend your *ṭola* for secular instruction and who are ardently attached to you, to devote your energies and abilities to their advancement. Your pupils are determined never to go elsewhere, nor do they get their instruction at yours.”

Nimāi blushed with conscious guilt. He stammered out an apology and promised to pay more attention in the future to his educational work. Indeed, Nimāi was now in complete possession of himself, having, for the time being, fully extricated himself from the influence which had almost continuously kept him under its bondage, by coming thus in contact with his intellectual preceptor; and he returned with his pupils, like the Nimāi of old, entertaining them on the way with brilliant discourses, literary and philosophical. That evening they all assembled at the house of Ratnagarbha, a Brahmin belonging not only to Sylhet, but hailing from the very village where Nimāi's father,

Jagannātha, was born.

There Nimāi sat surrounded by his pupils, whom, as of old, he kept deeply engrossed with his intellectual conversation. His pupils, seeing that their preceptor was at last teaching them in his old style, were delighted, and listened to him with rapt attention. But alas! Poor Nimāi! Ratnagarbha was performing his evening devotions in his *pūjā*-house, as a part of which he recited loudly and feelingly a *śloka* (stanza) from the *Śrīmad Bhāgavata*, describing Śrī Kṛṣṇa. The sound and sense of the *śloka* entered the ears of Nimāi, and all his intellectual activity evaporated; and, like a bird shot from a tree, he fell flat on the floor ejaculating “My Kṛṣṇa!” in a state of complete trance!

Says Rādhā to her maids, “You advised me never to go to the Yamunā to bathe, lest I fall a victim to the bewitching beauty of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who lies in wait under a *kadamba* tree to steal the hearts of simple-minded maids—maids who resort to that river to wash themselves. Conscious of my own strength to resist him, I disregarded your advice. But alas! Alas! He has not only taken possession of me, but everything that belongs to me, even my individuality, and now wherever I cast my glance, I see nothing but Śrī Kṛṣṇa!” Thus Nimāi had left his preceptor with the resolution never to allow Śrī Kṛṣṇa to approach his heart again, but alas! A *śloka* about him from Ratnagarbha washed away all his resolution. And thus highly intellectual and learned men laugh at the so-called follies of the *bhaktas*, who believe in a good and lovely God; but if a ray of *bhakti* by any means enter their heart, all their so-called learning and wisdom are driven out of their mind, like mists before the rising sun. The proud savant, Sārvabhauma, had, in this manner, laughed at the so-called frolics of the Lord Nimāi; but when converted, he composed the famous couplet which means, “Let wise men laugh at us; but let us, in the meanwhile, drink the *bhakti* of Hari and dance and roll in the dust with the exess of our joy.”

Now this was the first occasion on which Nimāi had become affected in this way in public, and his pupils knew not what to do. Luckily, however, Gadādhara was present. Gadādhara had seen Nimāi in a similar trance before and consequently knew what should be done in order to revive him. After a long interval Nimāi regained consciousness; but the moment he did so he called out to Ratnagarbha to repeat the *śloka*. Ratnagarbha having complied, Nimāi again fell down in a deep trance. His condition not only excited wonder, but touched the heart of every one present. They all felt themselves irresistibly attracted towards God, and tears of divine joy ran down their cheeks. Passers-by, seeing the scene before them, were riveted to the spot and similarly affected. Nimāi recovered in the meantime and again exclaimed: “Repeat the *śloka*, repeat the *śloka*.” Ratnagarbha again repeated it and again Nimāi found himself unable to control himself!

Gadādhara loved Nimāi more dearly than he did his own life. He was therefore extremely pained to see his friend rolling on the ground, his gold-hued body besmeared with dust and tears coming down from his eyes as water does from a syringe. So when Nimāi again demanded of Ratnagarbha to repeat the *śloka*, Gadādhara requested him not to do so, and he desisted.

In the midst of these doings, Nimāi found an opportunity of rising and embracing Ratnagarbha, and the result was that the latter was immediately overpowered by *bhakti* for God, and converted into a new man—a man born again. From that moment he became Nimāi's for ever and ever. Those present now managed, after great efforts, to lead Nimāi to the Ganges, for the purpose of bathing him; and having thence brought him home safe and sound, they left him there to the care of his mother, and departed.

On the following morning Nimāi found himself in his *ṭola*, surrounded by his pupils. He seemed to his students to be a being higher than they. He looked divine in every way. From every part of his body shot forth the effulgence of holiness; his large eyes showed unutterable love for all; and his calm and chastened face gave evidence of unfathomable wisdom. Nimāi was absorbed in his own thoughts; but they gazed at him with awe, mingled with extreme tenderness. What they had seen the previous evening had created a thorough revolution in their minds. They felt convinced that their preceptor was more than human. Nimāi was about to speak under the influence that had overpowered him on previous days; but he succeeded in conquering it, though not without a great effort, and then he beckoned to his pupils to come near him.

They came, and Nimāi addressed them slowly and deliberately, and every word he uttered breathed the profoundest pathos. Said he: "Tell me, my friends, frankly, is it not a fact that you are now getting no help from me in your studies?" They remained silent with bent heads. "Yes," continued Nimāi, "I feel that you are getting no help from me. Tell me, please, what I do?" Nimāi was perfectly self-collected. He continued, "Tell me, friends, how I behave when I come here."

One of the students replied deferentially: "Paṇḍita, it is only too true that you do not now give us any instruction. You speak only of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. What you say is all true and good, and none of us doubts that the attainment of God is the goal of human life. But to listen to such discourses, however valuable in themselves, is not the object for which we students attend your *ṭola*."

Nimāi thought for a moment, and replied: "Yes, I seem to remember faintly that I speak to you of Śrī Kṛṣṇa and not of your lessons."

Another student now intervened and remarked: "Paṇḍita, since your return from Gayā, you have never addressed one word to us about our studies. Last night you fainted away on hearing a *śloka* recited. You probably do not remember anything about it; but we, who witnessed the scene, were

deeply impressed by your behaviour which clearly proved to us that of all human beings on earth, you are the most attached and favoured disciple of Śrī Kṛṣṇa.”

Nimāi gazed at the student who thus addressed him, while tears returned to his eyes. He replied with inexpressible pathos in his voice: “Yes, I have come to understand that you are getting no assistance from me. I have tried my utmost to direct my attention to your studies, but I have failed. Is it possible that my old malady, the insanity, has again taken possession of me?” This last sentence Nimāi addressed more to himself than to the students.

“No, that cannot be,” they replied as with one voice. “When you speak, sparkling gems fall from your lips. Your mastery over the subtlest ideas is marvellous. Your speech enthalls us and fills us with ecstasy. Your *bhakti* to God is beyond conception. No, sir, it can never be insanity.” When they had spoken, Nimāi resumed: “My friends, I will deal frankly with you, and reveal to you a secret which should not be told to others. It is this: When I am about to teach you, at that moment a child of dark complexion and of exquisite beauty appears before me, playing on his flute. The sight of him takes away my senses.” As he spoke, the image of the beautiful boy appeared before his mind’s eye, with the result that he was about to fall into a trance! But by great effort of the will he recovered himself, though it took him some time to recover from the effects of the influence. He thus concluded mournfully: “Therefore, my dear friends, teaching you is now out of my power. Nothing but Śrī Kṛṣṇa and matters concerning him come into my mind; my senses and my whole being have been taken entire possession of by him. So, dear friends, allow me to take leave of you. I freely give you leave to go wherever you choose for your education, and may the blessings of Śrī Kṛṣṇa always attend you! Forget me not as I shall never be able to forget you.” So saying, he looked tenderly at his students, and the professor of twenty-three burst into tears!

The pathos in Nimāi’s voice, his sentiments and sorrowful countenance, had a most powerful effect upon his students, and they too all burst into tears. They sobbed and wept, and could not utter a word in reply for some time. Said one at length, speaking for his fellow students as well as himself: “Here, then, our education ends—our dearly-loved education. Think not, Paṇḍita, that we can transfer ourselves to another professor; and even if we wished to do so, where should we find one so tender and so affectionate as you? We bid farewell then to education! Bless us, preceptor, that we may not forget what we have learnt at your feet.” Nimāi was visibly affected. He could not speak, but beckoned his pupils to come nearer. They came, and he caught hold of the nearest, placed him on his lap, smelt his head and kissed him. This done, he left him, and took another, and so on. They then all wept in a body devolved.

It now devolved on Nimāi to console his pupils, though himself inconsolable. He restrained his feelings as far as he could and said in a low tone: “Friends, if we are to part, let us part with a *Kṛṣṇa-kīrtana* (a song honoring Kṛṣṇa). Soothe my heart by singing one. Oblige me thus; and if I ever have been of any service to you, let this be adequate return.”

The students were then precisely in the state of mind which welcomes a pious demonstration in order to give vent to their surcharged hearts. So they eagerly exclaimed! “We will willingly do so, but what is *Kṛṣṇa-kīrtan*? Kindly explain it to us and teach us how to sing it.”

Nimāi said: “Let us sing in praise of that being who is so good, so merciful, so loving.” He sat in the middle, a picture of *bhakti* personified, while his students surrounded him. Keeping time with his hands, he began with his sonorous voice to sing, “Salutation to Kṛṣṇa, salutation to Hari.” As he began, he was filled with *bhakti*, and tears of joy poured from his eyes in floods. His tone, his look, nay, every movement of his limbs, imparted *bhakti* to the students, and they found themselves overpowered by it. The pathetic incident of leave-taking had softened their hearts, and the *bhakti* which now flowed from the preceptor found a welcome reception there. They joined in the song one by one, and soon found themselves drawn into the middle of the current. Gradually the external world began to grow dim and dimmer to their gaze—a holy joy filled their hearts. Some wept, though they shed only tears for joy. Some laughed, some trembled, some rolled on the ground, and some danced in the exuberance of their feelings. The commotion in the *ṭola* brought many spectators to the scene. They came as idle starers, but they too found themselves caught in the current. They all prostrated themselves before the preceptor who was then, as it were, “swimming in the river of *bhakti*.”

What Nimāi was doing, need not be described here. We shall have many occasions to do it. But what happened was this. Both the preceptor and the students were in a tender mood then. The song which they were learning from Nimāi opened the flood-gates of their surcharged hearts. The influence of *bhakti* upon their hearts gave a new turn to their feelings; and they, for the first time, learnt that it was altogether a pleasure to serve God. It then appeared to them that they had been fools to forget God and live the life of animals; that God was good and loving; and that they were bound to him by indissoluble ties of love,—that he was the fountain of bliss; and that the whole universe was the expression of joy as it emanated from him.

The joy that *bhakti* gives can be felt, but never adequately described by the puny wit of man. It was on that day thus that the truth was first revealed by Lord Gaurāṅga that it was not by austerities and mortifications that the companionship of God could be attained. Of course, by austerities men may possibly benefit themselves in many ways; but the companionship of God is a

quite different thing. The *bhakta* does not serve God as a light or a force, but as an ever-lasting companion, in whom all the yearnings of the heart find their fulfilment. Says Vāsudeva, one of the chroniclers of Nimāi's sayings and doings: "My Lord Gaurāṅga is like unto the philosopher's stone. My Lord converted the worst of sinners who were as black and as hard as iron, and made them as pure and soft as molten gold, not by subjecting them to fire (austerities) but by making them dance and sing in praise of God by his mere touch." It was then that the first *kṛṣṇa-kīrtana* was chanted by Gaurāṅga for the salvation of man. The original song still exists; and while it has lost much of the force with which it was originally charged when first revealed, it is still sung by Vaiṣṇavas and has force enough to make the *bhakta* who recites it beside himself with the fervour of the emotions it produces in him. Many of the pupils of Nimāi from that day gave up society, and dedicated themselves to the lotus feet of God. Thus ended the early sport of Nimāi,—the period of his intellectual culture.

Chapter Seven: The Envy of Rivals

Śacī knew not what to make of her son. He would not bathe unless forced; he would not eat unless made to do so. He seemed always absorbed in his own thoughts, and often-times perfectly unconscious. Tears never ceased to roll down his cheeks, and he was always in an attitude of devotion. If he spoke, he spoke of Kṛṣṇa; and if, for some moments, he regained his natural state and talked like other beings, he did not retain it long. He rarely saw company, outsiders never willingly. If they came across him, he tried to restrain his overcharged feelings, sometimes successfully and sometimes unsuccessfully. His friends, Gadādhara and others, always kept guard over him, in order that others might not annoy him in any way, or that Nimāi might not, in a fit of religious ecstasy, do any mischief to himself.

His rival professors again circulated the rumour that Nimāi Paṇḍita had been for a second time overtaken by his old malady, *i.e.*, insanity. And they did more; they forced themselves into Śacī's presence and began to frighten that simple-minded lady. They told her that she should take prompt steps for the recovery of her son who had become a hopeless maniac, and that he should be tied to a post, given only cold and liquid diet and kept immersed in water day and night. Of course, Śacī was frightened; but what could she do? She could not consult with her son. Indeed, she had ventured once or twice to sound him about the cause of his malady, and the only reply that she had got from him was that he knew that he was beside himself, that his attitude pained her, and that it was his duty, for her sake, to endeavour to restrain himself. But although he had, he said, done his best, he had not been able to shake off the influence that dominated him or to restrain his tears.

In despair, Śacī sent for Śrīvāsa, the friend of Nimāi's father, whom we have already spoken of. Why Śrīvāsa had not come to see Nimāi before is not known; perhaps he was not at home. But when he heard from Śacī about the state of Nimāi's health, he hastened to see what the matter was with her son. He saw Nimāi in a state of deepest possible devotion, his cheeks wet

with tears and his eyes red with constant weeping.

When Nimāi perceived the approach of Śrīvāsa, he rose to salute him. At one time Śrīvāsa had been an object of fun and ridicule to him as every Vaiṣṇava or *bhakta* was. But now the sight of a *bhakta* gave an ungovernable impulse to his devotional feelings. As he rose to salute Śrīvāsa, he fell down in a swoon! The trance was not, however, a very deep one, and Nimāi was soon restored to his senses.

Śrīvāsa saw with wonder the condition of Nimāi. From the moment he came there, he had been watching Nimāi with the greatest attention and curiosity. He saw that the symptoms which should attend the ecstasy of a pious man of the foremost rank, as described in the religious books, were present in the case of Nimāi. Nay, he saw more. He saw symptoms in Nimāi which had not been noted by any of the saintly writers, who had dealt with the subject. Indeed, the *bhakti* which he saw displayed by Nimāi, appeared to him something supernatural.

Nimāi knew that some people had said that he was mad, and that his mother had been advised to treat him as a lunatic. Indeed, he knew why his mother had gone to Śrīvāsa, and why Śrīvāsa had come to him. So having composed himself, he asked Śrīvāsa to tell him frankly what he thought of his condition. He said: "It is well, Paṇḍita, that you have come. You were a friend of my father and are a servant of Kṛṣṇa. People tell my mother that I have been again overtaken by my old malady, insanity. As for my opinion of the matter, all that I can say is that I cannot restrain my tears."

Śrīvāsa smiled, and then looking at Śacī, addressed her thus: "Why do you listen to what these silly people say? Your son has attained to *kṛṣṇa-prema*, the highest blessing of God to man. How is it possible for the irreligious to understand these celestial matters? Banish all anxiety from your heart on account of your son. I warrant you, your son will do wonders. Such marvellous *bhakti* means that God is coming or come."

Nimāi gratefully looked at Śrīvāsa and said, "People have called my condition madness, and if you were of the same opinion, I would immediately go and drown myself in the Ganges, and thereby put an end to my miserable existence; but as you have given hope, allow me to embrace you in return." So saying, Nimāi clasped Śrīvāsa to his breast.

A thrill of pleasure immediately passed through the entire frame of Śrīvāsa, and it took him some time to recover from the emotion. He then slowly remarked, "People call it madness do they? I wish you could oblige me by sharing with me some of your so-called insanity, even an infinitesimal portion of it, for I should then consider myself the most fortunate man in the universe. We have nothing to do with what those silly people say. Come to my house every night and we shall pass our time in worshipping Kṛṣṇa."

Nimāi agreed. Śacī no doubt felt somewhat reassured by what she had just

heard from Śrīvāsa; but yet she had not forgotten the wound that Viśvarūpa, her eldest son, had left in her heart, and she trembled to think that this love for Kṛṣṇa might also take her only son Nimāi away from home, and convert him into an ascetic like his elder brother.

Chapter Eight: His Morning Routine

Śrīvāsa had three brothers. All the four brothers messed¹ together, though each had a separate house in the same compound, enclosed within strong and high walls. Beside the four houses, Śrīvāsa had a small one where he performed his worship. In this house he kept an image of God, made of stone, which he worshipped daily. The intimate friends of Nimāi came to know that he had agreed to come to Śrīvāsa's house, and spend some time there every night in devotional exercises. Thus Murāri, Gadādhara, Mukunda, the famous singer of whom we have spoken before, and others came to attend the meetings.

Something must be said here as to how Nimāi passed his days. In the presence of his friends he did not make any effort to check the manifestation of the so-called malady that had overtaken him. But before outsiders he tried to restrain his feelings. Early in the morning he went to the Ganges to perform his ablutions; and Gadādhara and a few other intimate friends always accompanied him. If on these occasions he saw anyone with whom he was not intimate, he avoided them carefully unless he was some pious man, in which case he would bow to him and even prostrate himself at his feet, trying all the while to suppress an outburst of feeling. "What is it you are doing, Paṇḍita?"—was the general exclamation of those to whom he thus bowed. This was not to be wondered at, considering that in that city of learning Nimāi was deemed its literary king. In such case, a momentary surprise, mixed with confusion, gave way to compassion at the sight of Nimāi's extraordinary humility. Sometimes they were moved to tears. In fact, Nimāi, in his heart of hearts, felt himself "meaner than grass"; and, therefore, he was led by an inward impulse to fall at the feet of any person who had the reputation of being a *bhakta*. Sometimes he would take the basket of flowers from a *bhakta* proceeding to perform his worship at the river and carry it for him, or the clothes to be put on by him after bathing, or he would wring out the water

¹ ate

from his wet garments after he had bathed.

The persons thus honoured were abashed by these humble attentions paid to them by such a superior man, and invariably entreated Nimāi not to give himself such trouble. Nimāi as invariably replied to this effect: “I have heard that Kṛṣṇa vouchsafes his grace to him who serves a pious man. Why, then, would you deprive me of such a simple and agreeable way of winning his favour?” Humility softens the heart of those who witness it, especially when it is shown by a great personage. One may therefore easily perceive the mighty effect of Nimāi’s uncommon humility upon those whom he thus served and those who witnessed the service. Every pious man who chanced to meet Nimāi would greet him with the blessing, “May Kṛṣṇa grant you his grace!” Nimāi on such occasions would reply: “Since you, his *bhaktas*, are so kind to me, Kṛṣṇa no doubt will bless me.”

Nimāi’s unparalleled humility surprised and moved not only the *bhaktas*, but even men of the world. He soon became the topic of conversation in many circles. Among these learned men whose fame had been eclipsed by that of Nimāi, there were some who spoke of him spitefully. But no one who had once seen him and observed his simplicity, humility, earnestness, piety, and the pathetic expression of his countenance, however jealous he might be of Nimāi’s reputation, could any longer bear an ill will towards him. His countenance showed him to be utterly without guile. He looked the *avatāra* of simplicity, honesty, and sweetness.

Pious Vaiṣṇavas, very glad at heart, went in a body to Advaita to convey to him the tidings of Nimāi’s extraordinary piety. He was, as we have said, the head of the Vaiṣṇava community of Nadia. At his house the Vaiṣṇavas were accustomed to hold meetings at which Vaiṣṇava books were read, conversations about Kṛṣṇa held, and hymns chanted. At one of these meetings, a Vaiṣṇava announced that Nimāi Paṇḍita, who, having overcome the most learned men, had declared himself matchless in the world of learning and scoffed at religion, was now the humblest of men; so deep were his feelings of devotion that he seemed more than mortal.

This information visibly affected Advaita. He said: “I have always noticed something remarkable in Nimāi. When a child of four or five he often came here, at the bidding of his mother, to fetch his elder brother, Viśvarūpa, home. He then attracted my attention. As a humble servant of Śrī Kṛṣṇa I was not likely to be captivated by the mere physical beauty which undoubtedly the child possessed; but there was a spiritual light in his eyes, and a heavenly sweetness in his expression, such as I had never observed in any child before and which caused me to ask myself: ‘Who and what may he be?’ I have often repeated the question since; but not until last night was an explanation vouchsafed me. It came in this wise:

“Not understanding a passage of the *Bhagavad-gītā*, whose literal meaning

seemed opposed to all our pre-conceived notions, I had fasted and prayed to Śrī Kṛṣṇa to enlighten me and remove my doubts.² Well, having gone to sleep last night, I dreamt that some one was calling me by name. The being said: ‘Get up, Ācārya, and listen to the explanation of the passage you have failed to understand.’ Then the true reading of the *śloka* was told me and the explanation I received was perfectly satisfactory. The being then added: ‘Grieve no more; your prayer has been heard: I myself am come to teach the ways of salvation to man.’ I opened my eyes, and saw Nimāi standing before me! Presently he vanished from my sight. From that moment my soul has been filled with joy. It may, of course, have been merely a hallucination. There is no doubt, however, that if Nimāi, the grandson and son of two great *paṇḍitas* and himself a *paṇḍita* of unrivalled powers, becomes a *bhakta*, he will be of great service to humanity. But if he be really the he whom we are expecting, he is bound to come to me and prove to me that he is none other than my beloved Lord.”

Advaita had so strong a faith in the coming of the Lord that he was led to look at the matter from a practical point of view. God’s creatures were suffering, and he had prayed to him to come and relieve their sorrows. He was convinced in his mind that God had listened to his prayer and that he was coming. What, again, could be more natural than that he should seek Advaita and announce himself to him?

Nimāi was at the time meditating a visit to Advaita, with the object of asking him to intercede for him with God. But Advaita was a saint. He was recognized by all the Vaiṣṇavas as such. Nimāi’s father, Jagannātha, treated him as he would do an inspired man possessed of more than human powers. How then was Nimāi, who in his humility esteemed himself meaner than the grass under his feet, to venture on approaching him? At length, however, he summoned up the courage to go, but not without the precaution of taking Gadādhara with him as a companion. The idea that he was going to see a saint and the head of the Vaiṣṇavas, filled his heart with fervid emotion. As he neared Advaita’s house, he was almost beside himself with anxiety; and when having entered, he saw the old saint at his devotions, with a light that seemed divine shining in his *bhakti*-inspiring face, he wished to throw himself at his feet. He succeeded in advancing a step or two towards the saint, when suddenly uttering a piercing cry, he fell flat on the earth in a deep swoon!

The cry which Nimāi uttered drew the attention of Advaita, who at once realised the scene before him. He perceived that Nimāi had come to visit him and had fainted away in the excess of his emotion. For, as an eminent *bhakta* himself, he had frequent experiences of the kind. He gazed at the golden figure that lay prostrate before him with wonder, bewilderment, and

²Whenever the rendering of a *śloka* in a book which is authoritative seems obnoxious, the *bhakta*, as a rule, prays and refuses food till his doubts have been removed.

joy. “How beautiful his form!” thought he, “And impressed with what transcendent grace! God is described as the most beautiful and graceful being in existence—a description which might be applied to this youth, whose every pore, moreover, seems to emit a divine spark. My Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa is described as of a dark complexion, while this young man is of the colour of gold. But mysterious are his ways!”

The more Advaita gazed, the more enthralled he found himself! He recalled his dream, and the recollection of it moved him powerfully. He found himself, in spite of his efforts to check it, overcome by an irresistible belief, which so affected his heart that he could no longer restrain his feelings, to which he gave vent in these words:

“So thou art come, my beloved! They call thee merciful. This condescension of thy coming amongst us puny creatures is a proof of thy infinite mercy. I am delighted beyond expression to see thee in our midst and in such a beautiful form.” Advaita was a rigid observer of forms, and now suddenly recollected that he had not worshipped his great guest in due form. Remembering this, he hastened to bring flowers, Ganges water, and other necessary materials for the purpose; and with these he worshipped the feet of Nimāi, chanting the well-known *śloka* “salutation to Śrī Kṛṣṇa,”³ etc., which is uttered by a *bhakta* when worshipping God.

Now, according to the prevailing belief, when a superior pays undue reverence to an inferior, the latter is sooner or later overtaken by misfortune. Gadādhara was pained, therefore, to see the old saint of seventy-five, Advaita, worshipping the feet of his young friend, Nimāi. In a tone of protest he remarked to the saint that as his young friend had not done him any injury it was unkind of him, an old *bhakta*, to bring misfortune upon an innocent youth by showing him the reverence due only to God. Advaita stared at Gadādhara, and for the first time perceived his presence. He smiled and observed: “You will soon know, Gadādhara, what sort of being your young friend is.”

“Is my friend, then, Śrī Kṛṣṇa himself?” thought Gadādhara in his mind. “That must be so, when the great saint Advaita himself testifies to it,” thought Gadādhara again. The idea, however, that his young friend, Nimāi, might be Śrī Kṛṣṇa himself, did not give him unalloyed pleasure. Before this he was Nimāi’s friend and Nimāi was his; but now he seemed suddenly to discover an impassable gulf between them.

In the meantime, Nimāi, awaking from his trance, opened his eyes. Seing

³The verse meant here was the well-known offering to Kṛṣṇa:

नमो ब्रह्मण्यदेवाय गोब्राह्मणहिताय च ।
जगद्धिताय कृष्णाय गोविन्दाय नमो नमः ॥

I bow to the god of sacred knowledge, who is favorable to cows and brāhmaṇas and to the whole world. Unto that Kṛṣṇa who is also Govinda I repeatedly bow.

Advaita kneeling at his feet, he hastily arose and bowed to him with great reverence.

He then said, addressing Advaita, “Goswami! Rescue me from the sea of worldliness wherein I am drowning. Lead me to the lotus feet of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, thou world-famed *bhakta*.”

Nimāi was proceeding in this fashion, when Advaita, uttering some words the while, hastily withdrew, whereupon Nimāi and Gadādhara rose and went home, leaving Advaita alone to his meditations.

When Nimāi spoke to him as might a novice asking him for spiritual favours, Advaita was disappointed. “Why should Kṛṣṇa, if Nimāi were he, speak to me in this fashion?” thought he. “Was I then mistaken in supposing him to be Kṛṣṇa himself?” Nimāi’s presence had enthralled his soul; but now that he was gone, Advaita felt himself quite free from his influence. He wondered at his own stupidity and folly in paying divine homage at the spur of the moment, without inquiry, to one who was no other than the son of Jagannātha—a lad whom, but the other day, he had seen naked in the street. What was the strange influence that had blinded his eyes? thought Advaita. And he censured his folly in having paid divine homage to Nimāi in the presence of Gadādhara. He felt himself humiliated; and to avoid a scandal, he fled to his home at Śāntipura. He muttered to himself, while proceeding home, “If Nimāi be really he, he will no doubt seek me out.”

Chapter Nine: The First Sight

According to arrangement, Nimāi at nightfall proceeded to Śrīvāsa's house. The object of this old and pious Vaiṣṇava was to experiment with Nimāi who seemed to him to be a very sensitive subject. He expected manifestations relating to the mysteries of the other world through him. There were others also who assembled,—all friends of Nimāi, such as Gadādhara, Murāri, Mukunda, Śrīmān and others. When they had sat down, Nimāi again attempted to reveal his secret to them, but he fainted away!

This incident did not strike many of those present as anything unusual, as most of them had witnessed him in similar swooning fits before. So they began to adopt all the methods they knew to bring him round. Nimāi recovered his senses, though only partially; for he began to bewail his fate in these words: "I have found my Kṛṣṇa, but I have lost Him!" Now these words were simple, but they affected those present most powerfully, uttered as they were with the deepest pathos by Nimāi. Have you ever seen the spectacle of an affectionate mother who had just lost her only son? If you have, you can form a faint picture of the spectacle that Nimāi presented to his companions. To him Śrī Kṛṣṇa was a reality; to him his loss was real. He had actually found his God, and he had actually lost him. Now you can realize to some extent how he felt. The pathetic tone of his voice "would melt a stone." The sorrow revealed thereby made the hearts bleed of those who perceived it. This effect, which his deep-seated sorrow produced upon his body, proved the intensity of the anguish that consumed him. Thus, he rolled on the ground as if stung by "a thousand scorpions," because of having lost Kṛṣṇa.

We shall presently describe how his bereavement affected him both in mind and body. Now, whether it was due to the spectacle before them, or to the influence which Nimāi involuntarily communicated to anyone who approached him, those who were attending on him were violently moved. Thus everyone wept with Nimāi, though they did not precisely know what they were weeping for. Powerfully affected as they were, they had yet enough

sense left in them to comprehend that they were not acting like sane and sober men of the world. “What may all this mean?” said they to themselves. “Are we men or ethereal beings? Are we still on earth or have we been transported to spiritual regions? Has Nimāi, as a celestial being, or even Kṛṣṇa himself, carried us with him thither?” Thus they spoke to one another in the momentary lucid intervals they occasionally enjoyed between the spells of ecstatic rapture which held them in bondage, beyond the limits of self-consciousness, throughout the long wintry night. They only knew that they had entered and remained for hours in a state of transcendental, spiritual emotion beyond the power of memory to convey or reason to analyse.

In the morning Nimāi came home, and with returning darkness, again accompanied by his friends, repaired to the house of Śrīvāsa. Again he attempted to disclose his secret, and again he failed. The utmost that he could achieve, during his moments of semi-consciousness, was the utterance of a word or two which suggested the nature of the burden that was on his mind. Sometimes he would clasp the neck of one of his attendants and declare, “Brother, bring back to me my Kṛṣṇa and thereby save my life.” To another he would say “Yield yourself up to Kṛṣṇa, brother, for there is none like him.”

He eventually succeeded, however, in disclosing the secret which he had attempted so often to tell them and always without success. He said, “Brothers! Listen to the story of my grief: how having found Kṛṣṇa I lost him again. I beheld one morning at Kanāi-naṭaśālā¹ a boy of dark complexion coming towards me. His beauty surpasses imagination. His tender and bewitching gaze enthralled my heart. He approached me smiling, as if his love for me knew no bounds, and such was the light in his countenance that he seemed the very incarnation of joy. He danced with delight as he came, and the jingling of his anklets sounded like celestial music. Having approached, he embraced me!”

Nimāi could proceed no further. After several futile attempts he had been able partially to disclose the sorrow that pressed upon his heart. But before he could complete his narrative, he was overtaken by a death-like swoon. The recollection that he had been embraced by Śrī Kṛṣṇa, overwhelmed him completely!

His attendants could observe no sign of life in him whatsoever; for, not only had he ceased to breathe, but his heart had ceased to beat. He seemed, to all intents and purposes, dead. His attendants were consequently very much alarmed. They had never before seen Nimāi in a trance so deep and death-like. They feared that he was lost to them forever; that Śrī Kṛṣṇa had allowed him to survive so long only that he might disclose the story to his *bhaktas*, and had now taken him to himself. Hours passed in this manner, and Nimāi regained consciousness only when it was near morning.

¹This is near Gauḍa, then the capital city of Bengal.

One or two words of explanation are necessary here. We have already seen that the object of Kṛṣṇa's sport was to furnish mankind with the means of salvation through the heart, that is to say, by *bhakti* and divine love (*prema*) for God. We have also said that one of the objects of the descent (*avatāra*) of Śrī Gaurāṅga was not only to bear witness to the truth of Kṛṣṇa's sport, but also to show by its practical application how men might attain to God through its means, Śrī Gaurāṅga himself acting the part of the *bhakta*. In fact, as practice is better than precept, he became a *bhakta* to show how one ought to act in order to attain to God.

In Kṛṣṇa's sport we have seen that Rādhā bathed every day in the Yamunā river to purify herself, and that one day as she was coming home she saw Kṛṣṇa gazing tenderly at her. Thus commenced her attraction for Kṛṣṇa. Nīmāi was initiated by Ívara Purī at Gayā, and was thus purified, even as if he had bathed with that object in the Yamunā. Subsequently, he and Kṛṣṇa met at Kanāi-naṭaśālā and Nīmāi was fascinated. Thus the *pūrva-rāga* or first attraction of Nīmāi for Śrī Kṛṣṇa commenced.

The reader is referred to the short description given before regarding the manner in which Rādhā was affected, according to the *Bhāgavata*, by her *pūrva-rāga*. But Nīmāi was many times more powerfully affected than even Rādhā was. In short, Nīmāi manifested *pūrva-rāga* for God in a way never dreamt of by the Vaiṣṇava philosophy. Thus the *Śrīmad Bhāgavata* says that love for Kṛṣṇa is evidenced by eight external signs, namely, weeping, laughter, shivering, sweating, *pulaka* (i.e., the hair of the body standing erect), fainting, etc.² But the symptoms that developed in Nīmāi were many times more than eight. Overtaken by *pūrva-rāga*, Nīmāi became wholly and entirely subject to its influence. He lost all control over his emotions and constantly complained that he could not restrain his tears. He became; as we know, the meekest of men and his *bhakti* transcended all human experience. His sorrowful countenance and melancholic air created a feeling of sympathy in all who beheld him. Then he became absent-minded, careless of everything worldly, and constantly engaged in devotion. There was not a moment when he was not communing with Śrī Kṛṣṇa. His self-possession frequently left him; indeed, he was far more often under the influence of the holy spirit than not. Karṇapūra, the author of *Kṛṣṇacaitanya-caritāmṛta*, thus describes the state of *pūrva-rāga* as observed in the Lord Nīmāi:

“He weeps incessantly from dawn to dark. When evening comes he asks if it is morn, and argues out the matter in his mind. Anon he says: ‘Tis morn, for there is light.’ Notion of time is completely

²The group of *sāttvika-bhāvas*, outward signs of inner powerful emotion, mentioned here are given as eight, not in the *Bhāgavata*, but in the *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* (“Ocean of the Nectar of Devotion”) of Rūpa Gosvāmin at 2.3.12. Laughter is not included there. The remaining three are paralysis, cracking of the voice, and loss of color. (ed.)

lost. Soon as he hears the name of God pronounced, prostrate he falls and rolls in the dust, and quakes from head to foot, and heaves forth sighs, while shedding ceaseless showers of tears of love.”³

His tears are always eager to flow, but in the presence of strangers he makes great efforts to suppress them. He rises up in the morning, and tears of joy⁴ rush from his eyes. While he washes his face he sheds tears. At breakfast, he sits absorbed in divine contemplation and touches hardly anything. It is only at the earnest entreaty of his mother, Śacī, that he takes a few mouthfuls of food. He lies down at noon to rest himself, but only wets his pillow with his tears.

So engrossed was he with the contemplation of Kṛṣṇa that he could think or speak of nothing which did not concern him. As we have said before, the presence of a discordant element in the shape of a stranger or outsider interrupted the force of the influence that was upon him, so that he was generally able to restrain his emotions. But when a friend came to see him, a very opposite effect was produced in him. To the friend he would ask questions like these: “Has Śrī Kṛṣṇa been your way?” Or “Have you met Śrī Kṛṣṇa?” Or “Can you tell me where Śrī Kṛṣṇa has fled to?” These questions he would ask with such simplicity and earnestness that the person to whom they were addressed would immediately burst into tears. Nīmāi, surprised at the outburst, would anxiously ask his friend: “Why do you weep? Is it because Śrī Kṛṣṇa will not come again?” And then he would himself burst into tears on realizing that he had been raving all the while!

One day Gadādhara approached him with *pāna* (betel nut) in his hand,

³Kavikarṇapūra, *Śrīkṛṣṇa-caitanya-caritāmṛta*, 5.10-12:

प्रत्यूषप्रभृति दिनं समस्तमेव
प्रेमाश्रुप्रचुरवरै रुदन् विनीय ।
यामिन्यां भवति सति प्रभुः प्रबोधे
वैकल्यादिनमिति तर्कयाम्बभूव ॥
सन्ध्यायां किमपि रुदन् विमुक्तकण्ठः
प्रातः स्यात् कथमपि चेद्विहिः प्रबोधः ।
तन्नक्तं व्रजति कियत् कदेति गौरो
वैकल्याद्वदति तस्य कालभेदः ॥
नामैकं श्रवणपथं यदैव गच्छे-
त्तत्सोऽयं भुवि विलुठन् बलप्रकामम ।
द्राघिष्ठैः श्वसनसमीरणैः सकम्पै-
र्नेत्रान्तप्रस्रसरधारया च रेजे ॥

This is a very loose translation of these three verses! (ed.)

⁴There is a vast difference between weeping and shedding tears from *bhakti* or *prema* for God. Thus a man, when suffering, weeps; and a man under the divine influence “sheds tears of joy.” Later on the manner in which the heart is exercised by these divine influences and worldly feelings will be explained. Be it noted here that so good is Śrī Kṛṣṇa that even the devotee who bitterly weeps from his separation from him all the while enjoys supreme felicity.

and he eagerly asked: “Gadādhara, where is my Kṛṣṇa?” Gadādhara, used to such questions, did not pay any particular regard to the query, and simply replied: “He is within your heart; where else should he be?” Nimāi believing that he would now be able to seize his beloved, exclaimed:—“He is in this bosom, you say?” And at once he attempted to tear open his breast with his fingers! Gadādhara and Śacī both caught hold of his hands to prevent him from wounding himself, and tried to soothe him. “Gadādhara,” said Śacī, “you are a sensible child, you have saved my Nimāi’s life. Were you not near, he would have killed himself. Even as it is, he has wounded his breast with his nails, and blood is flowing from the wounds.” And, as a matter of fact, blood was trickling down his breast profusely from the wounds inflicted on himself.

Nimāi now began to see Kṛṣṇa in everything and everywhere, awake or asleep, in the air, on the water, in the wood, on the plain,—in fact, the whole world to him was full of Kṛṣṇa. Sometimes he would actually speak to him in a state of ecstasy; sometimes he would shed tears of joy and describe his beauty in a state of semi-consciousness to his friends; and sometimes he would weep on missing him. He scarcely took any notice of those who surrounded him. He was conscious only of his Kṛṣṇa, and of nothing else. Neither could he perceive the necessity of the existence of any other being but Kṛṣṇa. People did not understand the state he was in. Indeed, he did not hear what others said to him, or if he did, he seemed not to understand them. When he returned to his senses he could not remember what had happened to him during his state of unconsciousness, and the little that he remembered had the vagueness of a dream. In the latter case he would sometimes ask his friends or his mother to pardon him for anything incoherent that he might have said when he had lost all control over himself. Sometimes he would ask his friends to tell him what he had done or said in the state of trance. His friends, however, did not always disclose to him all that he wanted to know.

Following in the wake of the saints who have recorded the doings of Lord Nimāi, I must give here some more definite particulars as to how the influence upon him began its operations, and how it, for some time, completely mastered him. It must be borne in mind that when Nimāi was invited by Śrīvāsa to pass the evenings with him, the latter had no definite idea as to how he would utilise the time with his invited guest. But shortly after the meetings began to be held, Śrīvāsa and his friends saw strange manifestations thereat, of which Nimāi was the medium. This led them to continue the experiments night after night. The manifestations seemed marvellous; so, to prevent interruption, no outsiders were admitted, during their sittings, to the house of Śrīvāsa, which was protected by a high wall all round, and a strong door.

They had two objects in view in carrying on the experiments. Firstly, the

manifestations seemed so curious as to lead them to expect most important results from them. Secondly, they felt themselves overcome, they knew not how, by a celestial joy when in the company of Nimāi. It was, therefore, the most ardent wish of those who had passed a night with Nimāi once, to come again, and never let slip an opportunity of attending the seances. Every evening they assembled and strongly bolted the door from the inside, after which no one was permitted to enter the house of Śrīvāsa until the seance was over. Gaṅgādāsa, a *bhakta*, was the fortunate man appointed to keep guard at the door.

We have called the meetings “seances,” and the divine manifestations, experiments, advisedly. When Nimāi first attended the meetings it was found that he was influenced by a power exterior to himself, which, and not his own soul, controlled his thoughts and actions. This influence, day by day, increased in power, until it obtained complete possession of him. Indeed, eventually the influence obtained so much control over him that he sometimes ceased to be Nimāi Paṇḍita altogether. In time, Nimāi obtained ascendancy over his influence and brought it into subjection; but of that hereafter.

As the influence began to exercise authority over Nimāi, it was found that he was gradually losing control over his own body, his own senses, nay, over his very soul. When he wanted to say something, the influence prevented him; and when the influence wanted to make him speak or act, he involuntarily resisted it. And thus there was a struggle between the influence and Nimāi, and the result was external manifestations frequently accompanied or followed by violent contortions of Nimāi’s body. For instance, the influence would urge Nimāi to say that he was Akrūra, the person who led Kṛṣṇa from Brindaban to Mathura. But Nimāi would refuse. Then there was a contest, in which the influence would eventually win, and impel Nimāi to declare that he was Akrūra.

Let us, in this place, notice the minute description given by the saints, his chroniclers, regarding the manner in which the influence affected his body and mind. Now Nimāi weeps, and he weeps for hours together. When he weeps, sometimes he cannot assign any cause for his weeping. Sometimes he tries to explain himself but cannot; and sometimes he tells his companions what he is weeping for, because Kṛṣṇa has forsaken him. The weeping is accompanied by floods of tears, which actually make the earth, where they fall, muddy. Tears gush from his eyes as water from a fountain.

The mood changes, and then he begins to laugh, and he laughs for an hour together. The weeping makes his companions weep with him, and the laughter makes them laugh. Sometimes he cannot or, at least, does not explain the cause of his laughing; sometimes he does, to the effect that it is impossible for Kṛṣṇa, the loving Lord, to leave him, for he has chained him in his heart.

It soon came to be perceived that if one symptom appeared, the opposite was sure to follow. For instance, when there was weeping, laughter was sure to be the next manifestation; and when there was laughter, weeping was sure to follow. Not that one was to follow the other immediately as a matter of course; but it was clearly established that if a strange symptom manifested itself one day, a contrary one was sure to appear sooner or later. Thus, as I said previously, laughter followed weeping, and *vice versa*. Sweating was one of the symptoms which sometimes occurred as a result of the influence; it was, however, so very unusual that it created wonder. This sweating is thus described in the *Caitanya-bhāgavata*:

Whenever the Lord perspired,
The Gaṅgā herself seemed to flow from him.⁵

Then again, his body would become dry and hot to such an extent that even when big jars of water were emptied thereon, its pores absorbed it all instantly. There was thus an ebb and flow of water through the skin. Sometimes there was a violent shivering and a chattering of the teeth, and sometimes the body became so rigid that it seemed to be made of a single piece of some unyielding material.

Sometimes breathing was suspended altogether, and sometimes it became so strong that a storm was blowing and those who sat before him had to move aside to give it passage, so violent was the shock they received.

Sometimes Nimāi's body became so heavy that it could be lifted only with great difficulty, and sometimes it became so light that each of his companions, weak or strong, could in turn take him up in his arms,—a full-grown man something like seven feet high,—and then dance with joy. Indeed, his body sometimes became so light that he was seen to float in the air, though only for a few moments.

Sometimes he formed his body into a circle by bringing his feet into touch with his head, and turned round and round in the yard of Śrīvāsa like a wheel. Sometimes there was so violent a hiccup, that the sufferer Nimāi, became quite restless on that account. Sometimes his bright countenance became pale or colourless, sometimes red, and sometimes dark. Sometimes the colour of his eyes also changed; indeed, sometimes they exhibited two different tints. Sometimes the hair stood on end all over his body with plum-like pimples at their roots from which blood oozed.

We have already said that his limbs sometimes became so stiff that they could hardly be bent. Sometimes, on the other hand, they became so soft and

⁵Vṛndāvana Dāsa, *Caitanya-bhāgavata*, 2.8.158:

ক্ষণে ক্ষণে মহাশ্বেদ হয় কলেবরে|
মূর্তিমতী গঙ্গা যেন আইলা শরীরে||

pliable that his body seemed to be altogether destitute of bones. Sometimes he moved about on all fours, and sometimes he danced as if he had no control over his movements.

In the midst of these manifestations, he would sometimes impersonate other people, especially those who had figured during the time of Kṛṣṇa, and sometimes he would talk as the baby Śrī Kṛṣṇa used to do.

Gradually the manifestations became more coherent and graceful. Those in the spiritual world can communicate with those on earth in a material form only through matter. It is thus that spirits communicate with men. The spirit takes possession of the body of a man suitable to its purposes, and then opens communications with mankind. The higher spirits have to avail themselves of highly-organised bodies to give expression to their elevated thoughts. The highest spiritual existence is God himself. A wise master never breaks the laws made by himself, and the wisest master in existence, God, certainly does not do so. God, therefore, in order to communicate with man, must adopt the same means as other spirits do. Higher spirits need highly-organized bodies to serve their purpose. God, himself perfect, needs a perfect specimen of human organisation. Such was the body of Nimāi, which he created, appropriated and adopted for the purpose of associating with mankind, not only to converse with them but to act with them.

This body of Nimāi, though made perfect by God for his own purposes, had to be nourished, however, in this world of imperfections and impurities. And thus some of these necessarily attached themselves to Nimāi's body, which had to be divested of them, chastened, and gradually perfected to serve the purpose for which it was created. Thus the body had first its fits, which ignorant people called insanity; and then a fever which purified it so much as to enable it to receive and nourish the divine influence instilled into it. This divine influence next subjected the body to a thorough process of development and purification; the whole body was made to undergo a thorough preparation for the purpose of receiving the Great Soul of all souls. It was this process of preparation that caused the outwardly visible and wonderful manifestations in Nimāi.⁶

⁶Intelligent people will go to Siberia to examine the bones of a mastodon; but they will not move a finger to ascertain the fact whether they shall live or not after death. Yet this all-important fact can be ascertained by a very simple process. "Possessions" take place frequently, and there is not one village in the world which cannot furnish an example. Men who pretend to be wise take no notice of such occurrences. They attribute the manifestation either to disease or roguery. It is quite true that fits are oftentimes mistaken for possessions, and also that people pretend they are possessed for the purpose of deception. But a little patience will furnish the honest inquirer with a true case; and if he be fortunate enough to get hold of such a one he will thereby earn for himself a blessing which is much more valuable than a kingdom. For such an incident will prove to him the immortality of the soul. Being furnished with such information, he will be able to defy the miseries of this world. Besides, it will lead him to be good and pious, and enable him to trample worldly temptations under foot. A true case of possession will also prove that the *avatāra* (descent) of God is possible under the laws of nature. Through a human

We have stated before that when a symptom appeared in his person, it was an intimation that the exactly opposite symptom would next manifest itself, sooner or later. This was also true in regard to his mental state. When, for instance, there was grief, joy was sure to follow. The fact is, Nimāi was subjected to two different states of mind: At one time he felt that Śrī Kṛṣṇa had abandoned him, and then he showed all the symptoms of unutterable grief. Indeed, in the depth of his sorrow he would swoon away, and that repeatedly. His companions imbibed the spirit from him, and felt as he did, though, of course not in an equal degree. But the mood changes again, and Nimāi feels that Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa is with him, and then he shows all the manifestations of intense joy. And as in the case of sorrow, so in the case of joy, he falls down in a swoon from the very excess of his emotion. His companions receive a portion of the joy, and a drop is enough literally to make them delirious with it.

During the first few nights they did nothing definite. The companionship of Nimāi imparted to his attendants an irresistible flow of *bhakti*; they drank it, and became intoxicated with it. They passed their nights in holy joy; and when morning dawned they reproved the sun for disturbing them in the midst of their celestial happiness. In the excess of his joy, Nimāi at length began to dance; and when he danced, his companions were irresistibly led to follow his example, step by step. By and by, the musical instruments, necessary to accompany the *kīrtana*, were introduced. This *kīrtana*, in the beginning, was nothing more than the several names of Śrī Kṛṣṇa strung together and set to music. No sooner was the *kīrtana* began than Nimāi was overpowered by emotion. We have noticed above what Kavi Karṇapūra said in his *Kṛṣṇacaitanya-caritāmṛta-kāvya*, namely, that the Lord fell down in a

body, perfectly formed, God Almighty can manifest so much of himself as is conceivable by, and therefore necessary for, man; for man cannot conceive of a being who is different from himself fundamentally. You can give God Almighty many high attributes such as illimitability and so forth, but they will convey no definite idea to the human mind. Man can conceive of God only as a man,—only perfect, perfect in every thing. The rational basis given for the *avatāra* will possibly not be approved of by a class of Vaiṣṇavas, who, in their excess of *bhakti* for Śrī Gaurāṅga, maintain that the person of the Lord is a constant quantity. We have, however, to found the sport upon a rational basis or it will not be accepted by a large class of people. For ourselves we do not see, however, much practical difference in the theory propounded and the creed of a certain class of Vaiṣṇavas referred to. This aspect of the question will be thoroughly discussed hereafter.

The belief in “possessions” is universal, and that is proof enough that it is based upon positive fact. In Europe, the belief in possession does not obtain that hold now as it did during the Middle Ages. The Bible itself testifies to it,—indeed, every holy book in the world does so. Dealings, however, with dark spirits are prohibited: try the spirits, says the Bible. Among the Hindus there is precisely the same injunction. Indeed a belief in possession led to a good deal of mischief in Europe; but then there is an abuse of everything. The question before us is not whether dealings with spirits are conducive to the well-being of men or not, but whether “possession” is a fact or not. One who believes in the Bible cannot deny it.

swoon as soon as the name of Śrī Kṛṣṇa was uttered in his hearing.⁷ That being the case, one can get some idea of how it affected Nimāi when these sweet names of his beloved Lord were strung together and set to music! Either he fainted away outright or he danced in the excess of his joy, utterly unconscious of the fact that, being a great *paṇḍita*, dancing in his normal state was an abomination to him.

We have translated below a few passages from the author's Bengali work on this subject, giving a description of Nimāi's *kīrtana* as it was in the beginning.

"The *saṅkīrtana* or chanting of hymns by Nimāi and his companions, was unlike anything then known. The musical instruments used on the occasion, were the *khola* (a sort of long drum) and the *karatāla* (cymbal). The tune of the hymns was simple, yet sublime and soul-moving. After the instruments had been played in concert for a while, during which the singers composed and concentrated their minds, the chanting of the hymns commences. Nimāi, beside himself with *bhakti*, rises up and begins to dance. His companions, in a moment, being as it were, electrified by his performance, join Nimāi. Nimāi dances on, with uplifted arms and with eyes turned upwards, and from time to time, cries out, *Haribala* (pronounced Haribol), which means, 'say Hari,' or simply *bala bala* (bol bol). In the course of the *kīrtana* the members often exhibited many external signs of deep emotion. They would become senseless, or roll on the ground, embrace one another, cry and laugh alternately, and sometimes, as with one voice, make the sky resound with the ejaculation of 'Haribala, Hari!' The scene that presented itself was a heavenly one. The soul of the *kīrtana* was, of course, Nimāi, whose influence awoke profound religious enthusiasm in his companions, who felt themselves immersed, as it were, in a 'sea of divine *bhakti*.' They felt as if they were with Kṛṣṇa, and Kṛṣṇa with them. Everyone present was, in spite of himself, carried away by the torrent of religious excitement.

This scene was repeated night after night.⁸

⁷Kavikarṇapūra, *ibid.*, 5.12.

⁸To outsiders *kīrtana* may seem to be a noisy and artificial affair. It is so when there is no *bhakti* in the heart. But when there is *bhakti* the *kīrtana* is a celestial enjoyment with powers of purification. Men sit together with musical instruments for the purpose of chanting the praise of the Lord, who is so good, kind, and disinterestedly affectionate. The music in the beginning soothes the soul, and prepares it to receive the pious sentiments which the hymn contains. Nay, it has also the power of evoking such sentiments in the heart. The music and sentiments in a song moved the heart. When one of the party is moved, others are also moved by a mysterious law of sympathy. The whole party is then saturated with pious feelings. (It also sometimes

happens that the presence of an unsympathetic infidel in their midst disturbs the work of the influence on the mind and spoils the whole *kirtana*.) This pious feeling is followed by an influx of joy in the heart. This joy is communicated from one to another, and the state of their feeling is expressed either by dancing, *pulaka* (gooseflesh), weeping, or complete loss of consciousness. But the *kirtana* in which the Lord presided was a quite different affair; the feeling that was evoked there is simply indescribable.

Chapter Ten: Bhakti is Not Imaginary

The friends of Nimāi learnt from his life one grand truth, namely, that *bhakti*¹ was not something imaginary but a powerful reality, and that Nimāi could bestow it at pleasure upon whomsoever he liked, as if it had been a material object. They also felt that those who recieved it became, as if born again, new men, better in every respect and happier than they were before.² Thus *bhakti* began to be the most prized of all objects on this earth to them. His other companions, therefore, begged to be favoured by him with the *bhakti* of Kṛṣṇa. Even Śacī one day said to him: “I hear you have brought the *bhakti* of Kṛṣṇa from Gayā; my child; let me have a little of it.” “Mother,” replied Nimāi, “you shall be blessed with it through the favour of pious men; for, God acts through them.”

Gadādhara, his constant friend and companion, wished to make the same request to Nimāi, but had not the requisite courage. One night as they lay down together on the same bed, Gadādhara clasped Nimāi’s feet and began to weep. “Why do you weep, Gadādhara?” earnestly asked Nimāi, as he raised him up. Gadādhara replied with sobs: “You have saved many, and shall your slave Gadādhara alone never taste *bhakti*?” Nimāi smiled and answered—“Tomorrow, when you visit the Ganges to bathe, you shall be blessed with it.” Nimāi spoke as if he were joking; but he was not, and Gadādhara took the promise seriously, indeed. As the day dawned, Gadādhara went to the river to bathe; and, as the *Caitanya-maṅgala* has it:

¹In the original Bengali text Ghosh has *kṛṣṇa-prema* not just *bhakti*. *Kṛṣṇa-prema* is the highest form of *bhakti* according to the Caitanya tradition. (ed.)

²Of course everyone has *bhakti* in his heart,—some in a higher, some in a lesser degree. But as a sufficient quantity of heat is necessary to produce steam, so a sufficient quantity of *bhakti* is necessary to make a man born again. You may go on applying heat to water forever and ever; but there will be no steam as long as it is less than 212 degrees Fahrenheit. In the same manner the *bhakti* of a man is of very little use to him if it is not strong enough to be able to make a new and better man of him.

He bathed himself and great was his joy,
To find his heart o'erflow with reverence for Kṛṣṇa.³

The Lord and his companions were seated together when Gadādhara approached them like a drunken man, with a tottering gait. Tears of joy trickled down his cheeks and breast. Putting his cloth round his neck, as a sign of devotion, Gadādhara prostrated himself at Nimāi's feet. Śrī Gaurāṅga smilingly said, "Gadādhara, have you got it?" Gadādhara answered by bathing the Lord's feet with tears, without saying a word.

Thus was Gadādhara blessed with divine *bhakti*. Thenceforth when Nimāi began dancing, Gadādhara danced by his side; and the touch of Nimāi, as it were, melted Gadādhara with joy.

Śuklāmbara was a neighbour of Nimāi, as stated before. He was a great ascetic: he had always regarded Nimāi as if he were his own son. He would wipe off the tears from Nimāi's eyes and cheeks, remove the dust from his person, and do other similar services. In the course of time Śuklāmbara perceived that *bhakti* was the highest state attainable by man; that his asceticism had done him very little good, for he had got no *bhakti*, and that Nimāi was capable of imparting it. One day, therefore, he addressed Nimāi in these words:

A tired pilgrim from shrine to shrine I went,
and heedless of sufferings, I travelled far
to Madhupurī and Dvārāvati.
Grant me, O Lord, the *bhakti* of Kṛṣṇa.⁴

Here Śuklāmbara betrayed his vanity. What he said was, in effect, that since he had suffered much by travelling to sacred shrines, he deserved to have *bhakti*. The Lord wanted to purge him of his vanity, and replied: "Are not jackals and dogs to be found at Madhupurī and Dvārāvati?" Convinced by these words of his own folly, he fell upon the ground and wept tears of profound repentance. Said he: "Forgive me, my Lord! I deserve nothing because I have not been able to conquer vanity."⁵

³Locanadāsa, *Caitanya-maṅgala*, ?:

অতি হ্রষ্ট মনে স্নান করি গঙ্গাজলে
প্রেমায় অবশ তনু টলমল করে||

⁴*ibid.*, :

নানা তীর্থ পর্যটন করিয়াছি আমি
অনেক যন্ত্রণা দুঃখ কিছুই না জানি||
মধুপুরী দ্বারাবতী কৈলু পর্যটন
দুঃখিত হৈলু মুঞি, দেহ প্রেমধন||

⁵Kavikarṇapūra, *ibid.*, 6.9:

The Lord, who could not bear to witness distress, felt profound compassion for the humbled ascetic. So, lifting his hand, he said: “Be blessed.” No sooner had the Lord said this than a thrill passed through his frame, his hair stood on end, and tears rolled down his cheeks. He felt himself overpowered by a sense of celestial ecstasy, and relieved of all the impurity of his soul; and presently with his mendicant-bag thrown across his shoulder he began to dance like a man drunk with joy.

In the same manner, his companions, one by one, received the boon of *bhakti* from the Lord. They prayed and he gave. For one who is desirous of having *bhakti*, it is, as a rule, necessary that he should pray for it, that is to say, be in a negative state of mind. This state of his mind enables the novice to receive the gift more readily and utilize it.

The religion that the Lord was teaching inculcated the doctrine that *bhakti* is the easiest and surest way of attaining God, that God has no family of his own, and that his adopted family is composed of his *bhaktas*, that is, of those who worship him with *bhakti*. Nay, this religion goes even so far as to allege that God Almighty, irresistible and all-powerful though he is, is yet an obedient friend to his *bhaktas*. People now began to see that Nimāi possessed the power of granting this *bhakti*, an invaluable gift, to anybody he chose. They saw every day that he had the power, not only of purifying a sinner, but also of making him an active *bhakta* or ardent devotee of God. A passive *sādhu*, who is pure but has no *bhakti* for God, does not attract him and is not attracted towards him. Without *bhakti* he is only a good man without God. This power, possessed by Nimāi, of granting *bhakti*, created the impression that he was at the least some being higher than man. For, to grant *bhakti* to one is to make him something like a master in relation to God, who is a serving friend to his *bhaktas*. So, when Nimāi granted *bhakti* to a sinner he practically issued a mandate upon God Almighty to serve that man, sinner though he had been. “Who is this Nimāi, then,” thought his companions, “who can thus issue a mandate upon the Almighty God? Is he somebody sent by God, or *the* he himself?”

It must be borne in mind that the idea of God appearing to man in a human form, never crossed the minds of the generality of Hindus. Of course, Śrī Kṛṣṇa appeared to their fathers thousands of years ago; but then, many learned men in their hearts believed him to be a mythical character. Others, who believed in his advent, had the idea forcibly impressed on their minds, that Śrī Kṛṣṇa could only have appeared in those by-gone and golden ages when God frequently came into direct communication with man. It never

किं तत्र सन्ति न शृगालचयास्ततः किं
तेषां भवेत्किमथ ते न पुनः शृगालाः ।
इत्युक्तवत्यथ विभौ द्विजपुङ्गवोऽयम्
उच्चैः पपात भुवि दण्डवदुत्सुकात्मा ॥

crossed the mind of any ordinary Hindu of that period that God would condescend to appear to the sinful men of this iron age. The holy books of the Hindus did not predict any such *avatāra*. All the *avatāras*, according to the holy books, had come and gone except one, who was to appear as a warrior, sword in hand; and Śrī Gaurāṅga did not at all answer to this description; so the friends of Nimāi naturally could not entertain the idea that he was an *avatāra*. That being the case, they anxiously inquired of one another who this Nimāi Paṇḍita might be, who could thus issue mandates upon God Almighty.

It is quite true that Advaita had predicted that he was coming; indeed, he went sometimes the length of asserting that he was come! Few people, however, seriously believed him. But even those who did, could not bring themselves to entertain the notion that he who was coming or come might be Nimāi Paṇḍita, the son of poor Jagannātha Miśra, who was subject to the laws of nature like themselves, and one who, but the other day, had comported himself as an aggressive, irrepressible, and boastful scholar.

When Advaita, and with him his followers, predicted the advent of God, they had not any definite idea as to how he would appear in their midst. All of them naturally thought in their hearts that if God Almighty came, he would do so with the pomp befitting his exalted position. But Nimāi was only a man,—a man who had all the weakness of humanity. He ate and slept like others; he showed that he was not all-knowing at every step of his life. To think that the *avatāra* which Advaita had predicted was Nimāi, would have been a great disappointment to all, as it actually was to Advaita himself.

“Śrī Kṛṣṇa is here,” “Śrī Kṛṣṇa is there,” “Śrī Kṛṣṇa is come”—these were the expressions which Nimāi would use in such a matter-of-fact manner as led his friends to believe that he was not giving vent to fanciful notions but to what he was actually feeling or seeing. Of course, they themselves did not see Śrī Kṛṣṇa; but they could see that Śrī Kṛṣṇa was not far off from Nimāi, and that Nimāi had direct dealings with him. Nimāi’s presence filled them with holy feelings, and in his company they felt vividly the nearness of God. The belief, as we have just stated, gradually obtained a very firm hold of the minds of all his constant companions that God was coming. Indeed, they expected every day something very wonderful to happen, though in what way they had no conception. Every one of the companions of Nimāi was in a constant state of great expectation, and they passed their days and nights in a state of semi-trance.

The outside public, however, naturally became curious to know what the matter was with Nimāi and his companions, who seemed to have become transformed into beings who continually led a dreamy and unearthly life. Their appearance and actions showed that they were not in a sober state of mind.

Every night, at the house of Śrīvāsa, *kīrtanas* were sung by a daily-increasing

number of pious men. The doors were closed at a fixed hour, and no one, not even an intimate friend, was admitted after the doors had been once shut.

Hundreds of people were drawn to the place by the sounds that came from within, of music and of “Hari Haribala.” They clamoured for admission with entreaties, and sometimes threats, but in vain. The doors remained closed, and they had to return home disappointed. People began to form surmises about what passed within the walls of Śrīvāsa’s dwelling-house; and a rumour was spread throughout the town of Navadvīpa that Nimāi and his companions were indulging in vicious pleasures.

The *saṅkīrtana* commenced in the month of January, and was carried on most enthusiastically throughout February. By the month of March it came to be known throughout Bengal. Gradually Nimāi’s party increased in strength, and eminent men flocked to surrender themselves at his feet

The tumult grew in Nadia. The followers of Nimāi were easily marked out from the common herd. They seemed to be absorbed in their own thoughts, and in a state of absolute happiness. This naturally created envy. Then these *bhaktas* avoided all company and worldly affairs, and were absolutely reticent about their own movements. When any question was asked as to what they did at their meetings, they declined to reveal to unholy and unsympathetic ears anything about the subjects that occupied their minds. Those who nightly returned disappointed at not being able to gain admittance to the *kīrtana* party, began to circulate ugly rumours. They argued that “wherever there is secrecy there is crime.” But the followers of Nimāi, who were constantly “swimming in an ocean of happiness,” did not much mind the shafts aimed at them. Seeing that they could not in any way provoke the followers of Nimāi, they invented the story that Hossein Shah, the Mussalman King of Bengal, had been moved to put a stop to their malpractices, and was sending several boatfuls of soldiers down the river to arrest not only Nimāi but all his followers!

This rumour day by day gained in strength, and evidence was forthcoming to corroborate the allegation that the embarkation of the troops had already taken place!

As stated above, the *bhaktas* were constantly in the enjoyment of a spiritual ecstasy which led them to feel vividly the nearness of God Almighty. They felt that God was coming or already come, and they expected every moment some wonderful manifestation of him. The rumour, therefore, very much dampened their spirits. For, their opponents were doing their best to convince them of the truth of the allegation that troops were almost upon them to arrest and eventually to slaughter them.

When the spirits of the *bhaktas* were at the lowest ebb, the expected wonderful manifestation actually took place.

It was in the hot month of May and the time was the forenoon, when the

sun was shining in full force. Śrīvāsa, having bathed, entered his *pūjā*-house for devotional purposes. On a cushioned seat was his image of God. He first saluted it and then sat with his eyes shut to commune with God. Just at this moment there was a knock at the door, which he had taken care to shut, to prevent his being disturbed. There was a knock and a voice which said, "Open the door!"

Śrīvāsa, rather annoyed, enquired who was there. And the voice said, "He whom you are trying to commune with!"

Śrīvāsa could not realize fully the true significance of the words he heard. He was very much annoyed, when he understood the purport of the message, at the blasphemy, and got up in a not very amiable mood, and opened the door. As soon as he had done so an illuminated figure entered the *pūjā*-house!

The illuminated figure and Śrīvāsa gazed at each other. What Śrīvāsa saw before him paralyzed all his senses. He saw a human form covered with, as it seemed to him, a dense spiritual essence which emitted a dazzling light, or rather a light which ought to have dazzled, but did not. There could, however, be no mistake that the figure before him was Nimāi, the son of Śacī. Nimāi smiled and said: "Śrīvāsa, you see I am come." So saying, he sat on the cushioned seat referred to above. No Hindu would have dared to sit on the throne of God. This was the first time that Śrīvāsa was so familiarly addressed by the young son of his friend Jagannātha.

Śrīvāsa stood speechless. It is beyond human power to describe how he felt then; suffice it to say that he was in the position of a man who suddenly finds himself face to face with God. He had at this moment no doubt whatever in his mind that the illuminated and living figure before him was God Almighty himself. It was not only the effulgence with which the figure was covered that convinced him of it; but he found that his soul had been taken possession of, and the belief had indissolubly been impressed upon it.

So Śrīvāsa was face to face with God Almighty! He was, as it were, confounded by the advent of the long-expected blessing. The highest desire of Śrīvāsa had now been fulfilled; and to the man who has nothing to wish for there is no difference between life and death. Hence, for the good of his creatures he keeps himself unrevealed to man; and if ever he reveals himself, he allows man to have only a faint glimpse of him. Idea after idea passed through the mind of Śrīvāsa with the speed of lightning. His first effort was to recollect what actually was the matter with him; for, the suddenness of the appearance had led him to forget everything for the moment. When he had partially recovered from this shock, the first idea that struck him was to ascertain whether he was dreaming or awake. "No doubt it is all a dream," thought he. "Yet how can that be? For I seem quite conscious of being wide awake. Yes, I am awake, but who am I? Am I Śrīvāsa? And who is Śrīvāsa? Am I, then, lucky Śrīvāsa, at length face to face with God Almighty? But is

there really a God at all?" It was thus Śrīvāsa found his reason tossed about like a rudderless boat on the Ganges during a hurricane.

It was thus Śrīvāsa, a firm believer, became skeptical when he found himself face to face with God! Now he began to doubt his own existence! The fact is, the awful presence unhinged his mind for the moment.

The reader must, however, bear in mind that a doubt about the existence of God and about his nature, is one of the greatest blessings of God to man. It is this doubt which makes religion and God sweet; it gives life to the devotee's meditations and is the main impetus which leads him on to progress. And this doubt about God, therefore, is what, by the will of kind providence, attaches itself to every man however holy, and under every circumstance.

The doubt crossed the mind of Śrīvāsa even when he was face to face with whom he believed to be God himself! The fact was that, as stated above, Śrīvāsa was then certainly in a condition almost amounting to temporary insanity. "Is there a God?"—thought he. And he tried to solve the question. But in that state of his mind, any systematic thinking was out of the question. "Yes, there is a God; there cannot be any doubt about that," thought Śrīvāsa. "But is it possible that he, the creator of innumerable universes, should come among us, the crawling creatures of this earth? Why should he come? What does he care whether we suffer or not? What are we, puny creatures, to him, that he should take any notice whatsoever of us?" Such doubts, as I said, are natural to man, and they are of incalculable benefit to him. They make faith doubly sweet; because, though urged to come, it does not, and when it does come, its approach is so slow! As we have to look at the sun through a blue glass lest we hurt our eyes, so doubts overshadow the dazzling effulgence of God, and make it possible for man to commune with him. Let him not think himself unfortunate, who is subject to doubts. Providence has given them to him for his good. As a post fixed in soft soil may be lifted up without much effort, so faith, lightly planted, may be as easily uprooted.

Nimāi was there before Śrīvāsa gazing at him with a tender feeling. There was no mistaking that Nimāi was God Almighty, and that he was seated there before Śrīvāsa, ready to perform any service for him!

A flood of joy passed through his heart, and he felt that he was about to faint; but by a mighty effort he succeeded in keeping himself from falling. It would not do to fall in a fainting fit when God Almighty was sitting before him. Moreover the tender gaze of Nimāi helped Śrīvāsa much in resisting the faintness that was coming over him.

"So I am the luckiest man in the world, the object of my life is at last accomplished," thought he. The love of self, which is a feeling ingrained in human nature, suddenly got the better of him at that moment, and he thought that this was his time to extort favours from the almighty. In that troubled state of his mind he tried in vain to think of the particular favour which

would suit him, and he failed with his utmost efforts to select one. Every blessing that occurred to him, when subjected to examination, was found to be not an unmixed good.

Here the humble author of this book ventures to offer a remark. No man in the world will be able to select a *vara*⁶ if he finds himself in the position of Śrīvāsa—face to face with God. He will see that there is no unalloyed happiness in any gift which man can realize or even comprehend in his mind. Self, however, had only a temporary influence on Śrīvāsa who was a saint, and who had trained himself all the days of his life to conquer that feeling. He immediately brought the feelings under subjugation, and felt humiliated that it had arisen at all. Śrīvāsa then tried to welcome the Lord; but language failed him. And he stood, as before, speechless as a statue before him.

Of course, the Lord knew very well what was passing in the mind of Śrīvāsa—that it would be not only impossible for Śrīvāsa to speak to him but even to bear his august presence much longer. So he wanted to divert his attention by giving him some pleasant occupation. And the Lord addressed him thus: “Śrīvāsa! Fetch water and bathe me.”

This command, considering the state of his mind, suited Śrīvāsa very well. He came out of the house and shouted for help. His voice showed that something strange had happened and that the matter was urgent; so Śrīvāsa’s three brothers, the ladies of the house, and the servants, male and female, hurried up to know what the matter was. When they had come, he told them, in the simplest language, and in a matter-of-fact way, that God Almighty had come, and water must be brought from the river to bathe him.

Now, when Śrīvāsa delivered himself thus, his brothers did not for a moment consider that he had gone mad. Neither did they think that he was making fun of them; for, they knew from his voice and look, that he had never been more earnest in his life than he was then. They all had known that God Almighty was coming, and had expected every moment some such wonderful manifestation. They, therefore, took the announcement of Śrīvāsa in a matter-of-fact way, and hastened to do his bidding. They ran to the bazaar, which was on the way to the river, purchased new earthen jars, and then went to fetch water from the Ganges.

One by one, the followers of Nimāi appeared on the scene; but they stood outside and did not venture to go in where the Lord was. From outside they suddenly witnessed a wonderful phenomenon. The *pūjā*-house of Śrīvāsa, within which the Lord was sitting, had a mat wall. Through the fissures in this wall issued pencils of rays, which were distinctly visible from outside. They

⁶A *vara* is a favour which a devotee asks of God Almighty, if he appears before him. To the question, “What would you have if God Almighty offered to give you a *vara*,” the author has got invariably one answer from his friends, which is, the grace of God. But that is evading the question. The grace of God is already upon him who finds himself face to face with God. Man is, however, so constituted that even the sovereignty of the world is no blessing to him.

soon found out that the rays were coming from the body of the illuminated figure within. The rays coming through the fissures were not affected by the midday sun of May, but remained distinctly visible. Those who have any experience of this country know how fierce are the rays of the sun at Indian noon-tide towards the close of May, when the above incident occurred. For any pencils of rays to be visible in such light, they must be stronger than the rays of the midday sun of May. The early saints chronicle this incident to give man an idea how strong was the light that surrounded the person of the Lord.

When everything was ready, the Lord came out of the house to bathe. There were then hundreds of his *bhaktas* present. And what did they see? They saw a figure of gold, gilt as with a “million lightning flashes,” issue from the house. Indeed, the light that surrounded him dimmed the midday sun of May! This is what the *Kṛṣṇacaitanya-caritāmṛta* says: “When the Lord appeared, he was seen to be enveloped in a garb woven of lightning, a million times condensed, and proportionately bright, which dimmed the rays of the sun.”⁷

The Lord seated himself on a large wooden seat in the open air, and water was poured on his head. The water which descended to the ground from Nīmāi’s body acquired a peculiar luminosity; and as it flowed through the yard it sparkled like golden water or water mixed with a sparkling substance such as pieces of diamond. The body of the Lord, when he had bathed, was rubbed with a white piece of muslin, to which the illuminated fluid stuck, and the white sheet shone in the sun like a piece of gold-embroidered cloth, studded with diamonds!

From there the Lord again entered the *pūjā*-house of Śrīvāsa, where he sat on the same cushioned seat as that on which the image of God was seated. Suddenly the *bhaktas* heard the sound of a flute from within, and the music charmed their ears. It seemed to them that the music must be heard by everyone in the universe. When the music entered their ears, the hair of their heads and bodies stood on end, and tears of joy began to flow down their cheeks. The beloved Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa has been described as all-joy. The sound of the flute enabled them to realize what that meant. Again sounded the flute, and they fancied that if the Lord should play it again and again they would not be able to bear it, but die of joy. Here the Lord bore testimony to the bewitching properties of the flute of Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

⁷Kavi Karpūra, *Kṛṣṇacaitanya-caritāmṛta*, 5.57:

गौराङ्गस्तदथ गृहं व्रजन् विरेजे
तेजोभिर्लघु तिरयन् विवस्वदोजः ।
शम्पानां शतशतकोटिकोटिवत्स
प्रोन्मील्य क्षितिमिव सञ्चितश्चकास्ति ॥

Gaurāṅga entered the house shining, making with his effulgence the light of the sun insignificant. It was as if hundreds and millions of lightning bolts burst open and settled on earth shining.

The Lord, from inside, then commanded Śrīvāsa to take him to his sleeping-room. Thereupon Śrīvāsa had the cushioned seat removed to his sleeping-room, and the Lord was conducted thereto. A canopy was hastily erected above the seat; and on the latter was placed a sheet, soft and white as “the froth of milk.” Screens were hung against the doors and windows to exclude light and heat from the room as far as possible.

As the Lord proceeded from the worship-room to the sleeping-apartment of Śrīvāsa, a thousand flashes of lightning seemed to play around him. As he sat on the platform in Śrīvāsa’s room, it seemed to be lighted up in an instant. The *bhaktas* had now a clearer view of the Lord; and his body appeared to them to consist of strong light only, and not of flesh and blood. That light, though brighter than that of the midday sun, was quite serene, and agreeable to behold. It soothed and delighted, but did not dazzle.

Flower garlands were soon ready, and Gadādhara adorned the Lord’s body with them. Ornaments of flowers were placed on different parts of his person. A fanciful *cūḍā* (knot in the hair) was tied on his head, and was encircled with a wreath of flowers. His body was then besmeared with sandal-paste, *aguru* (a scented substance), camphor, and flower-dust. The *cāmara* was waved by Narahari to drive away the flies which gathered round the divine body, attracted by its bewitchingly sweet scent.

Thus sat the Lord in the house—the Lord who is the source of all beauty, of all wisdom, and of all power, face to face with his creatures! His creatures wanted to give him a welcome adequate to his exalted position, but that was out of the question. Those who wanted to speak found that their tongues would not move,—others finding speech impossible, burst into tears. They, as already stated, gave him a clean bed-cover to sit on, and being poor and not having any gold or diamonds to spare, presented him with flowers. As it was very hot, they besmeared him with *candana* (sandal-paste), and fanned him diligently. The Lord objected to nothing that was done to serve him; on the other hand, he was gracious enough to express his acknowledgments not by speech but by signs and benign smiles.

At length the Lord spoke. The voice was sonorous and impressive, withal sweeter than music. He spoke thus: “You, of course, know who I am. I am he who sits in the heart of every man. I have revealed myself to tell you that you have nothing to fear from the king of Gauḍa. I am come this time, not to punish sinners, but to reclaim them. I am come to teach my creatures how to attain me by *bhakti* and love, and practically to show all that a devotee should do, by myself passing through all the stages required of a devotee in his spiritual progress. I will, in short, in this *avatāra*, teach my creatures by precept and example how to attain me.”

The Lord continued: “If the Mussalman sovereign should be minded to maltreat you, I shall not punish him, but soften his heart towards his fellow-

creatures. Punishment is not my work, in this *avatāra*. I will show you how I shall touch the heart of the Mussalman king.” And saying this, the lord beckoned Nārāyaṇī, a girl of four years and a niece of Śrīvāsa, to approach him. She approached at the Lord’s bidding. “Nārāyaṇī,” said he, “be inspired with *bhakti* for Kṛṣṇa.” No sooner were these words uttered than the girl burst into tears, saying, “O my Kṛṣṇa, O my Kṛṣṇa,” and began to express her devotion to God in a manner which an ardent devotee of great power could alone do. The Lord smiled and said, “That is how I will deal with the king, if he should resort to force to maltreat My *bhaktas*.” Śrīvāsa stammered out a reply in these words: “Fear of the king is out of the question now that thou hast appeared.”

All that happened confounded everyone present. They had no idea as to where they were and what they were doing. Sometimes they took everything to be a dream—sometimes they thought it a reality. This day’s revelation of the Lord was only for a short time. Its object seems to have been to dispel the fear of Śrīvāsa and other devoted worshippers, which the rumour that Mussalman soldiers were coming to apprehend them, had created in their minds. Much perhaps was not said on that day. We say ‘perhaps’ for we know only of those facts which have been left recorded by the *bhaktas*.

While the Lord addressed Śrīvāsa, Gadādhara repeatedly rubbed *candana* on his person. He remembered the words of Śrī Advaita, namely, “You will soon know what sort of a boy Nimāi is,” but without saying a word, he busied himself in serving the Lord. At this time Śrīvāsa’s wife, Mālinī, and the wives of his three brotheres, appeared at the door. The Lord was seated on the sacred seat, illuminating the room with a strong light. A screen hung before the door. Of the four ladies who wanted admittance, three were quite young, and had never before appeared before Nimāi, uncovered. Addressing Śrīvāsa’s youngest brother, they said humbly, “Can we not go in and see him?” The Lord was in the room, but they could not venture to go in because of the modesty of their sex.⁸ Addressing Śrī Kānta, the youngest brother of Śrīvāsa, in the most imploring tones, “Can it be just,” said they, “that we should be deprived of the inexpressible joy of seeing him, simply because we are women?” The Lord heard their appeal from within, and replied, “Certainly they may come in and see me.” The ladies having entered the room, overcome with a variety of feelings—such as joy, bashfulness, expectancy and fear—saw through the half-uplifted veil, which covered their faces, the benign countenance of the Lord. They then, overpowered by profound *bhakti*, saluted the Lord with their heads bowed down close to his feet. The Lord felt compassion for them, touched their heads with his lotus feet, and blessed them, saying, “May your hearts abide in me.”

⁸The custom in Bengal is that the young wives of a household cannot speak or even appear with uncovered face before one who is comparatively a stranger.

Their husbands who were present, did not feel the least jealousy when Nimāi claimed the undivided possession of their hearts. And why? It was because Nimāi was not then the young *paṇḍita* of Nadia, but the father of all. They also felt that if a wife is more dearly related to her husband than to any other man, God is still nearer to her.

A little while afterwards the Lord said, “I am going. I shall come again in good time.” No sooner had the Lord said this than, uttering a loud scream, Nimāi fainted away. All present got alarmed, and eagerly but carefully lifted him up. They saw with dismay that there was no sign of life in him. His condition gave them a fright, when they discovered that he was not breathing. Indeed he seemed, to all intents and purposes, a dead man. After much care he was restored to consciousness. On regaining consciousness he looked around at those who were near him. “Is not this your house, Paṇḍita?” says Nimāi, addressing Śrīvāsa. “Yes, I know it is your house, but how came I to be here?” After a little reflection he continued. “I feel as if I had been dreaming; did I rave?” They explained to him that he had had a fainting fit, but that he had not raved at all.

He slowly rose. He was then quite himself—an ordinary man and the meekest of men in the world. The light had disappeared as soon as he had fainted away.

A few years previously when Nimāi was only nine years old, at the time of the ceremony of the sacred thread, he had addressed his mother in these words: “I am going, I shall come again.” And, as a matter of fact, we have seen in the above that he did come again. Again he addresses Śrīvāsa, “I am going; I shall come again.”

All those who had witnessed the manifestations related in the previous pages, felt bewildered. They had never seen such things before, nor ever dreamt of the possibility of such an occurrence. Next morning people saw Nimāi. He was then but a man, though, of course, a deep and amiable *bhakta*. That very Nimāi who the day before had touched the heads of young ladies with his feet, saying, “May your hearts abide in me,” was now praying, most humbly and with tears, in these words: “O merciful Kṛṣṇa! Save me from all worldly desires and draw me towards your lotus feet.” But the conviction of Śrīvāsa and his party was not to be shaken by this change in him. Believing that the Lord had come, they felt that there was for them nothing but joy in the world.

Murāri, one of the chroniclers of the early life of the Lord, was the next to be blessed. The Lord revealed himself to him in that *bhakta*’s own house. And in this manner he appeared to a good many of his *bhaktas* who had earned the blessing by their character and devotion.

Thus Nimāi taught mankind. In his infancy he was a restless creature, fond of play. In his youth he was a student, and improved his physical and

intellectual nature. In the third stage, we see him cultivating *bhakti* to show men how Śrī Kṛṣṇa should be served. Finally, he showed how the fruit of his devotion was the attainment of God.

Hitherto the Lord was only teaching *bhakti* to God; the other and higher method, love to God or *prema*, he taught subsequently. When Nimāi manifested himself as the Lord Almighty he always spoke in the first person, and naturally comported himself as one who had no equal in the universe. But at all other times he was the meekest of the meek, the humblest of the humble, and apparently the most helpless creature in the world. He would, with folded hands and tears in his eyes, and with a sorrowful countenance which greatly moved the hearts of those who beheld him, beseech every pious person he met to give him a drop—even a drop—of *bhakti* for Kṛṣṇa. Previously he used to fall at the feet of every one, but such a humility gave his companions great pain. Seeing this, he gave up that practice; nevertheless he would entreat the meanest amongst his companions to procure for him the favour of Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

In his ordinary mood he was, as we said before, a meek, holy, good-natured and pious companion. If anyone then showed him any extraordinary regard, he expressed so much anguish of soul, that none ventured to treat him in any other way than as an ordinary man. In his ordinary state he seemed to remember only very little of his doings as the Lord Almighty. Indeed, Nimāi the Lord Almighty and Nimāi the *bhakta* were two distinct personages. He knew that he had had fainting fits, but he remembered very little of what he had done or said in that condition. We say he remembered very little, for he did remember something. This was proved in the following manner. After every manifestation as the deity he would fall down, apparently dead, and recovering again become a man. And fully coming to consciousness he would address his companions thus: “My friends, did I rave? I know, you all love me dearly and so I ask you always to take care of me. See that I am not led to be presumptuous and to talk in any way disrespectfully of my Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa.”

From what Nimāi did say, after the divine manifestation was over, it sometimes appeared that he retained only a very faint recollection of what he had done and said during the period the influence was upon him.

Chapter Eleven: Nityānanda

Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma of the Kṛṣṇa Līlā, were revealed respectively in Nimāi and Nityānanda or Nitāi.

Nityānanda came to Navadvīpa in June, when Nimāi had already revealed himself. Born at the village of Ekcākā, in the district of Birbhum, he relinquished the world when only twelve years old. And ascetic came as a guest to his home, and begged him from his parents as a gift. The request, monstrous as it may seem to us, was granted, and Nitāi became the companion of the mendicant. There is a tradition that the ascetic was no other than Nimāi's elder brother, Viśvarūpa. But we do not know from what source it is derived.

Nityānanda travelled for twenty years visiting numerous places of pilgrimage and at last came to Śrī Vṛndāvana. There he met Īśvara Purī, who first initiated Gaurāṅga at Gayā. At that time Vṛndāvana was covered with jungle, and Nitāi went there in search of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Īśvara Purī perceiving what he wanted addressed him thus: "Whom do you seek, O good Sādhū! Śrī Kṛṣṇa is not here. He has been born of Śacī at Navadvīpa, under the name of Nimāi Paṇḍita. If you are seeking Śrī Kṛṣṇa, go to Nadia." Nityānanda thereupon hastened to Nadia. For some reason or other he became a guest at the house of Śrī Nandanācārya, a Brahmin residing in the city, without directly repairing to the residence of Nimāi. Seeing that he was a devotee of the first class, the Ācārya gave him a hearty reception.

Three or four days before the arrival of Nitāi, Nimāi had told his followers that a great being was coming to Navadvīpa; and on the very morning Nitāi reached the town, Nimāi informed his companions of the arrival of the great one of whom he had spoken to them. "Go and find him out," said he. "I think he is a re-incarnation of Balarāma." But hardly had Nimāi finished speaking when he lost consciousness and Balarāma took possession of his body. Balarāma then, speaking through Nimāi, said, "Fetch me liquor."¹ The eyes of Nimāi became blood-shot and he spoke as Balarāma would have

¹It is said Balarāma was a drunkard. But it is the view of the uninitiated. Pious men know that Balarāma was only drunk with love of Kṛṣṇa. Nityānanda, as Balarāma in this *avatāra*, certainly never touched nor smelt liquor.

done. The companions of Nimāi, hearing this, stood aghast, and they did not know what to do about the liquor. But Śrīvāsa said: “The liquor that you mean, *i.e.*, the love of Kṛṣṇa, is with you: it is not with us.” Nimāi, however, immediately recovered his normal state, and resuming the thread of his discourse requested his companions to make a search in the town for Nitāi. “I am,” said he, “impatient to see him.” Thereupon Murāri, Śrīvāsa, Mukunda and Nārāyaṇa proceeded to the four quarters of the town in search of Nitāi. They went through the whole town, but without finding him. In the afternoon they came back disappointed. The Lord smiled and said, “Let us go in search of him.”

Then Nimāi himself, accompanied by all his friends, went out to find Nitāi. He proceeded directly to the house of Nandanācārya. They all saw a holy man seated in the outer house. He was tall, rather dark-complexioned, lotus-eyed, aged about thirty or thirty-two years.

Nimāi and his friends bowed to Nityānanda and then stood before him. Nimāi and Nitāi gazed at each other, as if they were old acquaintances. They spoke not a word, yet it seemed that Nitāi was losing consciousness. Indeed, Gaurāṅga was all the while entrancing the poor man, and the matter ended in Nitāi’s almost losing his independent existence, Gaurāṅga having taken possession of every nerve of his body. From there Nitāi was led as a prisoner, a very willing one, to the house of Śrīvāsa. There Nimāi revealed himself to Nitāi and the others present as God Almighty, and sat upon the sacred *daīs* of the image of God. Nitāi, who had been in search of Śrī Kṛṣṇa these twenty years, now at last found himself face to face with him. He also saw a wonderful spectacle.

Here a word of explanation is necessary. Prophets and *avatāras* come never to destroy but to develop and chasten faiths. In India, hitherto, Rāma and Kṛṣṇa were worshipped as the two *avatāras* of God. Rāma flourished as the warrior king, the object of whose incarnation was the destruction of the wicked, who oppressed their fellows. Kṛṣṇa came to show by example to men how lovable a being he was. And lastly Śrī Gaurāṅga came to soften the hearts of men towards himself and to show, by precept and example, how Śrī Kṛṣṇa should be attained. Thus Rāma is represented with a bow and arrow; Śrī Kṛṣṇa in the act of playing his flute; and Śrī Gaurāṅga with a *daṇḍa* and *kamaṇḍalu*, representing respectively the staff and the wooden cup of the mendicant, who has forsaken the world. For, be it known, Śrī Gaurāṅga, a few months after his meeting with Nitāi, left society and lived as an ascetic whose austerities filled mankind with wonder and softened the heart of the hardest.

What Nitāi saw was that Gaurāṅga had six arms—the first two provided with bow and arrow; the second two with a flute in the act of playing upon it; and the last two with a *daṇḍa* and *kamaṇḍalu*. By this manifestation he made

it known to Nitāi that he was Rāma; that he was Kṛṣṇa, and that he was God Almighty. As soon as Nitāi saw the six-handed divinity² he fainted away. For a good many days he remained under the influence of a partial trance. Nitāi as a mendicant had his *daṇḍa* and *kamaṇḍalu*, but at night he broke them. This is what we find concerning him in the book called *Nimāi-carita*:

Having adopted an ascetic's life at the age of twelve Nitāi wandered about in quest of Kṛṣṇa. For a time he resided at Vṇḍāvana but could not discover that being whose essence is love. At Navadvīpa he met with him who was the wealth of his soul, and the end of his life. Now what need had he more of the mendicant's water-pot? Accordingly he broke it in pieces. The staff and the cup meant absolute reliance on God.

His *ānanda* (joy) was *nitya* (constant) and so he was called Nityānanda. He is the *avatāra* of Balarāma, and him he represented in every way as described in the *Śrīmat Bhāgavata*. His strong feeling of *bhakti* and love for Kṛṣṇa not only carried him away, but also carried away all those who came in contact with him.

As Nitāi fainted away at seeing the six-handed deity, the Lord touched him and said: "Rise! All your wishes have been accomplished. You shall carry with you the fountain of *prema* (love) and *bhakti*. Distribute them at your pleasure. If any refuses to accept the blessings, implore them."

And what was this desire of Nitāi? It was the salvation of mankind! And thus young Nimāi and young Nitāi, the two brothers, stood hand in hand as Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma had done in days gone by for the deliverance of mankind from misery.

The next day Nimāi led Nityānanda to his own house. At his request Śacī came out. Then Nimāi addressing her said: "Mother, here is another son of yours. He is my elder brother. Know him henceforth as Viśvarūpa." Śacī looked at Nitāi, who certainly appeared to her to be no other than her eldest son, Viśvarūpa, himself! In fact, the spirit of Viśvarūpa was present in the person of Nitāi. Śacī now said within herself: "Is this my Viśvarūpa, my lost wealth?" She then addressed Nityānanda thus: "Child! Nimāi says you are my Viśvarūpa. Is it so? Come, child, come." She then smelt his head and wept with joy. She then whispered to Nitāi: "Hitherto my thoughtless Nimāi has been alone, but now he has you. Protect him, child; take care of your younger brother. I shall no longer be uneasy on his account."

A mother's love for Nitāi did she feel
Her voice was choked, she melted into tears,

²The great savant Sārabhauma, who also witnessed the manifestation, had this figure represented in the celebrated temple of Puri. The figure exists to this day.

Affection warmed her heart as she beheld
 Her sons before her stand, and sorrow she had none.³

³Locanadāsa, *Caitanya-maṅgala*, 113:

নিত্যানন্দের মাতৃভাব পাই শচীরাগী||
 নয়নে গলয়ে নীর গদগদ বাগী||
 এই মত স্নেহরসে সব গরগর|
 দুই পুত্র দেখি শচী জুড়ায় অন্তর||

Chapter Twelve: Rāmāi as the Lord's Messenger

Beginning from the time of his revelation at the house of Śrīvāsa, the Lord thereafter frequently manifested himself. A day or two after the occurrence mentioned in the previous chapter, he commanded Śrī Rāma, the younger brother of Śrīvāsa, popularly called Rāmāi, to proceed at once to Śāntipura. Said he: “Śrī Rāma! Go to Śāntipura and tell Advaita that I am he for whom he has been fasting and depriving himself of the comforts of life and weeping incessantly; and whom he has ever hoped to bring down to this earth by his unexampled devotion. Tell him that I am come in response to his prayers, and that he with his wife should forthwith appear before me.

Now, it must be borne in mind that Advaita had left Nadia in a huff. He suspected that he had been befooled by Nimāi. He had the ill-luck of having paid divine homage to the young son of Jagannātha Mīśra before a witness, and he had fled to Śāntipura to avoid the shame. He was therefore not in the least disposed to accept Nimāi as God Almighty. Besides, he was a laborious student, a deep thinker, an austere devotee, and was not one to be easily influenced by a so-called miracle. His austerities and his piety had created for him a great name throughout Bengal. A sovereign prince of the Eastern districts of Bengal had renounced society at his bidding, and was then waiting at his door as a disciple. He had thus a character to maintain and a large following to consult in all his actions. To this man, the then head of the Vaiṣṇavas, who was himself regarded as a divinity or at least a saint of the highest order, Nimāi sent, as God Almighty, his commands through Rāmāi, requesting him to come to him, along with his wife!

As for Rāmāi, he was at this time constantly under the influence of an unearthly joy. He was now carrying a divine message, and this circumstance had the effect of entrancing him. He had no idea whatever of the possible failure of his errand, much less that there was a chance of Advaita voting him a madman. On his arrival he stood before Advaita speechless, and every movement of his limbs showed the joy that agitated and filled his heart, and

a touch whereof had deprived him of the power of speech.

The information that Nīmāi Paṇḍita had revealed himself as God Almighty had spread far and wide in Bengal, almost with the rapidity of lightning. Of course, Advaita had heard it, and that with stern incredulity. He had also heard that Nīmāi Paṇḍita was manifesting himself principally in the house of Śrīvāsa. Rāmāi was the brother of Śrīvāsa. Advaita saw that the person before him, Rāmāi, was not in his proper senses, and at once suspected that he had come with a message from the so-called God Almighty to fetch him.

Seeing that Rāmāi could not utter a word, Advaita himself broke the silence. “What is it? Have you come to take me to your God? And do you mean to say that I, Advaitācārya, would join in the antics like those which you are now indulging in at Nadia? Of course, Rāmāi, you don’t know what metal I am made of, but your brother Śrīvāsa knows. And so, the youngster, whom I saw the other day naked in the streets, has become at last God Almighty himself! God does not come upon this earth often. And pray, in what sacred book is it predicted, Rāmāi, that God would appear in human shape before man in this iron age?¹

The rude address of Advaita had no effect upon Rāmāi. He was “immersed in an ocean of happiness,” for was he not bearing a message from God? And Advaita’s shafts could not therefore reach his heart. He said: “I have nothing to do with your remarks, nor do I know much of your *sāstras*. But listen to the message which God has sent to you through me. He has sent me to tell you that he has come, in response to your prayers, to alleviate the miseries of man, by teaching them how to attain him by *bhakti* and *prema*, and he commands you and your wife to appear before him at once.”

Advaita would have interrupted Rāmāi, but found that he had suddenly become powerless to do so. The Lord had sent something through that message which Advaita, powerful as he was, could not resist. He struggled to resist the influence but could not, and he—burst into tears!

These washed away, as it were, all his unbelief and life-long opinions founded upon worldly knowledge and logic. Muttered he to himself: “Is he come? Is he come? So he has listened to my prayers at last! Why should not he? Is he not merciful? As for the *sāstras*, is he not above them? The Lord says that it is I that have brought him down. Here he pays me a compliment. I, a puny creature, to bring the Almighty God down? It was his wish to come down himself, and now he throws the whole responsibility upon my shoulders! Is it not so, Rāmāi?” And he burst into a loud fit of laughter. He then loudly called out to his wife, and when she had come, he told her in a business-like manner that the Lord had come, and added, “He

¹Here Advaita forgot all that he had himself been doing and preaching these several years. His idea probably was that if he came he would appear to them in a form at least as big as the heavens so as never to give any puny man an opportunity of disputing his authority.

has commanded you and me to appear before him at once. So make all the necessary preparations." Saying this Advaita began to clap his hands with joy, exclaiming repeatedly, "I have brought him! I have brought him!"

A little after, Advaita and his wife and Rāmāi entered a boat and proceeded towards Navadvīpa.

The influence which had kept Advaita so long under subjugation was slowly relaxing its hold upon his mind. He found himself almost free from it when he landed at Nadia. That being the case, he felt somewhat stultified. He opened his mind to Rāmāi and said, "Is it a fact that Nimāi is God Almighty? Please do one thing for me: promise that you will not tell him that I am coming to him, rather tell him that I refuse to come. This will be a test: will it not Rāmāi?"

Rāmāi smiled and said that he need not have any apprehension about the reality of the revelation. Advaita observed in reply that he would believe Nimāi to be God Almighty when he (Nimāi) ventured to put his foot on his (Advaita's) head.² The fact is, Advaita was contemplating how to test the "pretensions" of Nimāi.

Before Rāmāi could have reached his house, Advaita had received orders to appear before the Lord! Advaita felt that the Lord had come to know of his arrival, which He could not possibly have done in the ordinary way, for Rāmāi had only just left him. This fact, insignificant as it was, revived his faith a little, and he proceeded with his wife to the Lord. Where was he going? To the Lord Almighty! The thought overpowered him. He tried to think, if it was possible. "Can it be true that he, my Lord God, has called me to his presence?" He tried to realise in his mind what that meant. The nearer he approached to the house of Śrīvāsa the firmer became his faith, he knew not why, and the more he lost control over himself. Today possibly he was to attain the highest object of his life; today perhaps his vow was to have its fulfilment, for he was going to behold him, the Lord of the universe! His heart began to throb audibly from excess of emotion. He tried again to deliberate upon what and where he was, and what he would do and say in the Lord's presence, but failed.

At last he entered the house of Śrīvāsa and with difficulty stepped up to the verandah, but could not enter the room where the Lord was seated, for he trembled so that his wife had to support him. Others then helped him to enter. He and his wife entered the room and bowed to the Lord. He now opened his eyes and tried to observe the scene before him; but he saw neither the room of Śrīvāsa nor Nimāi, but, says the *Caitanya-bhāgavata*:

A form, brighter than a thousand moons,
And fairer far than a thousand gods of love;

²Advaita was a saint, and no human being except his preceptors or elderly relations would venture to touch his head with their feet.

The Lord and his worshippers wrapped in light,
And every thing besides.³

Yes, not only was the room filled with light, but every man and every thing in it. Light was emitted not only from the person of the Lord, but from his attendants, and from all the inanimate objects in the room: beds, chairs, utensils, and so forth.

He then beheld numberless celestial beings in different attitudes of devotion, offering up prayers to the Lord.

The great angels knelt around the Lord,
Filling all space on earth and in the air.⁴

Advaita saw innumerable beings, incomparably higher than men of this world, fervently worshipping the father of the universe, each in his own way. Nay, he felt as if the whole universe, grand and illimitable as it is, was engaged in proclaiming the glory of that incomprehensible and wonderful being who had created all out of himself!

Advaita and his wife were transported beyond themselves. At first they bowed, and then they stood perfectly still. Advaita now perceived that God was even a greater being than he had thought. What was the good, thought he, of bowing before him? He would take no notice of his salutation—the salutation of a puny creature like him. Millions of gods were bowing to him through all eternity. He himself was an insignificant creature, and could not possibly attract his attention by his salutations and prayers. To bow and not to bow to him were all the same. All these thoughts rapidly passed through the mind of Advaita.

The greatness of God was manifested to Advaita, for he had wished to see it. He had doubted how Nimāi, whom he had seen as a naked child but the other day, could be the Almighty himself, and he had resolved in his mind that he would only accept him as the Almighty if Nimāi could display infinite power. It was the greatness of God which Advaita had wished to see, and here was a partial manifestation of the Almighty power.

³Vṛndāvana Dāsa, *Caitanya-bhāgavata*, 2.6.74-75:

জিনিয়া কন্দর্পকোটি লাবণ্য সুন্দর|
জ্যোতির্ময় কনকসুন্দর কলেবর||
প্রসন্নবদন কোটিচন্দ্রের ঠাকুর|
অদ্বৈতের প্রতি যেন সদয় প্রচুর||

⁴*ibid.*, 2.6.90:

ক্ষিতি অন্তরীক্ষে স্থান নাহি অবকাশে|
দেখে পড়িয়াছে মহাঋষিগণ পাশে||

Advaita now perceived that God in his greatness was beyond human conception, and was therefore quite unattainable. He therefore ceased to bow to him. Despair seized him, and the awe that he experienced in the presence of the infinite Supreme Being made him tremble from head to foot, like a plantain leaf under the influence of a strong gale.

But Advaita was an invited guest of the Lord. Seeing the pitiable condition in which Advaita was placed, he withdrew his illimitable greatness in an instant, and, assuming the form of a beautiful youth with rays of light beaming from his person, he smiled and beckoned Advaita to approach him. Advaita was now emboldened to come up to him, which however he did while yet trembling. The Lord addressed him thus: "Oh Advaitācārya! Pained to see the misery of mankind you practised austere devotion for their salvation. By the force of your attraction I am come to earth. Henceforth distribute *prema* and *bhakti* to your heart's content." When the Lord thus assumed the form of a man and addressed him, it was only then that Advaita's devotional feelings rushed to and warmed his heart, which previously had been chilled by fear and awe.

The words of assurance from the mouth of the Lord emboldened Advaita to stammer out a reply. He said: "Who will listen to or believe me if I say, the Lord has come on earth to save mankind, attracted by my devotion? Who can bring thee down to this earth, unless it is thy will? All men are thy children. Who can feel for misery as thou dost? Thou hast come of thy own will to save thy own creatures. I am meaner than the meanest. How could I bring thee here? Thy advent for the salvation of mankind has enabled us to see thee, which, above all things, had hitherto been impossible for us. Thou only, O Lord, canst do what to us seems impossible. If thou wilt permit us, we shall, by worshipping thee, gain that which is the goal and end of life." So saying he seated himself at the Lord's feet and, having washed them with holy Ganges water, laid scented substances and flowers upon them. Advaita, as a lover of forms, could not, from previous training, withhold the desire of worshipping him in due form as prescribed in the *śāstras*.

The Lord said, "Advaita! I am willing to give thee a *vara*. Ask whatever thou wilt."⁵ Advaita was never placed in such a position before. He knew, at least at the moment, that God Almighty was before him. He had not the least doubt that he would get whatever he asked for, even the sovereignty of the gods. But he had been trained from his early life to feel that there was no happiness in sovereignty,⁶ that on the contrary, it was beset with sorrows and responsibilities. Besides, the presence of the Almighty had elevated his soul, and had led him to feel kindly towards every living creature. His heart then

⁵Whenever the Lord agrees to give a *vara*, he pledges himself to give whatever is asked. From this it would also appear that none but the Almighty has the right of offering a *vara*.

⁶The great emperors of the world will testify to the fact that there is no happiness in sovereignty.

yearned, not for sovereignty, but for service; not to enjoy but to make others happy; not to take the Lord all to himself, but to enable his less favoured brethren in the universe to have a share of him. so he said: “If thou wouldst give me a *vara* let *prema* and *bhakti* be distributed to all irrespective of creed, position, and merit. My Lord God, let the meanest of thy creatures have it.”

When Advaita had asked his *vara*, all the *bhaktas* present shouted “*jaya*” (glory): “*Jaya* to the child of Śacī, and *jaya* to Advaita, the friend of the humble, the sinner, and the ignorant.”

The Lord was greatly pleased. Said he: “The *vara* that thou hast asked of me is worthy of thee, my Advaita. It is such disinterested love that wins my heart irrevocably. I grant your prayer. The greatest of sinners shall, by your favour, be filled with *prema* and *bhakti* and purged of their iniquities.”

Śrī Advaita returned to Śāntipura a thorough believer. But in spite of his efforts to keep them out, doubts soon began to creep into his intellectual mind. Again he began to give way to doubts about the Lord. That Nimāi was possessed of supernatural powers he freely admitted. But such powers were, he believed, sometimes acquired by men, who were thereby enabled to enthrall their fellows. Was Nimāi only a man possessed of supernatural powers or was he what he professed to be? He must, thought Advaita, be subjected to another crucial test; and he must be taken unawares. He therefore set out early one morning for Navadvīpa, without giving any warning, with the determination, if possible, of removing his doubts once and for all.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa is of a dark complexion while Nimāi is the fairest of the fair. Advaita had heard that Nityānanda had seen the Lord take the form of Śrī Kṛṣṇa; and he thought that if the Lord could only show himself in that form his doubts would be completely removed. For he was certain that no being excepting Śrī Kṛṣṇa himself would be able to take his own form as he flourished in Vṛndāvana.

Even if any miracle-worker had the power of assuming the form of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, that act would be a sacrilege, which, he believed, God Almighty would never permit anyone to commit. Advaita first went to the house of the Lord, and not finding him there he repaired to that of Śrīvāsa, where the Lord was engaged in conversation with his *bhaktas* about Kṛṣṇa. Seeing Advaita coming, all, including Nimāi himself, stood up to receive him. Advaita bowed to Nimāi, and the Lord bowed to him in return. After this all sat down. Nimāi then said, addressing his friends,—“Now that Sītāpati is come, we shall no more be haunted with the fear of death.” There is a pun in the name Sītāpati which, signifying the husband of Sītā, might mean either Advaita whose wife’s name was Sītā or Rāma Candra, the incarnation of Viṣṇu, Nimāi meaning that Advaita was even as Rāma Candra himself and would deliver them from sin.

Advaita evidently took the remark as a compliment, and made a suitable

reply, whereupon Nimāi addressing him said, "I was very much grieved at your sudden departure for Śāntipura." At this moment someone arrived to say that Śacī Devī had invited Advaitācārya to dinner. Advaita accepted the invitation with profound thanks.

In the course of the agreeable conversation that followed, Advaita whispered something to Śrīvāsa. Thereupon Nimāi asked: "May I not know what you mean by that whisper?"

Śrīvāsa replied: "Advaita regrets that you did not appear to him in the form of Śrī Kṛṣṇa as revealed to Nityānanda."

Śrī Gaurāṅga took the request as a joke and said: "This is my real form and the only form which is agreeable to Advaita."

Advaita was in a dilemma, for if he admitted that the natural form of Gaurāṅga was dear to him, he could not press him to assume his other form, namely, that of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, while if he requested to see him as Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the request might be taken by Nimāi as uncomplimentary to the form in which he was. He therefore remained silent. Śrīvāsa, however, came to his rescue and said: "Lord, your form as Gaurāṅga is more lovely than any other, but Advaita is sorry because you promised to show yourself to him in the form of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, which you have not done as yet."

Nimāi could now see that Śrīvāsa was serious, and the statement surprised him greatly. He blushed and hung down his head in sorrow. He then said: "It seems I must have made the extravagant statement attributed to me. This much I know that I suffer from fainting fits and that in that state I often rave. It is quite possible that on such occasions I rave like a mad man, and even give expression to blasphemous sentiments. But you all love me dearly, and I have often humbly besought you to take care of me, my kind friends, and to see that I do not offend my Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa by anything that I may say or do in that condition. I am, as you know, beside myself and utterly helpless when in that state. In one of those fits, dear Advaitācārya, it seems, while raving, I promised to do that which is simply impossible for a humble creature like me to do. But is it just and generous to take advantage of what I may have promised in a state of frenzy and press me for its fulfillment?"

Said Śrīvāsa: "But you did show yourself in the form of Śrī Kṛṣṇa to Lord Nityānanda."

Nimāi: "Did I? If that be the case, I cannot tell you how it came about. I am utterly helpless at such times, and if any wonder happens through me I have no knowledge of how it comes to pass. I assure you that I have no control over these extraordinary events. If they happen at all, they come or go of their own accord."

Śrīvāsa: "You say that you have your normal state and your state of frenzy. But in our humble opinion the state that you call frenzied is your natural state, and what you call your natural state is only a—deception."

Nimāi: “A glimpse of God can only be seen by the earnest *bhakta* in meditation. If the Ācārya is desirous of seeing that form, let him sit in meditation with closed eyes; and perhaps Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who is so merciful, may appear before him.”

Advaita, partly out of curiosity and partly inspired by hope, closed his eyes in meditation, and the *bhaktas* present also sat still, in a similar state of mind, with their eyes fixed on him.

In an instant Advaita was thrown into a state of trance, and even his breath became suspended. Nay, for the moment he seemed quite lifeless. The *bhaktas* got alarmed; but presently his hair stood on end, indicating that he was alive. Śrīvāsa now asked Nimāi to explain why Advaita was in such a state.

Nimāi replied: “Perhaps he has been blessed with the sight of Kṛṣṇa within his heart and the external manifestations are due to that fact.”

Śrīvāsa muttered: “Lord, you would not appear before us as Śrī Kṛṣṇa although you showed yourself in that form to Advaita in the secret recesses of his heart. But we are not sorry for it, because it is enough for us to see you as you are.” He then addressed the Lord: “May it please you to bring Advaita to his senses?”

“How can I, a humble individual,” replied Nimāi, “interfere with the work of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and restore him to consciousness? Wait, and he will no doubt come to his senses without any assistance from me.”

Shortly afterwards Advaita awoke from his trance. He now, like one roused from sleep, looked vacantly around him, and it appeared as if he had lost sight of something he had been looking at. He then began to rave in this fashion: “Where is the dark-complexioned, beautiful and bright figure that regaled my sight? His eyes beamed with love, and his whole body emitted an effulgence. Where is he, the delight of my eyes?”

While Advaita was thus feelingly describing the form of Kṛṣṇa he seemed to be pouring nectar into the ears of his hearers. Every heart was moved by Advaita’s graphic description of Kṛṣṇa. Śrīvāsa said: “Tell us clearly what or whom you saw?”

By this time Advaita, having fully recovered his senses, replied, “It is all the doing of him,” pointing to Nimāi, “whom we see before us. As soon as I closed my eyes he entered into my heart and showed himself to me in the form of Śrī Kṛṣṇa and afterwards issued from thence as you see him now.”

Śrī Gaurāṅga said: “You fell asleep and dreamt, and now you charge the whole matter to me?” Advaita said: “Was it a dream? I plainly saw you enter into my heart. Cast not upon me a veil of delusion, please. You are he whom I worship.”

Again Nimāi blushed. He endeavoured to treat the whole matter as a joke. His *bhaktas* always avoided giving him pain by calling him Śrī Kṛṣṇa and they

too sided with the Lord in treating Advaita's vision as only one which he had been permitted to see by the grace of God.

Though Advaita thus beheld the God whom he loved, he was soon to be pestered by fresh doubts about the divinity of Gaurāṅga. Faith does not depend upon our will. Ocular proof is not enough. A successful test suggests another. Advaita's test was met, but it had no lasting effect upon him.⁷ Faith is the result of a particular state of mind, which some attain to with ease and others after repeated failures. Or, it might be, that the doubt felt by Advaita was a part of the great plan of the deity. Was it his object to show by this doubting on the part of Advaita that he was not accepted lightly by those who were afterwards to be his followers, but that even the most unbelieving, intellectual, and hard-thinking of men, interested, as the head of the Vaiṣṇavas, in discrediting the being who was to supplant him in his position, would, after repeated tests, believe in him?

⁷Miracles as a rule never produce a permanent effect upon the mind. Those who beheld the miracles of Christ continued to doubt his mission. Christ was accepted because of his character and his teachings and the last great sacrifice and not for his miracles.

Chapter Thirteen:

Puṇḍarīka

It was after this that Puṇḍarīka, the great saint of Chittagong, came to Nadia. He was a wealthy man with a large following, and lived like a wealthy man, but his heart was with Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and worldliness had not the slightest influence over him. He and Ramānanda (of whom hereafter) proved to the world that a man can enjoy the good things of the world and can yet keep his *bhakti* intact. He came and unconditionally surrendered himself to Lord Gaurāṅga. It was in this manner that the Lord attracted towards him, one by one, the greatest of the *bhaktas* that flourished at that time.

The saintly chroniclers, who have, for the good of humanity, left for us an account of the sport (*līlā*) of the Lord, boldly declare that some of these *bhaktas* had come down to earth with him to accomplish his object. In proof of which they say that the *bhaktas* who followed the Lord were men such as the world had never seen. Each of them could be likened to a sun, enlightening the quarter in which he flourished.

Yes, each of them has a history of his own, and a wonderful history too. But we cannot afford to increase the bulk of our book by giving in detail the doings of the followers of the Lord.¹ Indeed, we have to omit many of the sports of the Lord himself for that reason. Those omitted now, will assuredly be supplied in the future, either by my unworthy self, of which, however, there is little likelihood, or by others more able. We cannot, however, help giving an account of Haridāsa, a *bhakta* who played a most important part in this sport, and who came to the Lord when he was, like Advaita his spiritual preceptor, an old man and one of the foremost saints of the time. He was an inhabitant of Buḍana, a place now included in the Bongong sub-division of Jessore. He was a Mussalman. But he became a follower of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and won fame by his piety. His principal religious practice consisted in repeating aloud the name of Hari, day and night. Firm as a rock was his faith, and

¹The number of principal companions and *bhaktas* of the Lord that is on record, exceeds a thousand. All these were, from a worldly point of view, leading men of the time.

he believed that anyone who took or even heard the name of Hari would be saved. Even the lower animals, he believed, would be delivered, if the sound of Hari entered their ears. For this reason he pronounced the name with a loud voice. He had built a hut in the Benapole jungles, near the present railway station of Bongong. His austere devotion became well-known in that quarter. The rich Zemindar of the place, doubting the sincerity of the young and handsome saint, employed a public woman to see if he could be seduced. She approached him and was so much affected by his piety, that she became in turn a disciple of Haridāsa, and ever after led a life of austere piety. Haridāsa, leaving her to occupy his hut, proceeded elsewhere.

The Mussalman Kāzī brought it to the notice of the Mahomedan ruler of that part of Bengal, that Haridāsa, though a Mussalman, had forsaken his religion, and become an “infidel.” The governor caused him to be arrested, and brought before him. The firm faith displayed by Haridāsa softened the heart of the governor; but the governor’s chief officer, Gorāi Kāzī, a bigoted Mahomedan, advised him to punish the saint. He urged that if such infidelity were not put down with a strong hand, the spectacle of a Mussalman adopting the Hindu religion with impunity would produce a bad moral effect, prove humiliating to the Mussalman community, and be an insult to Mahomed. The governor was therefore obliged though reluctantly to pass the sentence of death upon Haridāsa.

Though the sentence of death was passed upon him, the object of this persecution on his part was not to take Haridāsa’s life, but to make him recant. It was feared that the mere apprehension of death would not be sufficient for the purpose. It was, therefore, proposed that he would be threatened with some form of cruel and slow torture.

The punishment with which Haridāsa was threatened, was one of the cruelest ever devised by man. It was provided that he should be led to one of the market-places, and there unmercifully scourged. When this was done, he was to be taken to another market-place of the town and the scourging repeated. From there he was to be taken to another, and so on. In this manner, he was to be tortured in each of the twenty-two market-places which the town contained, and in the last until he died. It was believed that when Haridāsa had been once subjected to the lash, the punishment would induce him to recant, thereby rendering it unnecessary that he should be scourged again.

So, it was not only the prospect of death, but of a most horrible death, by slow torture, that was held out to the saint. Gorāi then triumphantly addressed Haridāsa: “You see what is in store for you, if you persist in defying our authority. If the punishment inflicted in the first market-place fails to open your eyes to your folly, you will nevertheless have to yield eventually; for if you do not recant after the first scourging or the second, you will surely

do so after the third or, at most, the fourth. Would it not then be better for you to yield at once? Therefore, read the Kalmā (confession of faith) at once or take the consequence. If you return to the fold you shall be provided with a good appointment under the Government.”

Haridāsa was the gentlest creature in the world; but when he was thus both tempted and threatened, he lost all patience and proudly declared:

Were I to pieces hacked, body and soul,
I would not give up Hari's sacred name.²

Of course, the challenge of Haridāsa highly offended the authorities. According to them a renegade was an enemy of God himself. A citizen who defied authority was also considered by despots as the greatest of offenders. And thus Haridāsa was taken to the market-place to be scourged.

Everyone expected that he would quail before the horrible punishment with which he was threatened. But the heart of the saint was filled with other thoughts than his own sufferings. The great object of his life was the salvation of all, men and beasts. Like Advaita, he had also been praying for the salvation of his fellow-creatures. He was gentle, not only to his fellow-beings but to the meanest of God's creatures, an ant or a fly. He would not drive away even a mosquito which was sucking his blood. The chief regret, therefore that filled his heart when he was being taken to be flogged was that all the men concerned in his suffering would be severely dealt with by God Almighty. He forgot his coming punishment in his distress at the thought of the severe punishment that would be dealt out to his torturers by the father of all.

What passed through his mind appeared from his actions. He kept chanting the name of Hari loudly, as was the custom with him. His persecutors were, of course, there to see that he was flogged with severity. The spectators could not discover any trace of fear or anxiety in his face, though his look was melancholy. “Recant, or the scourge falls upon your back,” said his judges to whom he replied by uttering as usual the name of Hari. The lash falls with great severity upon his back. Haridāsa does not utter a groan or even wince, but repeats the holy name; and again falls the lash upon his back!

Now men have oftentimes sacrificed themselves for God and this we know from the history of the martyrs. But martyrdom is absolutely impossible.³ A man who essays to give up his life for God is protected by him; he is bound

²Vṛndāvana Dāsa, *Caitanya-bhāgavata*, Ādi, 11.91:

খণ্ড খণ্ড হই দেহ যদি যায় প্রাণ|
তভো আমি বদনে না ছাড়ি হরিনাম||

³Of course Jesus Christ was a martyr, but he was more than a man.

to see him. If then martyrs are found, it is because so-called devotees of God have sacrificed themselves not for God but in order to indulge their own vanity or pride. God reads men's hearts, and when he sees a sincere devotee sacrificing himself for his sake, he immediately protects him in his own way.

"Hari," says Haridāsa loudly, and immediately falls another severe lash on his back. A large crowd had gathered; the sacrifice had drawn men, women, and children to the spot, for nothing attracts men more than to witness suffering in a good cause. The crowds shudder, Hindus and Mussalmans. The crowds shudder because they find before them a good man, a servant of God, mercilessly scourged for holding to his faith, and also because they apprehend disaster to the country. "God will not bear this," says one. "There will be an earthquake," says another, "and every one of us swallowed up. God never permits the strong to oppress the weak with impunity for any length of time; the vengeance of the Lord is sure, if sometimes delayed." But when they looked at Haridāsa they forgot all their selfish feelings. How unapproachably high then he looked, how beautiful, how divine; he was suffering for his Hari, and the soul. He absolutely forgot his own sufferings in his joy. This was so apparent that everyone saw it, felt it, and therefore burst into tears.

Yet Haridas had one sorrow in his mind. He was absolutely sure that his persecutors would be punished infinite times more severely than they were punishing him, so, in his simplicity, he tried to convince them of the folly of their act.

Said he, addressing his cruel tormentors in his sweet voice: "Refrain, brethren. What do you gain by beating me? And why do you beat me? I have done you no harm. Be you a Hindu or a Mussalman, you must all admit that it is wrong to hurt a living thing, and much more to inflict pain on a man who is innocent. Hari be my witness, I do not urge this because your lashes pain me, but because the thought overpowers me that you are, by your thoughtless act, bringing untold misery upon yourselves."

But his torturers, though some of them were visibly moved by the appeal of Haridāsa, had absolutely no choice in the matter. They must carry out the order or undergo the same punishment themselves. Haridāsa felt this, and so refraining from further addressing them, began to address himself to him, who is ever ready to listen to the prayers of the sorrowful. He opened his heart to God with the earnestness of a *bhakta* who vividly realized his presence and mercy. Said he loudly: "My Lord, my Lord! Have pity, O thou fountain of mercy, upon these poor fellows! Let not their offense against me be taken note of! They are ignorant men, and cannot realize the enormity of their offense."⁴

⁴In the above prayer a few Biblical words have been used only to recall to the mind of the reader a parallel incident recorded in the holy book of the Christians. The precise words that Haridāsa used in his prayer are not to be found on record. *Caitanya-Bhāgavata* says: "Haridāsa did not feel any pain on account of the lashes that fell upon him; he was only sorry for the

When he uttered this prayer, he did so in absolute faith that his prayer would be heard. The effort brought him into the presence of the Lord, who was in his heart, and he at once entered into a state of ecstatic trance!

The effect of this loud prayer upon the bystanders was instantaneous and powerful. Everyone was petrified with astonishment. Was Haridāsa joking? Had he gone mad? Had they heard him aright? Were they awake or dreaming? When they found that the man whom the Mussalmans were scourging to death was fervently praying for the good of his cruel and pitiless tormentors, they all began to behave like mad men. Some danced, some wept, some offered to be whipped instead of the saint, and some began to curse his tormentors.

His tormentors, equally moved, found themselves paralyzed. Luckily for them, the saint had then entered into a state of trance, and taking advantage of that opportunity, they gave out that he was dead, and threw him into the Ganges, very close to the bank. The plunge revived Haridāsa. On recovering his senses, he scrambled to the bank, and then a crowd surrounded the saint to crave his blessing. The Kāzī himself heard of the miracle, and came and fell at the feet of Haridāsa. The Kāzī, who at heart was not a bad man, now perceiving that Haridāsa was really a saint, asked forgiveness for himself, which was most readily granted.

Haridāsa, one of the greatest *bhaktas* of the period, found in Advaita a greater one than he. He placed himself at the disposal of the latter. And Advaita the prince of *bhaktas*, and Haridāsa, with a large following, found themselves swallowed up in the “ocean of love” which had been dug for them by that young Brahmin of twenty-three of Nadia. As mighty streams feed the mightier Ganges, and this river with all its innumerable tributaries at last finds its identity lost in the ocean, so Advaita, with his innumerable followers, each pious enough to be able to purify the quarter in which he flourished, found himself merged in the young *paṇḍita* of Nadia, who, four or five months before, had not as yet gone through even one devotional exercise!

future of the souls of the miscreants who scourged him; he prayed to the Lord that their offense against him might be forgiven and not only forgiven, but that they might be blessed by him.” Such parallel incidents are but natural in the lives of descents (*avatāra*), having the same errand. Thus parallel incidents are not wanting in the lives of Hannibal and Napoleon, both of whom crossed the Alps to invade Italy. Yet the most wonderful agreement is to be found between some of the incidents of the Old Testament of the Vaiṣṇavas and the New Testament of the Christians. Kṛṣṇa is the descent (*avatāra*) in *Śrīmat Bhāgavata*. Christ is the descent in the Bible. The two names are almost the same. The suggestion that Kṛṣṇa has been transferred from the Bible cannot be maintained. For the real hero of the *Mahābhārata* is Kṛṣṇa; and it is an established fact that that great book was written long before Christ was born.

Chapter Fourteen: The Different Moods of Nimāi

As has been stated, the mood of Nimāi changes frequently. He is now without God, he is again with God, and he is now God himself. There was also another, his natural, state, in which Nimāi was like other men, only the sweetest creature in existence. He was then a quiet man, simple as a child, affectionate as a mother, obliging as a devoted servant. He was then the meekest of men, with a very humble opinion of himself, and a very high opinion of others. He loved pleasantries, and his smiles were likened to the rays of the full moon. But he was very rarely found in his natural state. There was another state in which he personated others, as, for instance, Akrūra.

He was almost continuously, day and night, in that state which we shall call transcendental. When Śrī Kṛṣṇa was not with him, he felt like one who had suffered a most severe bereavement. He expressed the anguish of his soul in such a manner as to lead his companions to apprehend that his heart would break if Kṛṣṇa did not appear and save his life by his presence. The agony of his heart is shown by frequent fits, one succeeding the other in rapid succession, when he falls down apparently a dead man, with his breath and the beating of his heart suspended, and his jaws locked.¹ Let us translate a passage from the lay of a *bhakta*, describing his state when Nimāi was without Kṛṣṇa. The translation is free. Says Nimāi, in the midst of choking sobs, while holding the neck of a companion:

My friend! I fear I am dying. Will you be able to save my life to-day? You advise me to be patient. My friend, I do try my utmost, but my heart does not obey me. Let me go, let me go to my Kṛṣṇa. Why do you detain me? Let me go, or I shall die.

Nimāi then makes an effort to go to Kṛṣṇa, and falls down in a deadly swoon!

¹ Swoons are brought about either by excess of joy or excess of sorrows.

But suddenly he finds his Kṛṣṇa and then the joy that he expresses is simply indescribable. Indeed, then he dances with joy like a mad being. Let us again seek the help of constant companions who have left in songs a description of the ecstatic state of Nimāi. We have thousands and thousands of such songs. Here is one:

“My beautiful Nimāi had dressed himself in exquisite taste to meet his beloved Kṛṣṇa. Tears of joy were rolling from his lotus-like eyes to the earth, making it muddy. Joy overflowed his heart and he danced, making the whole universe dance with him. He says: ‘Lo! My beloved husband is come,’ and falls in an ecstatic trance.”

In the midst of such states of ecstasy the Lord now and then revealed himself. Sometimes he remained revealed even for hours together and sometimes only for minutes. When the Lord revealed himself, nobody could tell how long he would remain so revealed. Sometimes he would appear in the midst of a conversation, utter a word and disappear. Thus, for instance, Murāri was having a simple talk with him, and Nimāi was then in his human state. Nobody expected any manifestation just then, but suddenly the whole aspect of Nimāi was changed. His presence became awe-inspiring, his tone commanding, and his body emitted the light which it always did whenever the Lord revealed himself. This light sometimes appeared as strong as “ten million suns,” but sometimes in a very mild form. Murāri and everyone there present expected that the Lord meant to do or say something, and he did say something. He said: “The *saṅnyāsī*² of Benares, Prakāśānanda, is teaching dangerous doctrines. I shall teach him a lesson.”

Now this Prakāśānanda, the foremost *saṅnyāsī* of the time, then a resident of Benares, was teaching Advaitavāda, that is to say, the doctrine of “He and I are the same,” a doctrine which was fatal to the religions of *bhakti*, which Nimāi was teaching. Well, the Lord uttered his threat against Prakāśānanda in the midst of an ordinary conversation. When this threat was uttered the Lord again concealed himself within Nimāi, and then Nimāi began to speak as if nothing had happened to him, he himself not being aware of the momentary trance that had seized him!

What he spoke as the Lord he did not remember as a man, or only entertained a faint recollection of it in his human state. It appeared to his *bhaktas* that Nimāi was in a state of constant anxiety lest he, in his state of trance, should in any way speak blasphemously or otherwise behave sacrilegiously towards God. He knew that he was subject to fainting fits, and he knew that in that state he spoke and sometimes acted in an extraordinary manner. He characterized the words that he uttered during a state of trance as his “ravings,” and he always implored his companions to prevent him in his state of

²Renunciant.

trance from doing or saying anything that might be displeasing to God. His *bhaktas*, therefore, never breathed a word to him when he was in his human state as to what he had uttered as the Lord Almighty.

In the beginning, when the Lord revealed himself, the incident was preceded by some previous indications in Nimāi's behaviour. As a rule he would, first of all, pass through a period of unconsciousness before announcing that it was he who was addressing those attending on him. Gradually these divine revelations began to be more frequent and more easy. We shall now give a description of the Mahāprakāśa or great revelation when the Lord remained visible to the *bhaktas* for a period of twenty-one hours!

One day, after he had bathed, the Lord suddenly revealed himself. It was at the house of Śrīvāsa. Something very remarkable occurred on this occasion. For Nimāi, without first losing consciousness as was usual with him, seated himself on the Viṣṇu dais within the house, as if it was the most natural thing for him to do. He ordered the *bhaktas* to chant hymns. There were screens on the doors and windows, but the room was as usual lighted up by the mild effulgence of the Lord's body, so that it seemed as if it were filled with the sunshine of noon. Gadādhara decorated his person with flower-garlands and flower ornaments. Narahari waved the cāmāra.³

The Lord, seated on a fine cushion, which was placed on the dais, not only removed all his intimidating qualities by his smile, but completely fascinated all by his indescribable loveliness. He on whom the Lord cast a glance, felt him as much within his heart as he saw him without. They felt that he was both in their hearts and before them.

What poets had imagined, what painters had delineated, what saints had dreamt, the elite of Nadia actually realized: they found themselves face to face with the Lord Almighty!

The *bhaktas*, plunged in "a sea of happiness," engaged themselves in worshipping him with *tulasī* leaves, clothes of various colors, gold, silver, and various other things.

They also worshipped him with another flower, plucked from their heart, which was love! And what an overpowering love they felt for the lovely being before them! They could then have died "one hundred thousand deaths" to satisfy his slightest wish. Then for the first time they learnt what the four letters which make the word "love" actually mean. People say they love, but to love even in a slight degree is a privilege which is enjoyed by very few men on this earth. To love is to love God alone, for man cannot feel love in its purest form for his fellow-men, as man is an imperfect being. The

³The dais of Viṣṇu means the seat on which the image of God is placed. It would be an act of great sacrilege for a human being to see or allow a human being to sit on it. The *bhaktas*, as Hindus, would have risked their souls if they had permitted any mere mortal being to sit on it; and they would never have permitted Nimāi to occupy it, if they had any doubt about his being Kṛṣṇa.

only object of true love, therefore, is he who then sat face to face with his creatures at the house of Śrīvāsa. The *bhaktas* felt themselves maddened by their love for the being before them.

On that day the door was kept open, everyone having permission to see the Lord, yet the number of outsiders was not very large. Those who came surrendered themselves absolutely, for to see was to believe. The *bhaktas* flocked in from all sides, each engrossed with his own thoughts, each determined to do his duty, to show his love, and to relieve his surcharged heart—the heart surcharged with an irresistibly kindly feeling towards him. “How good he is, how incomparably delectable my Lord is,” thought every one in his heart, not only thought, but realized.

Hundreds of men and women shower flowers at his feet, throw garlands round his neck, recite *mantras*, and repeat prayers all at the same time. Yet there is no confusion. All are absorbed in the deity, and take no notice of one another. Everyone thinks that he and the Lord are the two persons present in the room, and that he has been looking at the Lord and the Lord looking at him. No one is aware of the noise made by others. Hundreds of persons are speaking to the Lord; yet there is absolute peace and quiet in the house. The union between the souls is complete, the one is absorbed in the other. Yet they feel that they are separate entities!

Those present address him as Lord, master, Kṛṣṇa, and so forth, each in the language which occurs to him. Someone offers a garland saying “I offer this flower wreath to thee. Be pleased to wear it round thy neck.” Thereupon the Lord, taking off the garland which he had on his neck, places it round the neck of the *bhakta*, and then, bending his head forward, allows the *bhakta* similarly to decorate him.

Someone runs to the market to buy a fine silken *dhoti*, and then returning to the Lord’s presence, offers it to him. The Lord, putting on the cloth given him, graciously takes off his own *dhoti* and presents it to the worshipper. The *bhakta* winds up the cloth round his head and dances with joy. In this way the *bhaktas* offer presents to the Lord and in return receive presents from him. The Lord remains under debt to no one.

But why do they offer presents to God who is Almighty? It is because he is before them as a man, and because they feel an intense longing to serve him. They are all humans, and they can only serve as humans do. So they give him food to eat. Indeed, they brought delicious things, placed them before the Lord, and prayed to him to partake of them. They all ran to the bazar to purchase fruits, sweets, and innumerable things. There were before the Lord such fruits as mangoes, jackfruits, and bananas, etc., procurable in that season; there were different preparations of milk; there were pastries, cakes; in short, everything to be had at that time in the city.

It is not altogether an easy affair for man to personate the Lord. Merely

besmearing himself with phosphoric light and sitting on the dias of Viṣṇu will not make God of a man. It may be possible for a man to throw a spell over another and enchain him for a time, but then to extort the consideration, which is due to the all-wise and all-powerful God, for any length of time, from hundreds, is a feat, which it is simply impossible for a human being to accomplish. They brought offerings before him which would have satisfied the hunger of “thousands of men.” They all began to press the Lord to partake of them!

He agreed with a smile. When he agreed to oblige one *bhakta*, he was bound to oblige another, for he was the father of all, and he had no excuse for partaking of the offering of one, and refusing that of another. Then every *bhakta* pressed the Lord to take everything that he had brought, and the good Lord, who is the most obliging being in existence, could not command the rudeness to refuse anything offered him. For pious men, his servants, had been proclaiming the fact from time immemorial, that he refuses nothing offered him by his *bhaktas*. Thus he was obliged to partake of everything that was offered to him.

He agreed to oblige every *bhakta*, and therefore had to accept everything offered to him, and so he partook of all. Here then was a miracle which the Lord was obliged to perform because he had then no excuse for refusing the offerings presented to him. It was thus that, “he, in a short time, partook of food sufficient to have filled thousands of men,” says the *Caitanya-bhāgavata*.

Now the followers of Śrī Gaurāṅga have no great opinion of miracles. Indeed, according to the Hindus generally, miracle-working is not at all a great feat. According to them everyone who has studied the secret art can perform it. Besides, according to them there are some who naturally possess occult powers. Lord Gaurāṅga could never have persuaded his followers to accept him as God Almighty, if he had only or mainly to depend upon his miracles for the accomplishment of that object. Of course, he had to perform miracles when it was absolutely necessary for the accomplishment of a purpose. As for instance, when he appeared as the Lord Almighty he had to show that he had not only all the power, but also all the wisdom. But his miracles served his cause very little. When his miracles were, by chance, witnessed by outsiders, they attributed them to his knowledge of the occult science. Even some of his own *bhaktas* did so in the beginning, as, for instance, even Mukunda, his life-long companion.⁴

Men are naturally skeptical. Those who easily believe do not believe at all. Only they have not the clear sight to be able to analyse their minds and

⁴I have referred to Prakāśānanda, the most respected *sannyāsi* in India at the time. He and Sārvabhauma, being the two foremost men in India then, knew each other very well. When Sārvabhauma was converted by Śrī Gaurāṅga, Prakāśānanda was surprised, and he attributed this miracle to the occult powers that the Lord possessed. Indeed, he continued to entertain a very mean opinion of the Lord until he saw him and then he was converted.

find that when they proclaim their belief they only make known that they are ignorant of their own mind. Men say they believe but when put to the test they come to know that they do not believe at all. I believe in the next world, says one. Why then does he fear to face death? The saying is that a Vaiṣṇava is known by his character. So the faith of a Christian is known by his dealings with his fellow-beings. When a man sees a miracle he is not convinced but bewildered. Gradually he seems to doubt whether what he has seen is a miracle at all. It is, therefore, utterly impossible for a man to extort the respect which is due to God Almighty by the help of miracles. The divinity of Śrī Gaurāṅga was based upon other considerations than miracles. True belief comes very slowly. Even those who had accepted Gaurāṅga as God Almighty at night, doubted him the following morning. The career of Advaita will show how the minds of the *bhaktas* of the Lord were alternately affected by faith and disbelief.

As we said above, miracles followed his steps everywhere, but they came naturally. As for instance, when he appeared as the Lord God he could no longer excuse himself under the plea that the eatables that would suit thousands of men would be too much for a single individual like him. So he had to consume them all.

But to return: the first few hours were passed in utter confusion, for his companions were utterly bewildered by the indecent before them. Gradually they came to realize the situation, and they saw that the material world had almost disappeared from their eyes. Their eyes were riveted on the Lord. He was on the dias. He was no doubt Nimāi, but his body seemed to be made up of electricity, of a yellowish white light, which though more brilliant than the rays of the mid-day sun, did not hurt the eyes in the least, but so soothed and pleased them that it was ecstasy in itself to behold it. They further saw that light was emitted not only from the person of the Lord, but from everyone present there. Indeed, it was seen that light was being emitted from every substance there, the stools, the utensils, the clothing; in fact, everything was covered and suffused with luminosity, even the atmosphere of the room.⁵

They gazed at the Lord. He sat silent as a statue and seemed to be looking at everyone at the same time. Indeed, everyone saw that his eyes were upon him. And what a gaze that was! That gaze showed unutterable love! They found that the being before them was exceedingly good, that he was beyond the influence of evil, that he was without guile, and absolutely pure. They felt that he had no misery, no sorrow, but, on the other hand, was swimming, as it were, in an ocean of happiness.

The worshippers of God, having tested a particle of joy, have called him All-joy. Now, this is an expression which conveys no definite idea to the

⁵This luminous substance remained even when the Lord had left the place, and sometimes for days together. But of this in its proper place.

mind. But the *bhaktas* present realized it. Says Kavi Karṇapūra in his *Moonrise of Caitanya* (*Caitanya-candrodaya*):

The Lord was sitting quiet, quietly enjoying the ecstasy which always accompanies him. As on the broad ocean, wave follows the wave in incessant succession, so the Lord was seen to be affected by an incessant flow of joy. It seemed to the *bhaktas* that his joy had no end, but was as boundless as the ocean.

Those present found in him their long-lost friend. Men are always in search of something. They know that they are unhappy, ill at ease, and discontented. A maid thinks that a good marriage will bring peace to her mind; when it comes it does not remove her restlessness. A poor man thinks that riches will soothe his soul; a tyrant believes that absolute power will render him secure and happy, but experience proves to them that the soul hankers after something else than riches or power. When, however, the *bhaktas* found the Lord, they came to realize that though they had not known it, it was his absence that had been the cause of their restlessness and unhappiness—a state which is to be found in every man. And when they found him, they felt that they had found their long lost treasure, the mate of their soul, the want of whom always kept them, unknown to themselves, in search of something unknown. In the Lord, they at last found their “own,” so long lost to them⁶—their soul’s eternal partner.

And what a charming friend! His beauty brought tears to their eyes. The fragrance from his body maddened their olfactory nerves. His grace, his elegance, the intelligence, goodness, benevolence and love that beamed through his beautiful person from head to foot, began to attract the hearts of those present “as an angler attracts a fish.”

The sweetness of the all-sweet is too much for human beings to bear, and the *bhaktas* were having too much of it. The Lord perceiving this wanted to give them some relief, and he spoke. His tone was commanding and it seemed that he was quite conscious that there was none in the universe to dispute his authority. But yet his voice was sweeter than music, and his sentiments considerate, condescending, generous and tender. Indeed, it seemed that he was incapable of finding fault, and that, in his opinion, everyone before him was as guileless, as good, as disinterestedly loving as he himself was. He addressed Śrīvāsa. He showed him and others that he knew everything about him (Śrīvāsa). He gave an account of some very important events which had occurred to Śrīvāsa during his life but which were secrets to everybody.

⁶Men try to find happiness in wealth, power, praise of their fellows, love, etc., but they never get it. They search for it here and there because they know not the cause of their restlessness. Their souls are, unknown to them, attracted towards the fountain from which they had sprung, and this is the cause of the feeling of want that makes every man restless. The soul without God is in the position of a loving but bereaved wife.

Śrīvāsa was convinced that the being before him knew all the secrets of his heart. He then addressed Advaita and in a similar manner told him some of the great past events of his life. Advaita was convinced that the being on the dais knew everything regarding him. He then addressed another and another.

The day was thus passed, and night came on. The *bhaktas* one and all were now delirious with joy. Numerous lamps were thrown into the shade by the effulgence of the Lord's body—the effulgence, which seemed mild at day-time on account of the sun-light, became very brilliant on the approach of night. The light, emitted from the bodies of Nīṭāi, who held the umbrella, and the other *bhaktas*, as well as from the inanimate objects around, received additional lustre at the approach of darkness.

It was now time to do *ārati* to the Lord Almighty. Śrīvāsa thought that this ceremony ought to be performed by Śacī herself. So he addressed Advaita and said, “Gosvāmī, is it not meet that the *ārati* should be performed by the mother of the Lord? Besides,” said he with a smile, “the simple lady has all along entertained a notion that we, elderly men, have spoiled her youthful son. Let her now come and see that it is not we that had spoiled her son, but that it is her son who is spoiling us.” Advaita, too, smiled and approved of the proposal, and so Śacī was brought.

She entered the room, and seeing her son, stood speechless and trembling. She saw at once that her supposed son was God Almighty. But did the knowledge please or gratify her? Certainly not. If the *bhaktas* found in the Lord their long lost treasure, she at once realized that she had lost her dearest object of love! Did she not love her child, so beautiful, so full of excellences, so affectionate to her? Was it not for her son that she had forgotten her bereavements, and become the happiest woman in the world? This dear object now slips away from her maternal bosom! He is no longer “the son of Śacī,” but the father of all! He is no longer her exclusive property, but a property to which everyone had equal right!

In the midst of these painful thoughts she came to remember that she had chastised her son, and treated him as an inferior. And would she be forgiven for having followed the Lord Almighty with a cane in hand? As we said, she stood trembling and speechless, a prey to diverse and contradictory feelings, and not at all gratified by seeing her son raised to so exalted a position.

As for the Lord he took no more notice of her than he did of the others. Seeing this, Śrīvāsa addressed her: “What are you doing, lady? Why do you hesitate? Go to him, do you not see that he is not your son, but the father of all? Go to him and prostrate yourself before him.”

So Śacī fell prostrate before him, whom she had hitherto regarded as her son. And the being who hitherto had treated Śacī as his mother, saluting her with the humblest of submission as often as he met her, now planted his foot

upon her hoary head.⁷

Śacī, as soon as she came in contact with the sacred foot of the Lord, found herself violently affected. A thrill of joy passed through her frame and she could not resist the temptation of expressing it by dancing! A dance by a Hindu lady and advanced in age before spectators and strangers was too horrible a scandal to be permitted. She was thus restrained by Śrīvāsa. Here another miracle was performed. Śacī knew not Sanskrit, yet she uttered the couplet in the *Śrīmat Bhāgavata* which contains the prayer of Devakī to the new-born Kṛṣṇa.⁸

Śacī, Mālinī and the other elderly ladies then performed the ceremony of *ārati*, which is worshipping by lights. This done, Śacī was permitted to go home.

When the *bhaktas* came to the Lord, they awaited his commands in the verandah. Without permission no one ventured to go in. Mukunda, the dearest of Nimāi's disciples, was in this manner awaiting his commands. Suddenly the Lord ordered the *bhaktas* to bring Śrīdhara. This poor man, who supplied plantain leaves and pith and the like to Nimāi, as has been stated before, was too insignificant a man to be known to the companions of Nimāi. So they wanted to know who he was. The Lord gave them specific directions as to how he should be found, namely, that if they proceeded in a certain direction, they would find a man loudly repeating the name of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and that that man was Śrīdhara. As for Śrīdhara, a former object of Nimāi's pleasantries, he had come to know that his tormentor, the *paṇḍita*, had turned a pious man, and that he was regarded even as Śrī Kṛṣṇa himself by many. But he had not ventured to approach him. Now the summons came to him that the Lord God Kṛṣṇa, Śacī's son, wanted him! Śrīdhara would have most readily come, but as soon as he heard the message he fainted away.

The *bhaktas* had, therefore, to carry him to the Lord, in the midst of the jeers of those who had the privilege of seeing poor Śrīdhara being carried on the shoulders of highly respectable men. When brought into the presence of the Lord, however, Śrīdhara awoke from his trance. He at first saw that it was the *brahmaṇa* youth, his tormentor, that was sitting on the dias. But

⁷For an inferior to put his foot upon a superior is a gross sacrilege. For a son to put his foot upon the head of his mother is the grossest sacrilege of all that could be conceived by a Hindu. But the being who did it was not the son of Śacī, but her father and the father of all.

⁸Actually, the verse recited by Śacī was from the prayer of Kuntī to Kṛṣṇa after he saved the life of the sole surviving descendent of the Pāṇḍavas, Parikṣit, in the womb of his mother Uttarā. *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, 1.8.20:

तथा परमहंसानां मुनीनाममलात्मनाम्।

भक्तियोगविधानार्थं कथं पश्येम हि स्त्रियः ॥

So, too, [you are not seen] by sages of the caliber of the highest goose who are pure of heart. How is it then that we women can see you who have come to arrange for the yoga of *bhakti*? (ed.)

he found that the youth transformed himself into Śrī Kṛṣṇa. The spectacle bewildered him and he stood speechless.

Said the Lord, “Do you now see who took your things by force? It is in this manner that I deal with those who love me! I show them in this manner that mine is theirs and theirs is mine. Of course, hitherto I have treated yours as mine, it is now time for me to show that mine is also yours.”

Śrīdhara was not then in a mood to enjoy a pleasantry. He said, in the midst of sobs, “Lord, you revealed yourself to me more than once. Did you not tell me that you were the father of the Ganges? But I, a fool, did not understand you.”

“Now, Śrīdhara,” said the Lord, “it is time for me to repay you for all the things I took from you by force. Ask a *vara*. Mind, you shall have whatever you want, for I have to pay fully for your plantain leaves.

Śrīdhara declined positively to have anything to do with gifts, or, indeed, to be merry. He stuck to his serious mood. Then the Lord said, “You have spent days in poverty. You have served me faithfully. I must ask you to spend your latter days in opulence and power. Let me, Śrīdhara, make you then the lord of an empire.”

Śrīdhara smiled. He smiled to express his contempt for the gift offered; he would have nothing, not even an empire. Said he: “My Lord, do not tempt me. It is not meet that you should tempt a humble creature like me. A poor despised man like me has no doubt a hankering after wealth and power. But I do not want sovereignty or anything.”

The Lord again offered him an empire and again he declined.

When Śrīdhara rejected an empire offered him by the Lord—Śrīdhara, the poorest of the poor, who had spent his whole life in a state of semi-starvation—the *bhaktas* naturally raised a shout of admiration. Now, it must be borne in mind that if Śrīdhara was really a half-starved poor man and an object of contempt to those better circumstanced, the rest of those present had no doubt of the fact that God Almighty was seated in their midst, and was prepared to remove the sorrows of the man. To them there was nothing theatrical in this offer of an empire by the Lord and its rejection by Śrīdhara; to them it was a stern reality. What they saw was that an empire was placed as his disposal and that poor Śrīdhara flung it away as a thing of no worth!⁹

⁹A man of the world may here suggest that Śrīdhara might have asked the Lord to free Bengal from the Mussalman yoke. But those, who have realized in their minds that man's connection with this world is of short duration, place no value whatsoever upon what is called worldly prosperity. The *brāhmaṇas* in India in days gone by enjoyed unlimited powers. Why did they then prefer the wilderness to palaces and thrones? A high *brāhmaṇa* who agreed to serve as minister was considered a fallen man. The greatest *brāhmaṇa* minister in India was Cānakya and he left society and lived the latter days of his life in the jungles, in religious exercises, avowedly for the purification of his soul. Rūpa and Sanātana, after enjoying almost sovereign powers in Bengal, left society at the bidding of Lord Gaurāṅga. So did Raghunātha who was a prince. Political aspirations have no place in the hearts of men who are “free.” It is of very little

The Lord was mightily pleased at the attitude of Śrīdhara, so worthy of a *bhakta*, but yet he did not just then show it. So he said: “But, Śrīdhara, you know, my words cannot go for nothing. I wanted you to ask a *vara*; you must ask one. If you don’t desire an empire, let me know what else you want.”

Śrīdhara pondered; he had got everything, he had nothing more to ask, but he must also obey the Lord’s command. So he said, “Then grant me this: let that young and beautiful *brāhmaṇa* who took away my plantain leaves by force also take possession of my entire heart and let him make his permanent abode there!”

The Lord looked at him tenderly and could scarcely restrain his tears. He said “I knew, Śrīdhara, you would treat with contempt even the offer of an empire. So it was only to tempt you that I made it. It was only to show that while for sovereignty people risk everything, even their future life, the poorest of the *bhaktas* would not accept it even when offered by me!”

An empire was offered to Śrīdhara, because he was the poorest of the poor. It was to show that *bhakti* was infinite times more valuable than sovereignty. It was to show men that those who jeopardise their souls for the acquirement of property or sovereignty are foolish.

The Lord had a talk with Murāri, one of the chroniclers of his early *līlā*. Murāri was a worshipper of Rāma and Sītā. Meek, philanthropic, pious, Murāri had no superior on earth. “Murāri, look at me,” said the Lord. Murāri looked up and saw that there was no Nimāi Paṇḍita, but in his place Rāma and his consort Sītā were sitting on a throne. The beautiful spectacle was too much for Murāri, and he fainted away.

The reassuring words of the Lord, however, roused him from the trance. Said the Lord: “Murāri, I implore you, give up the study of fruitless occult philosophies.” Murāri, a little disconcerted, said: “Are they not good? Do they not teach religious truth?” “Good or bad, that is not the question,” replied the Lord. “But those researches into the realm of occultism will not lead anyone to find me.” Murāri, forgetting the presence, for he was after all a man, ventured to suggest that a caution from the Lord was unnecessary, as there was no one to teach him occult philosophy. The Lord retorted with the remark, “Yes, you have a teacher in Kamalākṣa,” which was the original name of Advaita Ācārya.¹⁰

The fact is, the object of the Lord was not to give a lesson to the poor Murāri but to Advaita Ācārya, who had yet some pride left in him, because moment to such people who governs the country.

¹⁰Here the Lord refers to the Tantra and other occult sciences which had then taken possession of the minds of the learned men of India. What the Lord meant was that researches into the secrets of occultism may have their uses, but they do not train one in *bhakti* and therefore do not lead one to God. Those engaged in these researches may possibly sometimes discover truths not known before, that is all; but to attain to the personal God or Kṛṣṇa there is but one way, through faith, reverence and love, and that way is not paved but retarded by the cultivation of the occult sciences.

of his knowledge of the secrets of the occult sciences. So to avoid hurting the feelings of the great saint Advaita, the Lord chose to teach him by addressing Murāri. The Lord then explained that to love God and to be loved by God was an object quite distinct from the knowledge of the soul and its capacities. The scientists of Nadia were then deeply engaged in dissecting the soul, forgetting altogether the fact that they had another more important duty, which was to save their souls by directing them to the lotus feet of the great center, towards which all progressive beings are tending. Mere culture of the occult sciences will not save a soul from its downfall unless it has created for itself an attraction upwards. Advaita felt himself humbled.

Haridāsa was called. His mission on earth was to teach humility and resignation to mankind. He had prayed for the salvation of those who were scourging him to death. He stood before the Lord, a very humble creature, with folded hands. Said the Lord: “Haridāsa, you have suffered much for me. It is now my turn to show you that I appreciate your devotion. Ask a *vara*, anything you will, the sovereignty of the whole universe is at your disposal.”

Haridāsa said: “Great Lord, you know the secret of my heart. The more you reveal yourself to me, the more I come to realize my unworthiness. Thou art purity, I am a lump of filth. Thou art good, I am wicked. My Lord, when thou speakest to me in kindly terms I am overpowered by shame. Let me have only this *vara*, that I may never forget my own unworthiness. My Lord, if thou wilt give me a *vara*, make me the abject servant of all thy servants.” Saying this he rolled on the ground in the violence of his feelings.

The Lord said: “Rise, Haridāsa, rise, I implore you. Your humility simply rends my heart. The most pleasant being to me is he who, though great, is yet unconscious of it. Yes, it is from you that men must learn to be meek and forbearing, but yet rise, beloved Haridāsa, rise. There is not one servant of mine in the whole universe for whom I have a greater regard than for yourself. Yes, you were cruelly scourged by those wicked men and you suffered for my sake,. When they scourged you, you prayed for me to forgive them. Now, it is not my way to reject the prayer of a sincere *bhakta*. But yet, that is not the only or main reason why I did not punish your tormentors, Haridāsa. It would have been the easiest thing for me to have protected you from the lashes. But if I had done so, the world would have lost an example. The object of your existence is the salvation of the human race. You, a frail man, have done a deed which has no parallel. You not only forgave those who were scourging you to death, but prayed to me to shower my blessings upon them! Now, Haridāsa, I am not the being to throw obstacles in the way of the performance of so noble a deed. Yet, when they began to scourge you, I thought I had a duty to perform in your behalf. So what I did was to take you into my bosom, so that the scourges might not fall on your back. You, Haridāsa, can testify to the fact that the lash did not give you any pain.”

When the Lord had ended speaking, the *bhaktas* tried to express their acknowledgments, but they found themselves overpowered. They felt very much humiliated; they felt that they had hitherto led a very ungrateful life by forgetting so good and affectionate a master, and they felt also that the human race was altogether ungrateful.

They also felt how much the good Lord had been libelled by his ignorant creatures. They had given him a character after their own model; they had made him, in fact, a frightful tyrant. But how good, how incomparably good he was! They resolved that if they lived they would spend their days only in proclaiming his goodness to his ignorant creatures. The Lord in this manner addressed his *bhaktas* one by one. He wanted to give *vara* to everyone who asked it. He then ordered them to throw open the doors, and bring everyone from the town who wanted to see him. "Let those who have doubts come and see," proclaimed the Lord. His commands were to go through the streets and tell everyone they met that he was come and that anyone was free to come and see him.

Those who were present had no doubt in their minds that it was the Lord Almighty that was speaking to them. So they disdained to ask him for anything transient, such as, for instance, worldly goods. The presence of the Lord had taken away from their minds all traces of worldliness. So when the Lord offered to give *vara*, almost all chose *bhakti*, either for themselves or for their dear ones. One having a father, who was a skeptic, prayed that his heart might be drawn towards him. One prayed that his son, who was a gambler, might be cured of his vicious habits. When Advaita was asked to take a *vara* he prayed that the nectar, *preman* and *bhakti*, which the Lord had brought from Goloka for mankind, might be distributed to all, irrespective of creed, color or caste!

Mukunda was, however, weeping outside. Angelic as he was by nature; he also sang like an angel. He was an ascetic from his infancy. He was a *bhakta* before the Lord had revealed himself. Nimāi loved him, and he on his part followed his great friend like a shadow. But why was Mukunda outside? He was there sitting in the verandah, a picture of utter despair! The Lord was within, and Mukunda was able to hear every word that was being spoken there. He was cognizant of all that was being said and done inside, but he was not allowed to take any part therein, because the Lord had not called him.

It gradually became evident to all who were present that the Lord was deliberately ignoring Mukunda, and they pitied him. They held a secret consultation amongst themselves. Śrīvāsa ventured to put in a word in his behalf. He addressed the Lord, and boldly said: "My Lord, forgive my impertinence; but everyone has been blessed by thee excepting thy Mukunda." The Lord instantly replied saying, "My Mukunda? Who told you that he was

my Mukunda?”

Śrīvāsa said: “Not thine? Whose is he then? The world knows that he is thine, and thine alone. He is the singer of thy glories; what man is there who has not been moved by his songs about thee?”

Said the Lord: “Yes, he is a *bhakta* when in your midst. I know all that; but I also know that he is a philosopher when in the midst of savants who teach anti-*bhakti* doctrines. He has no firm faith in anything, certainly not in me.”

The angry reply of the Lord fell like a thunder-bolt upon all who heard it, for Mukunda was the beloved of all; but more especially upon the unfortunate Mukunda himself. The Lord God was within, he was blessing everyone with a liberality which knew no bounds. Mukunda heard it all, he heard what Śrīvāsa urged on his behalf and what the Lord said in reply. This led him to think profoundly about his condition. At last he broke the silence by addressing Śrīvāsa. Said he: “Do not intercede for me, Paṇḍita. The Lord is just, and my punishment is much lighter than my offence.”

Mukunda was quite sincere in what he said, and it was not mock humility that led him to admit his offence. Indeed, he was then in a very happy frame of mind. The remarks of the Lord had led him into it. For he felt that the Lord loved him or he would not have spoken with such kind solicitude about him. “Yes,” thought he, “that is his way: his punishment means only love. But I must chastise this unworthy body of mine which has become polluted by imbibing infidel doctrines. Yes, die I must. And then the Lord God will take me unto his bosom. But when will that time come, when the Lord will again accept me as his servant?”

He again addressed Śrīvāsa. He said, “Do not, please, intercede for me; only ask the Lord to tell me, if he will condescend to do so, whether he will ever allow me to see him?”

The Lord seemed moved to tears by the question of Mukunda, but he spoke aloud this time addressing Mukunda: “Mukunda, you shall certainly see me, but after ten million births.”

This meant that Mukunda must die and be born again ten million times before the process of purification was complete that would entitle him to see the Lord! To a puny creature like Mukunda the time that he was asked to wait before he could be permitted a sight of the Lord practically meant eternity. It was the cruelest blow conceivable for Mukunda, more especially when we consider that the Lord, who hurled the fiat, was only a few yards off. But Mukunda did not view the matter in that light at all. He heard the sentence passed upon him, and he began, calmly enough, to analyse his position. So engrossed was he with the circumstances of his position that he utterly forgot his surroundings, even the presence of the Lord, and freely unburdened his heart aloud. Said he to himself: “Yes, he is so good, so merciful!”

The *bhaktas* present had heard the sentence passed upon Mukunda and it seemed to them so unusual that they felt bewildered. Mukunda was dear to them, so was the Lord. They felt in their heart of hearts that the Lord was dealing rather severely with Mukunda, but the idea was blasphemous, and they did not venture to indulge it. They, however, could not help sympathizing profoundly with the unfortunate Mukunda. When, therefore, he talked of the “mercy” of the Lord, after his severe sentence, they could not see in his dealings with Mukunda where the mercy lay.

Yet Mukunda was never more sincere in his life than when he talked of the mercy of the good Lord. Indeed, if the sentence was felt as a thunderbolt by the others, to Mukunda it appeared like a choice blessing worthy of the fountain of all goodness and mercy. So he began to mutter to himself, utterly forgetful of the presence of the Lord and the *bhaktas*. “Yes, he is merciful. Here I have a clear and distinct promise from him, that he will allow me again to look on him. I must now pronounce myself to be the happiest man in the universe. He says I shall see him, that it is quite certain. He says that I cannot see him now. But what of that? See him I shall, for he has promised. Ten million births may seem to be long, but are as nothing when compared to eternity. So, Mukunda, take heart, you shall see him again.” Saying this he actually stood up to dance; he began to dance on the verandah with uplifted hands, a picture of supreme happiness, exclaiming, “I shall see him; he has promised it.”

The scene was too much for the *bhaktas*, who all burst into tears, which Mukunda observed, but he could not understand the cause. Said he to the *bhaktas* innocently: “Why do you weep at this moment of my supreme happiness?” Mukunda was so happy that he could not understand the cause of the sorrow of his friends. He had expected that his friends would congratulate him on his good fortune and was surprised to see them immersed in sorrow.

The golden figure, on the sacred dias, was taking a keen interest in what was going on in the verandah. When Mukunda began to dance, exclaiming the while, “I shall see him,” the lotus eyes of the Lord shed tears, and emotion filled his heart. He managed, however, to issue an order to Mukunda.

Said he: “Mukunda, come in.”

But Mukunda was not then in a condition to hear a command addressed to him, even by the Lord. His ecstasy, at the thought that he would see the Lord hundreds of millions of years thence, had not only blinded him, but also had closed his ears. The *bhaktas*, however, caught hold of the dancing figure and sought to restrain him. This interruption Mukunda did not like, and he resented it in these words: “Why do you stop me? Have you not heard the promise of the Lord? He will allow me to see him after ten million births.” They all, however, dragged him before the Lord.

The Lord said, in a voice broken with emotion: “Mukunda, forgive me

for the pleasantry. You have conquered me, though I must tell you I was only trying your faith. Not even exactly that. I wanted to show to the world what metal my *bhaktas* are made of. I also wanted to show that if I am master of all, I have also my master in my *bhaktas*. Did I not tell you that I would not be visible to you, till you had passed through ten millions of births? But where is my resolve gone? One word of yours has driven that resolution out of my heart. Know, Mukunda, that it is not my custom to be fault-finding with my people, nor to exact vengeance for their short-comings, whatever ignorant persons may say to the contrary. No, Mukunda, men do me wrong by judging me by their own standard. Forgiveness rather than the exaction of revenge is my nature. Now, Mukunda, you know that my resolve is unalterable, and so, you believed for certain that you would be deprived of the privilege of seeing me for millions of years. Yet your faith in me was not shaken. On the other hand, the prospect of seeing me after millions of years threw you into an ecstasy of joy. Mukunda, I have scarcely a *bhakta* like you. Now raise your head, look at me, and let us be friends again.

Through the whole of that day the Lord remained revealed. Midnight approached, and he was still on the dais. But now he assumed a different attitude. Advaita had wanted to see the mightiness of the Lord for his own belief, and accordingly the Lord had shown himself as the Almighty in the act of being worshipped by myriads of celestial beings. This sight had filled Advaita with despair of ever being able to attain to him,¹¹ but the Lord now withdrew all his mightiness and appeared to the *bhaktas* in his loveliness, pure and simple. The Almighty Lord disappeared, but the all-sweet Lord remained.

The senses open to us doors of pleasure, but the pleasure does not come. A fine scent may give a momentary pleasure through the olfactory nerves, but these soon get accustomed to it, and convey no further pleasure to the sense after a short enjoyment. So in the case of a beautiful sight, the eyes soon become used to it, and then it palls. In the Lord at last they found an object for the gratification of their senses. They gazed at him, and tears of joy began to trickle down their cheeks. They felt that it was unfortunate for them that they had only a pair of eyes, for the capacity of the pair was quite inadequate to convey the beauty which was presented to them. When they saw that the beauty of the Lord “overflowed” their eyes, they had to shut them for relief; but only for a moment. The maddening desire to see him led them to open their eyes again. When lo! They perceive all is changed, the Lord having assumed another and quite different form of loveliness, superior, if possible, to that hitherto revealed.

¹¹When Śrī Kṛṣṇa, in the *Gītā*, showed his mightiness to Arjuna, the latter was so terrified that he prayed to the Lord to appear to him as man. Those who call it idolatry, because *bhaktas* give the form of man to God, have never realized what worship by *bhakti* means.

In this manner, after every wink, the *bhaktas* found to their wonder that the Lord had assumed a new style of loveliness.

Now, the Lord was *sarvāṅga-sundara* which, when translated, means, “every-limb-equally-beautiful-being” or “beautifully proportioned being.” So, when the eyes of the *bhaktas* were directed upon one part of the body of the Lord there they were riveted. Suppose, for instance, the eyes of one had accidentally fallen upon the eyes of the Lord. There they remained riveted. Another was enjoying the sight of his lips. Says the first: “What beautiful eyes!” Says the second: “Yes, but how beautiful are the lips!”

One found himself maddened by the sweet fragrance that was emitted from his person. He exclaimed: “Yes, I now see why he gave me my nose. Yes, the nose has its uses; the nose is the chief source of human happiness.” In this manner they served the Lord with their five senses and were served in return, for he has said, “I serve as I am served.”¹²

They all felt attracted towards the lovely person before them. They ventured not to approach him but they felt themselves involuntarily drawn towards him.

They felt that he was drawing them towards him “as an angler draws a fish.” They approached him and some touched his fingers, some his hands, some his feet. “How delicious the touch!” they exclaimed, overpowered with pleasure.

The Lord held them, one by one, in his arms and embraced them!
Holding them in his bosom, he kissed them fervently!¹³

¹²A devotee who has any article of love for God is not satisfied with merely worshipping him. He longs to worship him through the five senses—to smell him, to touch him, to see him, etc. The *bhaktas* had their spiritual senses opened and these enabled them to appreciate the loveliness of God. The gross senses are but the natural expressions of the senses within, as the body is of the soul. A man who is born again has his spiritual senses opened, of course, each according to his capacity and progress. Here we can only lay down certain propositions without going into explanations. Thus, for instance, communion with God is impossible for one whose spiritual senses have not been opened, for God is spirit. Ecstasy is the proof of this communion; where there is no ecstasy there is no communion. There are various ways of vivifying, developing, and opening the spiritual senses. The Tāntrikas open this spiritual sense by certain artificial processes but the Vaiṣṇavas do it merely by the culture of *bhakti* and *preman*. The Tāntrikas cultivate the sense to acquire occult power, the Vaiṣṇavas to be able to secure ecstasy from communion with God. Thus the Arabs cultivate the date trees for fruits, but the Indians do it for its saccharine juice from which the finest of sugar is manufactured, and which can sweeten everything. We can go on laying down other propositions, though explanations we cannot promise just now or even in this volume which contain only the beginning of the *līlā* of the Lord. Thus every man has “his Rādhā within his body who is sleeping.” Rādhā is awakened when these spiritual senses are awakened, and then alone a communion with Śrī Kṛṣṇa is possible. And thus the following saying: lucky is the man to whom Rādhā is merciful.

¹³In the Bengal original work, Ghosh cites a verse from the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta-mahākāvya* of Kavikarṇapūra (5.92):

आश्लेषैः कति च तथैव काश्चिदन्या-
नाचुमैस्तदनु च चर्वितैस्तथान्यान।

It was then that the true significance of the Vedantic doctrine dawned upon their minds. The Vaidic affirmation is, “He and I are the same.” They felt then that he and they were one and that they were portions of him who is the whole. They had known, a few moments before, what love meant, but now they felt that love separated them from, rather than united them to, him. They felt that they were at first one, and that love had separated them.

A poor girl may come as a wife to her wealthy husband’s house and feel that it is hers and not only he but everything his. In the same manner the *bhaktas* felt that not only was he theirs, but everything that was his, the world, the universe. Then, and not till then, those expressions were vividly realized by them which the *Śrīmat Bhāgavata* uses to explain the cordial feeling that existed between Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Rādhā and the *gopīs*, and which it is impossible for ordinary men to comprehend. Said Rādhā to Kṛṣṇa, as described in the *Śrīmat Bhāgavata*, “I am thine and thou art mine, in happiness and misery, sickness and health, now and for ever and ever.”

And Śrī Kṛṣṇa in reply to Rādhā said: “Thy love has attracted me to earth which I prefer to my happiness in Goloka. Thou art the joy of my heart. Thou hast taught me how to love. Without thee existence is dreary,” and so forth.

Now, the above expressions to and by God Almighty were considered more poetical than real. How could any man, nay, even the *gopīs*, the most favoured of God address him in terms like the above endearing terms? The terms addressed to the deity, by Radha and the *gopīs*, were considered to be exaggerations. The *bhaktas* now found that they were not exaggerations, but fell far short of the reality.

In the Lord the *bhaktas* at last found the mate of their soul!

The writer is certainly not fitted to describe how they felt when they found themselves in the close embrace of the Lord Almighty. The saints who have attempted to do so have failed, and, as a matter of fact, in the company of the all-sweet God, the hours passed, away with the rapidity of lightning. But a strange thing happened. Advaita had learnt from practical experience that the mightiness of God was beyond the conception of man, and therefore, painful to him. Now, the *bhaktas* felt that the sweetness displayed by him was also too much for them. It must be borne in mind that they were only men, that their capacities were limited, that man is a progressive being, that perfection cannot be reached all at once, that what is nectar to him in his state of progress, may be poison to him in his state of undevelopment, and that although God is only good, man can enjoy only that portion of his goodness which is within his capacity. They found themselves exhausted; they found

इत्येवं परमकृपानिधिः सुतृप्तान्
चक्रे सद्विलसितलीलया महत्या ॥

Some with embraces, others with kisses, still others with the remnants of his food. Thus did the greatest ocean of compassion, Gaurāṅga, make them thoroughly pleased with his magnificent and playful sports.

that even the sweetness of the Lord was killing them inch by inch!

Whispered Advaita to Śrīvāsa. “Is it not time that he should go now? I can’t bear his presence any longer.” “Neither can I,” replied Śrīvāsa. Then, having held a secret conference, they agreed to address him direct. They assumed a humble attitude, and prayed thus: “We are puny creatures; we cannot any longer bear even thy sweetness. Appear to us as one of us and relieve us of the pleasure of thine awful presence.” People say that is it blasphemy to speak familiarly of God and that it is sacrilegious to give him the form of man. But alas! It is impossible for men to have too much of God at one time. They say God is light and they want also to see him and associate with him. But if God is light he must possess a fiercer light than that which he created. Can you associate with the sun? If not, how is it possible that you should associate with God as light? Christians understand the Bible better, of course, than the writer can pretend to do. But yet he believes that only one sentence in the Bible reveals to man all that need be known by him on this subject, which is “God created man after his own image.” That sentence explains clearly how God should be worshipped. It shows that man is man and God can only be worshipped as man in a state of perfection.

Twenty-one hours had passed away since the time of his revelation in the morning. He revealed himself at about eight in the morning, it was then about five o’clock the following day.

When the *bhaktas* prayed that he would subdue his glory and appear to them simply as a man, he said, “Very well, I go.” This was followed by something like a shriek and Nīmāi fell down in a swoon. And thus ended what is called the Mahāprakāśa or the Great Revelation. Whenever the Lord fell down in a trance his companions became frightened, accustomed though they were to the spectacle. For, in a state of trance, the Lord looked just like a dead man. Sometimes these trances left him quickly, sometimes they did not. On such occasions what his attendants did was to examine, by holding cotton before his nostrils, whether he was breathing or not. If it seemed to them that he was still breathing, they felt themselves relieved, and tried every gentle means to revive him. Sometimes, however, they found no trace of breathing, and then their consternation was terrible. They loved the Lord with all their hearts; so, naturally they were constantly afraid of losing him. They knew that the Lord was omnipotent and that he had his own methods and plans. Whenever, therefore, the Lord fell down in a trance, they all apprehended that he would perhaps take that opportunity of leaving them for Goloka.

Every revelation ended with a trance. First the Lord announces that he is going. This is followed by a slight shriek, and then the body falls down as if shot dead. The light disappears from the body, and with it every sign of life. So, when on this occasion the Lord fell down in a swoon, and the *bhaktas* found that the Lord remained absolutely motionless, they examined the state

of his breath.

They were horrified to find that he was not breathing at all, nor was there any movement of the heart. The condition of the Lord is thus described by the chroniclers. The eyes were fixed, lifeless, lustreless, showing only the lower portion of the pupil. There was no motion of any kind; even the heart had ceased to beat. Cotton held before the nostrils did not move in the slightest degree. His limbs were, however, not stiff, but remained in whatever position they were placed. The only circumstance that indicated life was that there was warmth in the body, which had the lustre of the living, and not the paleness of the dead.¹⁴

All known methods were adopted to revive him, but without avail.

The suspicion began gradually to overtake them that the Lord might have left them. For, thought they, what did that embrace mean, what did that kiss mean? Surely all this meant that he was taking his leave! “Yes, he is the Lord,” they muttered to themselves, “but we shall see whether he can cheat us out of his presence. He has left us by a trick, we shall follow him.” The whole of the previous day and night, most of them had tasted nothing, neither had they slept, or done anything to give rest to their limbs and minds. They had passed twenty-one hours in a state of constant excitement—an excitement which was greater than that of a general in the field of battle, or a prisoner before a judge, or a lover in a state of suspense waiting for the final decision of his beloved. They had voted rest, absolute and prolonged rest, for themselves, when the Lord at their request left them, so that they might enjoy it. But how could they go home, or even leave the place, when the Lord himself was lying before them in that condition?

They surrounded the person of the Lord, sitting like statues, and talking in a whisper. They had, however, very little opportunity of talking, for their minds were busily engaged with the circumstances of the moment. They had found the Lord, the Lord who was theirs for ever and ever, and he had left them. Why should they remain on this earth, and endure his absence? Why should not they follow him? Everyone was determined in his mind that he would follow the Lord. Of course, suicide is a sin, and a deadly one, but they

¹⁴A citation from the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta-mahākāvya* of Kavikarṇapūra (5.98-9) is given in the Bengali text of the work:

भुयोऽयं मुदि विलुब्ध चत्वरान्तः
संमुच्छन्निव विरराम रम्यमूर्तिः ।
चेष्टार्थं न किमपि नोत्तरञ्च किञ्चि-
न्न स्पन्दः श्वसितसमीरणश्च नैव ॥ ९८ ॥
चिक्षेप क्षितिषु यथा भुजो तथा तौ
तादृक्षाविव किल तस्थतुश्चिराय ।
तस्थौ श्रीपदयुगलं तथा यथासौ
चिक्षेप क्षणमनु विस्मृताङ्गचेष्टः ॥ ९९ ॥

were not then in a condition to weigh such matters.¹⁵ They were waiting only to see whether the Lord had really left them, or was only in a state of death-like trance. They had before seen the trances of the Lord, they had also on previous occasions given him up for lost, and their apprehensions had proved false. They had, therefore, a lurking hope in their minds that the Lord would perhaps again graciously remove their apprehensions by coming back to life.

Hope, however, refused to come forward to cheer them. The trance commenced at about five in the morning. There lay before them the golden figure of the Lord without any sign of life whatever. Thus an hour passed, and still there was no change in the body. Thus two hours passed, and still there was no sign of life. The sun rose in all his glory; this they could perceive from within the room. Three hours passed and still the Lord showed no sign of life, and in this manner they waited patiently till midday. For seven hours the Lord remained in this state, apparently lifeless, before them. Midday passed, yet no sign of life appeared. The *bhaktas* had no feeling of thirst or hunger, for were they not going to follow the Lord? They were waiting because there was yet one ray of hope in their minds. The body, apparently dead, was for nine hours before them, but yet it did not show any sign of paleness. It looked as fresh as a living body.

Said a *bhakta*: “Let us sing the songs of *kuñjabhaṅga*; let this be our last song on earth.” The idea was taken up with rapture, for the hearts of all were full and they wanted an outlet for their accumulated feelings. So, with the apparently dead body of the Lord in their midst, they began slowly their mournful dirge. It so happened that the effort gave them some animation, nay, some happiness. The music seemed to be celestial and it soothed their hearts. It appeared to them that they were receiving a flow of ecstasy from the person of the Lord.

Suddenly one discovered *pulaka* (gooseflesh) in the body of the Lord. This showed not only that the Lord was there in the body, but also that he was

¹⁵It is right that we should explain here that there is some slight difference of opinion between Vaiṣṇavism and Christianity, as explained by Christian writers, in regard to the nature of sin. Sin is described by Christian writers in such horrid colours as almost to drive weak-minded men mad at its contemplation. The Vaiṣṇavas, who never admit the existence of a wrathful and vindictive God, naturally do not attach so much importance to sin as some Christian writers have been led to do. Man is not God and can never be like him, which means that man, though always progressing, must also forever remain imperfect. That being the case, sin is a necessary condition of his existence. A sinless man is, therefore, as much an impossibility as a perfect man. According to the Vaiṣṇavas sin is only sickness of the soul. Men do not hold their fellows responsible when they fall ill; on the other hand, they tend them with care. Why then should God throw into eternal fire an unfortunate creature of his, who has somehow or other, certainly not willingly always, brought disease upon his soul? For, be it known, that if bodily ailments are brought on unconsciously, so likewise are the ailments of the soul. Thus for instance, a son inherits the moral imperfections of his father. Is it just to punish him for this, when he is not responsible for it?

enjoying their song. Now, these goosebumps, imperceptible in the bodies of ordinary persons, assumed the shape of a large pea on the body of the Lord. They all carefully examined the person of the Lord to detect whether they were goosebumps or not. It soon became clear that there was no doubt about them and therefore the Lord was in the body. "He is here!" exclaimed one, whereupon they all expressed their delight by shouts of "Haribala" and "Jaya." Peal after peal of Haribala followed, while the ladies, who were watching the spectacle with equal anxiety from their apartments, gave expression to their feelings with the joyful, "ulu." The elderly ladies then came forward, and some advised that a message should be sent to Śacī at once (who had, of course, been kept ignorant of the state of affairs); whilst others recommended that the Lord should be bathed without delay.

In the midst of these peals of "Haribala" the Lord opened his eyes. The shouts no doubt helped the *bhaktas* in rousing him. He opened his eyes and yawned. His look was at first vacant, but gradually acquired animation. His eyes travelled over the faces of his attendants with a view to ascertain who they were and why they were there. He found that he was lying prostrate, and so arose; he found that it was broad day; and then he endeavoured to recollect where he was and how he came to be there. To make things certain he asked, "Well, what is the matter to-day?"

Whenever he awoke from a trance, he always asked his friends to tell him what the matter was with him. They, of course, concealed from him everything that he had done and said as Śrī Kṛṣṇa. He himself, as stated before, retained nothing of what he had said or done in his state of trance though sometimes he had a faint recollection of his doings and sayings in the state of revelation.

To the enquiries of the Lord as to what the matter was, the *bhaktas* told him that he had fallen into a deep trance and had remained so since the morning previous. The Lord was shocked to hear it, and blushed. He hung down his head and said slowly: "So much time has been lost to me and to you, for every moment of ours is consecrated to the service of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. I am sorry that you had to sacrifice so much of your valuable time for me." Nitāi replied: "These apologies should be postponed to a more suitable time. We are hungry and thirsty, and the best thing for us to do now is to go to the river at once and have a plunge." So they all proceeded direct to the river, with the Lord in their midst, now once more a man like themselves, to bathe.

Chapter Fifteen: The Day Kīrtana

“Why do our days pass in vain, brethren?” asked Nimāi earnestly. So that if there were *kīrtanas* at night, it was settled that *kīrtanas* should be held by day also, sometimes at the house of the Lord himself, and sometimes at the houses of others. It was thus that the Lord held *kīrtanas* day and night. No outsider was permitted to see what the *kīrtana* was; and I fear that my readers, to whom the subject is new, have not been able as yet to clearly understand its nature. Well, besides *kīrtanas*, the *bhaktas* had their conversations about Kṛṣṇa; and sometimes the Lord himself, in the character of God Almighty, gave them instructions, though very rarely. In short, day and night, the Lord and his *bhaktas* did nothing else besides the worship of Kṛṣṇa.

The news spread far and wide, that Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa had come down to earth as the son of Śacī. Some believed in the news, some did not. As a general rule, the highest classes, that is to say the *brāhmaṇas*, refused to accept him, while the lower classes did so with avidity. The *brāhmaṇas* were interested in discrediting him. What the Lord indirectly preached was that the highest man was not the *brāhmaṇa*, but the servant of the Lord, and that a servant of the Lord, if he belonged to the lowest class, was higher in status than a *brāhmaṇa* who had no reverence for the Lord Almighty.

Now, this teaching was in direct opposition to that of the intellectual and spiritual *brāhmaṇas* of India, who had held despotic sway in the country from time immemorial. They, therefore, tried to put down this new religion and its founder. The lower classes, on the other hand, flocked in a body to his standard. The powerful *brāhmaṇas* did all that lay in their power to stamp out the religion of the Lord, but yet their leaders saw with dismay that the Lord was daily winning over to his side men from their ranks. His followers from the higher classes could be numbered by thousands and from the lower classes by hundreds of times that number, though he had flourished only for a few months.

His *bhaktas* were day and night engaged in worshipping Kṛṣṇa. The town

assumed quite a novel appearance. There was *kirtana* every evening in almost every house of the lower classes, and also in those of many of the higher. His *bhaktas* refused to behave like other people. They moved about like drunken men, men drunk with joy, the joy derived from serving Śrī Kṛṣṇa. They ate little and slept less, and kept themselves aloof from the general throng. The greater part of the external world disappeared from their view. They could think of or see nothing which did not belong to the Lord. In the street, if two of them met they gazed at each other and laughed, in the excess of their joy, and that was all. When they spoke they spoke only of the Lord. “What joy!” said one; “What a lovely Lord!” said another. Sometimes they would meet in the street and then hold one another’s hands and dance there before the public, though such exhibitions were considered quite unworthy of the position of a gentleman. Do men, when drunk, take note of public opinion? Why then should those who are drunk with *bhakti* fear the jeers and insults of the public?

Those who came to believe that God Almighty had really come and was visible at any moment, had, of course, no sorrow; on the other hand, they roamed about as if each of them was an emperor. Not that they were boisterous, aggressive, vain, or proud. Convinced of the fact that the mission of the Lord was to save mankind, and that they had been chosen as instruments to serve his purpose, they felt a sincere brotherly feeling for every man, and a detestation for everything sinful, mean, or improper. Their attitude and behaviour exerted a powerful influence upon those with whom they came in contact. The most skeptical, seeing the change that had been wrought upon men, some of whom were previously notorious sinners, and upon the *bhaktas* generally, began to yearn after similar good fortune. They wanted to be like the *bhaktas*, and they began to flock around them to be led to the Lord. Indeed, the *bhaktas* became so good and so attractive in every way that most men wished to be like them. Non-believers were thus induced to come to the Lord. To see him was, as a rule, to believe in him. That perfectly chiselled face, which seemed to be the incarnation of intelligence, innocence, simplicity, piety, and love, carried with it a power which those who saw him could scarcely resist.

Then many supernatural incidents began to occur frequently, and in many different places. Capala Gopāla, a savant, who got the nick-name of *capala* because he talked much, insulted meek and inoffensive Śrīvāsa. In three days after the incident, he was overcome by leprosy. This incident created a great sensation in the town. Gopāla was yet defiant, but five years after he fell at the feet of the Lord. The Lord said that it was Śrīvāsa alone who could save him. He then sought the forgiveness of Śrīvāsa and was cured, and then with all his following became a follower of Śrī Gaurāṅga. A Mussalman tailor had one day an opportunity of having a look at the Lord at Śrīvāsa’s house

whither he had gone for business. The sight maddened him, and for seven days he roamed the city a perfect lunatic, only with the exclamation of “I have seen him,” which he repeated continuously in his mouth. He recovered his natural state gradually, and in time became a great saint and a follower of the Lord. In like manner, Mādhava Ācārya, a cousin of Viṣṇupriyā, the consort of the Lord, and an unbeliever, having one day obtained a sight of the Lord at Śrīvāsa’s, was converted. Subsequently he became a saint of great repute. His work, *Kṛṣṇa-maṅgala*, is yet a source of supreme happiness to millions of pious persons.

But men began to be possessed by the divine influence in other ways. The Lord could, of course, impart it at his free will. He had only to say “Be blessed with *bhakti*,” and that was enough to throw a man down into a trance, from which he rose a new man filled with *bhakti* and sometimes *preman*, too. This power his *bhaktas* also began to acquire, one by one, and they also helped to extend the kingdom of the Lord. Others again were converted in still more mysterious ways. There passes a man through the public streets and he falls down in a trance. A crowd surrounds him and he rises with the exclamation of “Hari, Hari!” He becomes a *bhakta* from that moment. A child of five in the arms of his mother suddenly shows indications of the influence, dances like one possessed, and exclaims, “Hari, Hari!”

People, thus influenced, sometimes exhibited wonders. They became possessed of wonderful gifts, some speaking tongues with which they had no previous acquaintance. Supernatural incidents began to occur, not only in many parts of the town, but also in the country.

Thus the kingdom of the Lord extended, but along with it a spirit of resistance was slowly gaining strength in that city of giant intellects. This opposition increased with the increase of the influence of the Lord. There are people who do not like light or innovation. Then the leaders of society, the *brāhmaṇas*, apprehended the complete loss of their prestige, power, and influence. Besides, the Lord himself became aggressive, that is to say, in his own way, in his attempts at conversion.

There were some traits in the character of the Lord to which I have not as yet referred. It is time that I should do so now. The heart of Nimāi was kind, so that any sign of distress in others violently affected him. We have already seen that when Raghunātha wept because Nimāi’s work on Nyāya was better than his, he (Nimāi) flung his own work into the river. He loved sacrifice, and loved those who had a sacrificing heart. He lived for others; he loved service and not authority. His advice to those who wanted to be a servant of the Lord, which is the path now sought to be followed by every Vaiṣṇava, was embodied in a complet of his which can be translated thus:

That man is deserving of praising the Lord Hari, who is meaner in spirit than the grass, who is as patient as a tree, and who honours

those who dishonour him.¹

He never took for himself the credit of any work, but always sought to transfer it to others; indeed, his nature was such that he thought every man to be higher and better than himself.

But the above amiable traits, though very praise-worthy, are yet human. Nimāi was, however, something more than man. Rādhā, as the consort of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, is represented as standing on the left of her Lord with one eye fixed on him, and the other towards her attendant maids who, of course, represent human creatures. She is the medium through whom human creatures attain to Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Rādhā's one eye, therefore, is constantly engaged in taking care of her beloved maids. Therefore, if Rādhā's love for Śrī Kṛṣṇa is boundless, her love for human beings is boundless too.

Nimāi sometimes represented Śrī Kṛṣṇa and sometimes Rādhā. When he sits on the sacred dias, he is Śrī Kṛṣṇa; when he weeps for Śrī Kṛṣṇa he is Rādhā. So Lord Nimāi had not only Rādhā's love for Śrī Kṛṣṇa, but also Rādhā's love for human creatures. Here is an ancient and well-known song, in which the Lord is represented as addressing Nitāi, his chief follower:

Come, Nitāi, hold me fast,
I am overtaken by indescribable misery.
I had a mind to distribute Hari-nāma² to mankind,
but the powerful name created a current in my heart.
That current carries me away, and has rendered me helpless.
Nitāi, where is there another friend,
excepting thyself, to whom I can disclose the misery of my heart?
And who will sympathise with me?
Nitāi, the thought of the miseries of men rends my heart.
I owe debts to men, and I cannot redeem them.
I have been made a captive on account of these debts.
Where is the friend to procure my release?

Here we have to offer some explanation of the philosophy embodied in the above song. The problem, how the miseries of man can be removed, has been exercising the minds of men in India from time immemorial. Buddhists, Vedāntists, Nyāyaists have all tried to solve it. One great idea that pervades the philosophers referred to above is that the best way of removing misery is to bar its passage. They all advise relinquishment. Property is the cause

¹Verse three of the Eight Verses of Instruction:

तुनादपि सुनीचेन तरोरिवे सहिष्णुना ।
अमानिना मानदेन कीर्तनीयः सदा हरिः ॥

²The names of Hari, Kṛṣṇa.

of misery, let none acquire it. Love is the source of misery, let none love. Extinguish the senses, and misery will find no passage by which to come to you.

Now, as has been stated before, emasculation is not encouraged by Vaiṣṇava philosophy. Their pet divinity is not Śiva who destroyed Cupid, but Śrī Kṛṣṇa who brought the god under control, and who for that reason is called Madanamohana, that is “the subjugator of Cupid.” The god Cupid discharged his arrows at Śiva who looked at the god in anger and reduced him to ashes. Says Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī, the great follower of Śrī Gaurāṅga: “Let the senses be kept intact. Of course, they carry poison, but extract the fangs as the snake-charmers do in respect of poisonous serpents, and make them dance to your tune. Don’t kill the serpents, for they have their uses in the economy of nature.” What the Vaiṣṇavas advise, therefore, is to keep the senses intact, but also to keep them under proper control.

But how is that to be done? How can a human being escape misery? It can be done by the cultivation of *bhakti*. *Bhakti* will remove the misery of man, say the followers of Gaurāṅga. And that in this wise: *bhakti* will teach man reliance and forbearance; it will inspire him with faith and hope, and it will enable him to find the mercy of God even in what is called, by ordinary people, afflictions. And does a child who is assured of the love of his parents complain of their chastisement? What can the transient miseries of this world do to one who is assured of the existence of an everlasting happy life, under the care of an ever-loving and all-powerful father?

So Gaurāṅga clasped the neck of Nitāi and bewailed: “My heart breaks at the thought of the miseries of man. Alas, how are they to be saved? Who is to give them the name of Hari? Who is to teach *bhakti* and remove their misery?”

This is the way Vasu Ghoṣa describes his feelings when the Lord left Nadia and society: “My heart weeps for Gaurāṅga. Where shall I go; what shall I do to meet him? Who will now extend his mercy to the sinner, to the worldly, and to the fallen? Who will now burst into tears at the sight of a sinner?”

When he heard of the misdeeds of a sinner, he wept and betrayed such an anguish of soul that his companions thought that his heart would break. He would show more concern for the evil deeds of a wicked man than a doting father would do for those of his son, or a doting wife for those of her husband. If found face to face with a man who was spending his days in evil thoughts and deeds, and obliged to speak to him, he would address him with sympathy and affection. During his wandering in the south, the Lord went direct to the stronghold of a robber chief noted for his cruel disposition and depredations. “Why do I see a saint here in the midst of robbers?” asked the chief of the Lord. The Lord replied, “I come to see you, who are a saint.” “I, a saint? I am a robber,” replied the chief. The Lord said, “That may be, but I see a gem

(a lump cannot be cultivated) of *bhakti* in your heart, and that is what makes a saint a saint when cultivated.” This was said with such evident sincerity that the robber for the first time perceived that he had his good points. The thought had a powerful effect upon his mind and he immediately burst into tears, threw away his sword, and followed the Lord ever afterwards, till he died in Baroda.

Sometimes his feelings would get the better of him, and he would, at the sight of a fallen man, burst into tears. Under such circumstances, the sinner would fall at his feet and exclaim, “Pray, soothe yourself, my Lord. I can bear to suffer hell, but I can’t bear to see the anguish of your heart for my unworthy self. Henceforth I shall try to deserve the dust of your lotus feet.” That man was reclaimed then and there. Men of a higher caste will not touch a man belonging to a lower caste. Even a *sādhū* will rarely touch a man whom he conceives to be impure, he will rather avoid the contamination. But Śrī Gaurāṅga, in the impulse of his love for mankind, would clasp a loathsome creature, even a leper, to his breast, and give him a warm embrace. The touch would reclaim the man with the speed of lightning.

A leper who has been cast off by society, the odious smell of whose body would drive his fellows to a distance, the Lord would clasp in his arms with ardent love, and the lucky man would be healed and saved in an instant.

To summarise: If the Lord as Rādhā had Rādhā’s love for Śrī Kṛṣṇa, he also had Rādhā’s love for human beings. He felt that he was, as Rādhā, responsible for the good behaviour of human beings, to Lord Kṛṣṇa. He felt that he had a debt to discharge, a debt which he owed to humanity. It was thus that he addressed Nitāi to procure his release for the debt by saving mankind. A sinner, therefore, was not an object of anger to him but of compassion, sympathy, and love. He exonerated the sinner from all blame, which he took upon himself.

Lord Gaurāṅga, who was rarely visible and always absorbed in *prema*, never preached, nor did his *bhaktas* do so. Men were saved by other means.

Preaching is not one of the ways adopted by Vaiṣṇavas for the spread of their religion. The Lord imparted *bhakti* in his own way, by a touch, look, or a few words; and some of his followers also obtained the power, though in a lesser degree. The Vaiṣṇavas secure converts by the beauty of their tenets, of the *līlās* of their Lord, and of their own character. Mere companionship with a true Vaiṣṇava is oftentimes enough for the conversion of a hard-hearted sinner. The Vaiṣṇava has his fire, but does not display it by eloquence and fine thoughts as preachers do.³ The fire in the heart of Vaiṣṇavas melts him; and others who come in contact with him are melted by sympathy.

One day while in the midst of his *bhaktas*, the Lord addressed Nitāi and

³Preaching is almost impossible for a Vaiṣṇava, who is required to be meaner than grass. To preach is to arrogate superiority.

Haridāsa. “Go ye,” said the Lord, “to every man in the town, walk from door to door. Tell them to worship Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who is the life of every man. Don’t make a distinction between sinner and saint, intelligent and foolish, ignorant and learned, believer and nonbeliever, high and low, *brāhmaṇa* and *cāmāra*. Save them all.”

Haridāsa and Nitāi were selected for the purpose of proclaiming Śrī Kṛṣṇa for very good reasons. They were ascetics and strangers, they were incomparably pious, and they had acquired the power of imparting the holy spirit. Nitāi and Haridāsa accepted the task with due humility. The duty that was imposed upon them was to start early in the morning, to travel from door to door, deliver the message, and then return home at noon.

So they both started early the following morning. Their figures were commanding and attractive, though as ascetics they had only pieces of rags wrapped around their loins. They proceeded, with pride in their port and defiance in their eyes, and everybody could see that they were men who did not belong to the common throng. We refer to their pride and defiant spirit, but these were not like those of men of the world. Their pride and defiance proceeded from the knowledge that they were bearing an important message from an important personage. They felt that they were carrying messages of love and hope from their common father to their brethren. The magnitude of the task imposed upon them rendered them humble in spirit.

They stand before a door and exclaim: “Hari-Kṛṣṇa.” This is the way ordinary mendicants seek their means of subsistence. The householder, upon this, believing that mendicants are at the door, hastens to give them alms in the shape of a handful of rice. They then look at the alms-giver with an imploring look, and address him thus with folded hands: “We don’t beg rice of you, but to worship beloved Kṛṣṇa who loves you so well.” It takes some time for the alms-giver to realise the situation. When he does so, he is either permanently influenced or influenced for the time being, or not moved at all. Indeed, people belonging to the higher classes, when thus addressed, would sometimes take offence. Learned men would address Nitāi and Haridāsa thus: “You, ignorant and foolish men, may make God of a man, but, mind, we have spent years seeking after knowledge. Better go elsewhere, amongst the foolish and ignorant.” Some even would go so far as to call them thieves who had come to reconnoitre.

Whenever there is a message from high, and it is delivered to the people, it is accepted; the people cannot resist it. A pretender may announce himself as such a messenger, but then his message, though it may be accepted by a few for a time, is sure to be ultimately rejected. The simple proclamation to love Kṛṣṇa or serve Kṛṣṇa would never have produced any effect on the public if it had not been backed by some other force. That force is what Ramāi carried with him to Advaita; that force is what every *avatāra* or Messiah has

in his keeping for the purpose of carrying out his mission. How was it that a few Buddhists from India could succeed in converting China and Japan? They had no witnesses to prove to the people of those countries that there was even such a personage as Buddha, who was born in India. But they had received the power from their master, and that enabled them to enthrall their fellows. In Nadia the simple message proclaimed by Nitāi and Haridāsa produced wonderful effects; most men accepted it. It was because they were backed by that force which Messiahs carry with them. But yet many did not, nay, a few received the bearers of the message with ridicule, even insult. Now, this Nitāi did not like.

“What a command is this from our Lord, to proclaim Śrī Kṛṣṇa to the people?” said Nitāi to Haridāsa. “He has no mercy upon us, for the Lord does not see that we are not only not accepted everywhere as we should be, but we are subjected to jeers, taunts, and other expressions of ill-will.” The experience was strange to Nityānanda and Haridāsa, as it was to everybody else. After Buddha and his disciples, no religious character in India had tried to spread religion in this manner. The Hindus are the most Catholic race in the world; their ingrained faith teaches them to leave everyone to select his own religion. Every river flows to the ocean, say they, as every prayer in whatever way delivered reaches the throne of God.

Nitāi did not mind the jeers, but he was grieved because everyone did not accept him as a messenger from God. He knew very well that he was not a humbug and that there was no mistake about the source of his mission. Why did not the Lord make his mission acceptable to everyone whom he (Nitāi) addressed? Surely the Lord could have done so if he had wished. “Let us go to proclaim Śrī Kṛṣṇa to Jagāi and Mādhāi,” said Nitāi to Haridāsa.

“And why to them?” asked Haridāsa.

Nitāi said, “They are the most powerful men in this city, and perhaps the greatest sinners in this world. If the Lord could make them accept Śrī Kṛṣṇa, that would be a miracle which would lead the outside world to recognise our Lord. He does everything in secret, within closed doors, and the result is people call us fools or knaves, because we know that he is the Lord God himself and they do not.”

These two *brāhmaṇa* youths, Jagāi and Mādhāi, were nominally city-kotwals⁴ of Nadia, but in reality they were absolute masters of the lives and properties of the citizens. Their master was Cānd Kāji, the Mussalman governor, who held his authority from the king of Gauḍa. But practically Jagāi and Mādhāi were the lords of the city. They used their power most atrociously. After collecting around them a band of ruffians they maltreated the citizens in a manner which no human being would have borne patiently except the savants of Nadia. Engrossed in their intellectual pursuits, they allowed Jagāi

⁴Kotwal means the leader or controller of the city fort.

and Mādhāi to do whatever they liked. They took to drink, and, under its influence, began to commit outrages which spared neither men nor women. They robbed men, murdered those whom they did not like, and committed gross outrages upon women. They pitched their tents in various parts of the city, as suited their purpose best, but their approach led the citizens to fly for protection elsewhere.

Said Haridāsa: “There is the difficulty: Jagāi and Mādhāi may commit an assault upon us.”

Said Nitāi: “But you are used to it.” This was said in reference to the flogging which Haridāsa had received before. And Haridāsa was, of course, silenced. The fact was they were, in their heart of hearts, almost courting an outrage upon themselves. They then both proceeded to the brothers, “the greatest sinners then existing.”

Nitāi stood before the brothers, Haridāsa behind him. “May Śrī Kṛṣṇa bless you,” said Nitāi, addressing them. “Dear brothers, worship Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Serve him, for he is the best of Lords.”

Now Jagāi and Mādhāi had their religion too, which was based upon one of the *tantras*. This *tantra* advocated the eating of meat and the drinking of liquor. Those who followed this religion called themselves *vīra* or heroes. They held their orgies at midnight and had dealings with “dark spirits.” It is believed that this tantric religion was invented with a view to brutalize the Hindus so as to enable them to meet the Mussalman invaders of the country. It is said that the spiritual Hindus found it impossible to cope with the brutalized Afghans and Moghuls who came from the West. What was required was to create a body of men equally brutal, who should be able to meet them. And this tantricism was invented for the purpose. Men were induced to join it by the mysteries which surrounded all the ceremonies, and the liberty that it permitted its votaries in the matter of eating, drinking and other illegitimate pleasures. They were further promised gifts from spirits and gods. Those who ranged themselves under this banner, naturally became more brutal, if not stronger, than the other Hindus who lived sparingly and on strictly sober principles. The development of their brutal instincts was, of course, founded upon the ruins of their spiritual nature. Jagāi and Mādhāi were surely, therefore, not pre-disposed to accept Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the God of love. Besides, they entertained a particular hatred for the Vaiṣṇavas. Indeed, tantrics, generally speaking, had a very low opinion of Vaiṣṇavism which, they thought, was calculated to make men effeminate.

When, therefore, Nitāi recommended the brothers to accept Śrī Kṛṣṇa, they lost their temper, called him and Haridāsa humbugs, ordered them off, and forbade the saints to trouble them. The order to retire was not obeyed with the customary alacrity, which enraged the brothers, who thereupon expelled their visitors from their presence by force. Thus Nitāi and Haridāsa

had to endure humiliation and insult.

The love of Nitāi for his fellow beings knew no bounds, and for those who were fallen he felt a most profound pity. His notion was that Jagāi and Mādhāi, in spite of their worldly prosperity, were the most miserable of men. With Nitāi, the afterworld and the miseries of sinners were the stern realities. He knew that the brothers would suffer terribly hereafter. The condition of the two brothers, therefore, called for his earnest consideration. But he was further helped in forming the deep resolution of converting the brothers by motives of policy, namely, in order that these two men, so well-known in the country and so dreaded by the people, might bear witness to the reality of the *avatāra* of Śrī Gaurāṅga.

Said Nitāi to Haridāsa, “Dear brother, do oblige me by a service. Speak to the Lord about the brothers. Tell him that they demand his first consideration. I know the Lord has great regard for you, and that he will listen to your request. If you speak a word on behalf of the brothers, the Lord may be moved to take pity upon them and save them.” Nitāi, of course, had no doubt as to the power of the Lord to save them. He knew that if the Lord only agreed to save them, they would be saved.

Haridāsa smiled. He said: “I now see all. You who can purify the universe by your slightest desire, want their salvation, and this means that they are already saved.” They both returned home, but said nothing to the Lord just then. They were not men to run to the Lord for assistance without first trying what they themselves could do.

Haridāsa said to Nitāi: “To proclaim Śrī Kṛṣṇa in this manner is what was never done before. We must, however, obey the Lord. But what business had you to approach those drunkards?”

Said Nitāi, “Because our lord is playful and unconventional and we must needs be like him. And then, dear Haridāsa, fancy the condition of these wretches. What will become of them?” As Nitāi said this, his eyes were filled with tears.

However, it so happened that the two brothers just at this time pitched their tents in that quarter of the town where the Lord lived. The result was that the people became alarmed, and combined for their protection. They walked abroad but only in large parties, and gave up going out at all after nightfall.

The *kīrtana* of the Lord was not stopped, however, and one night the sound of the music attracted the brothers thither! It was early in the morning when the door was opened and the *bhaktas* issued from the courtyard of Śrīvāsa to proceed to the Ganges for the purpose of bathing. When lo! Who should be there but Jagāi and Mādhāi? The music had attracted them, and not finding an entry, they had been obliged to be satisfied with what could be heard of the *kīrtana* from outside. Heaven only knows why they did not use force

for the purpose of forcing an entry. What they really did was to pass the whole night outside the door, alternately dancing to the music within, and consuming liquor.

As the *bhaktas* issued from the meeting they saw before them the spectres of the two brothers! Immediately they surrounded the Lord for the purpose of protecting his person. The brothers were then in a happy mood, however. They accosted the Lord, and wanted to know what his troupe sang, having taken the *kīrtana* party to be only an opera company organized for the purpose of amusement and profit! The Lord made no reply; on the contrary, he was in a great hurry to escape from the presence of the brothers.

Nitāi's object was thus frustrated. His idea had been to bring the brothers face to face with the Lord. Accidentally this had been brought about, but the meeting had produced no result. So he again induced Haridāsa to visit the brothers with him and to proclaim the worship of Śrī Kṛṣṇa to them.

Thus they again proceeded to the brothers and delivered this message: "Love Kṛṣṇa, worship Kṛṣṇa, serve Kṛṣṇa." Said they, addressing the two brothers, "Life is short, and the object of life is the attainment of the lotus-feet of God." The brothers were then sufficiently sober to understand the situation. They saw the same Vaiṣṇavas had again come to them to advocate doctrines which they hated. They had once excused these meddlesome mendicants; they would do so no longer. So they said: "Humbugs, have you come again? Today we will teach you a lesson." So they rose to strike Nitāi and Haridāsa.

Seeing how their pious advances were received, the two *bhaktas* retreated, hoping in this manner to avoid being pursued or assaulted. But they were mistaken. The two brothers actually pursued them with uplifted fists. There was then no help but to escape by running away. Nitāi was a good runner, but not Haridāsa. So the former had to drag along the latter. The spectacle was certainly not edifying—two of the greatest *bhaktas* of the Lord flying before the two infuriated robbers, and the nimbler one dragging the other along with him! Of course, there were many men in the streets, some of them opponents of the *bhaktas*, and to these the incident seemed an excellent opportunity for taking revenge. They exclaimed, "Well done. The humbugs are well-served," and so forth. As for the two brothers, they being yet partially under the influence of liquor, had to give up the pursuit.

Ever since the two brothers had pitched their tents in the quarter of the city where the Lord lived, the *bhaktas*, who resided near him, were constantly under the apprehension of being molested by them. This they thought rather provoking, since the Lord Almighty was in their midst. Yet they took no steps to inform the Lord of the matter; they felt that Śrī Gaurāṅga would somehow or other protect them. But the outrage upon Nitāi, who was considered the elder brother of the Lord, and Haridāsa, one of his foremost *bhaktas*, ought

not, it was thought, to be kept a secret from the Lord. So the leading *bhaktas* besieged the Lord the same afternoon.

The Lord could see that his friend had something to say. So he inquired what it was. They then gave vent to their feelings, how Jagāi and Mādhāi had accumulated wagon-loads of sin upon their heads, how they had committed murders, robbed people, outraged the weak, etc. This description of the character of the brothers did not, however, create any feeling of indignation in the mind of the Lord. He was, on the contrary, overpowered by profound pity, of which his sorrow-depicted face gave ample evidence. He remarked, “Alas! Alas! Deluded fools, do they not know that they will have to render an account of themselves?” Another *bhakta* sought to move the Lord on personal grounds. He explained how they had pitched their tents in their midst, and that their presence had created a reign of terror, and then appealed to the Lord, if he had any pity for the fallen, to take the case of the brothers first into his consideration.

Here Nitāi broke in, interrupting the previous speaker: “As for me, I shall never more move about to proclaim Śrī Kṛṣṇa. And why should we? People call us thieves, cheats, and humbugs. Jagāi and Mādhāi would have murdered us had we not escaped through your mercy. You reveal yourself to us in a closed room, but what are you doing for the outside world? We don’t want salvation just now. First save the greatest sinners in the world and then you can take our case into consideration.”

The Lord smiled, and said: “Lucky are the two brothers, since you, the servants of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, wish them well. Śrī Kṛṣṇa will certainly fulfil your desire so worthy of yourselves.”

When the Lord had said this, the *bhaktas* immediately raised the joyous shout of “Hari, Hari,” for they knew from what fell from his lips that the two brothers were saved.

The Lord continued: “Their sins are great, and it is Harināma (the name of the Lord) that alone can remove them. Let us save them by giving them Harināma, and let the world see the power which the name of Lord Kṛṣṇa possesses. Do one thing. Send for all the *bhaktas*, and let us go in procession to the two brothers, performing *kīrtana*, and then breathe the name of the Lord Hari into their ears.”

No sooner had the Lord uttered this command than the *bhaktas* ran to fetch their brother *bhaktas* who were living near, but had not come. Large numbers obeyed the summons, and then all prepared themselves for the *kīrtana*. This was the first time that the citizens were to witness a *kīrtana*. They had heard of it, and some of them had called it only a masquerade of drunkenness. But though many of them had tried to see it, none had succeeded in the attempt; for none, except those who had deserved the blessing, had ever been able to gain admittance to the place where it was held.

I have been talking of *kīrtana*. I shall now attempt a description. *Kīrtanas* are either *Hari-kīrtanas* or *Kṛṣṇa-kīrtanas*. In the former all men join who wish to do so. Short sermons, prayers to the Lord or his many names knit together in verse and then set to music, constitute a *Hari-kīrtana*. The words and music of these *kīrtanas* are creations of the Lord Gaurāṅga and his followers. They evoke pious feelings in the mind; indeed, their wonderful music speaks more eloquently than do their words. Well, they sing those who can, and a few play upon the *khole* and the *karatala*, the former of which is a kind of drum, an invention of the Lord, and the latter a pair of cymbals played with both hands, to keep time. The music, the sentiment, and the poetry in the songs soon evoke pious feelings in the minds of those who take part in the *kīrtana*. In this manner the individuals of the party help one another, for when one is thus influenced by *bhakti*, he imparts the feeling to others. Gradually the members are filled with joy, and they cannot resist the impulse to express it by dancing. When one begins to dance, he leads others to do likewise. To make this dance in every way agreeable, the performers wear musical anklets. Well, this is the *Hari-kīrtana* with which the Lord went to subdue the brothers. We may describe the *Kṛṣṇa-kīrtana* hereafter.

To describe the *kīrtana* in this manner is, however, to do scant justice to it, for words can never convey the wonderful effect it produces upon the human mind. Strong-minded saints go into the wilderness and live in caves, with a view to learn how to concentrate the mind and direct it to God. A *kīrtana* enables a man to do the same thing, in spite of himself, and that without undergoing mortification, nay, by merely singing and dancing. People feel it an impossible task to subdue their passions, they weep and beat their breasts to deliver themselves from the sins that they have committed, but a *kīrtana* enables them to do both the one and the other. And thus says Vāsudeva, a chronicler of the Lord's doings: "My Lord Gaurāṅga purifies men by making them sing and dance."

Fancy people paying their addresses to the Lord not by prayers but songs, not by kneeling but dancing! Picture to yourself the spectacle of his creatures delirious with joy because of his goodness and showing it by dancing! Yes, it is good to join a *kīrtana* party, it is also good to witness it. For who can look at the faces of the *bhaktas* beaming with *bhakti*, their bodies gracefully waving to and fro under its influence, their tearful eyes red with love, and not be affected by the sight?

When the Lord proposed that they should go to the tent of Jagāi and Mādhāi, doing *kīrtana* all the way, and then give Harināma to the brothers, he thereby very severely tested the fidelity of his *bhaktas*. For to appear in the streets of the sedate city of Nadia with up-lifted arms, dancing and chanting the name of Hari, was to court ridicule, jeers, and the pelting of stones. The *bhaktas* braved it without a condition. But they braved more. They risked

immediate slaughter by visiting Jagāi and Mādhāi in their haunts. It must be borne in mind that in those days of anarchy, after the Mussulmans had come and disturbed the established government, leaders with a strong band of mercenaries could do whatever they liked. If the brothers had actually carried out the threats of exterminating the Vaiṣṇavas they might have done it with impunity; there was none to prevent them, for although there was a Kājī, or Governor, he had only nominal control over the town. But the faith of the *bhaktas* in the Lord was firm, and they felt that under his protection they had nothing whatever to fear. From this we may gather the absolute hold that the Lord had obtained over the *bhaktas*.

The *bhaktas* opened the door, and appeared in the streets. Crowds collected to witness, as it seemed to them, the ludicrous spectacle of respectable men, including many savants, dancing with musical anklets on their legs! Those who had come to laugh were, however, at once sobered by the spectacle. For the *bhaktas* who were singing and dancing were in terrible earnest. They were not dancing to praise God, but the praise of the good Lord brought so much pleasure to their hearts that they could not help dancing. Their faces beamed with celestial happiness, which everyone could see. There was piety in all that they did: in their voices broken by emotion, in their soft and tearful eyes, in their happy faces and suppliant postures; and men are rare who can laugh at true piety.

As for the Lord, he was in the middle, surrounded by hundreds of *bhaktas*. He looked like a figure of gold, an incarnation of beauty, an ecstasy. A description of the dancing of the Lord on that occasion has been attempted by the *Caitanya-maṅgala*. My command of language is not sufficient to enable me to follow him. The Lord danced, and, says the *Caitanya-maṅgala*, “it seemed to the on-lookers as if the joy which impelled him to do so was without measure and without end.” Every one of his limbs showed the joy that was at work within his heart.

Nitāi was at the head of the party. He was taking no part in the *kīrtana*. He was conducting the expedition to the enemies’ camp, and was therefore leading the way. He had set his heart upon the salvation of the two brothers, but he himself had failed to accomplish his desire. Now that he had been able to persuade the Lord to take up the task himself he was in ecstasy. His mind was so occupied with the thought of the brothers that he had no opportunity of directing it to the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa, which the members of a *kīrtana* party are required to do. The *kīrtana*, of course, with its songs, the playing of the *khole* and the *karatalas*, and the loud shouts of Hari, Hari, was making a good deal of noise. When the party, therefore, neared the tent of the brothers, their slumber was disturbed.

They had spent the night, as usual with them, in drunken orgies, and they were recouping their jaded energies by a few hours’ slumber in the afternoon.

Being disturbed from their sleep they directed their attendants to stop the noise, whereupon they again fell asleep. The attendants ran out to stop the *kīrtana*; they delivered the message and ordered the *bhaktas* to cease. But the latter were not in a state of mind to listen to such a command, for a celestial joy filled their hearts and the Lord himself was with them. So the message only served to increase their zeal. The attendants returned discomfited and filled with resentment, and told their masters how they had been insulted. “It is Nīmāi Paṇḍita,” said they, “and a large body of men under his leadership, all singing Vaiṣṇava songs, playing on musical instruments and dancing like mad men, who are making all the noise, and when we delivered your message and asked them to desist so as not to disturb your rest, instead of obeying they redoubled their noise.”

“They are Vaiṣṇavas, are they not?” enquired Mādhāi, the stronger of the two brothers. “Well, to-day we shall exterminate the pest.” Thus saying, the two brothers rose in a state of fury. They had never entertained any love for the Vaiṣṇavas; they had moreover been insulted by the two whom they addressed as humbugs, Nītāi and Haridāsa, who were sent to convert them; and the present *kīrtana* was an additional cause of anger. Their slumber had been disturbed, and they could not forgive this. Besides, their authority had been set at naught, and this last circumstance did not certainly serve to mollify their temper. What could be a greater offence to tyrants than disobedience to their authority? The spirit of murder was in them, and they ran towards the *kīrtana* party to satisfy their thirst for blood. They had been sleeping in a state of seminudity and they were in such a hurry to revenge themselves on the disturbers that they had no time to put on their dress before proceeding to the attack. What they did was, they wrapped their dhoties round their loins as they advanced, so as not to lose time. The idea of exterminating the Vaiṣṇavas so delighted them that they did not wish their attendants to share in the pleasure, so that although their attendants followed them, all of them cut-throats like their masters, the brothers took no notice of them, being resolved to do all the bloody work themselves. They, however, committed one blunder in their hurry, namely, they forgot to take any weapon with them, though their followers were fully armed.

The man at the head of the *kīrtana* party, as before stated, was Nītāi, and Nītāi and the brothers met face to face.

Nītāi saw that the brothers were in a state of fury, and that the spirit of murder was in them. He saw that the two brothers before him were just then under the influence of an uncontrollable homicidal passion. They stood before him as fiends in human shape, and Nītāi was not prepared for this. He had expected that the two brothers would be moved by the celestial music and fall at the feet of the Lord, which idea had put him in the happiest possible mood. The spectacle of the two brothers therefore shocked him.

He was filled with profound pity, especially because the two fellow-beings before him, God's creatures, blinded by animal instinct and what is called worldly prosperity, were quite unconscious of their own indescribably miserable state, and the awful sufferings that awaited them in the after-life. Nitāi tenderly gazed at them, while sentiments of pity for the assailants passed rapidly through his mind, and he sought to address them.

The brothers saw Nitāi before them, and the sight inflamed, still more if possible, their passions. They saw before them the same ascetic who had twice insulted them by assuming a tone of moral superiority, and censuring them for their conduct. They took a moment to think what sort of punishment they could inflict upon him, whom they considered an impertinent humbug.

That was Nitāi's opportunity. He burst into tears and in broken accents addressed them thus: "We come to you as loving friends. We come not to hurt you and to be hurt in return. We have to tell you that Śrī Kṛṣṇa is a loving master, and that our first duty is to worship his lotus feet. Good brothers, do not be offended. Why should you hurt one," here Nitāi felt that Mādhāi was contemplating mischief, "who is only a poor ascetic?"

Now, from the point of view of the brothers they were the injured party. If they drank liquor or committed murder that was nothing to Nitāi or the Vaiṣṇavas. What right had the Vaiṣṇavas to pose as superior beings and offer them moral assistance which they had not asked for? And had not they on more occasions than one shown, in an unmistakable manner, that they did not want the good services of the Vaiṣṇavas? And what did this show of force mean, hundreds of men coming to their house with loud shouts of Haribala, unless to proclaim that they were rascals? Would anybody tolerate being besieged in his own house for such a purpose? Besides, as we have said before, they had a determined hatred against the Vaiṣṇavas and their religion. The address of Nitāi acted like a spark applied to a heap of dry gun-powder. Mādhāi, the stronger, did not allow Nitāi to finish his sermon. He muttered some imprecations, and finding the broken neck of an earthen jar lying on the ground near him, took it up and flung it with great violence and unerring precision at Nitāi.

Flung from the arm of Mādhāi and with unerring aim, it struck the forehead of Nitāi with great force. The blow partially stunned Nitāi, and blood spurted from the wound. Nitāi, however, immediately recovered his senses, and seeing that the flow of blood was blinding him, he pressed the wound with both hands to stop it.

Mādhāi saw the blood, but was not appeased. There was another piece of the same jar there, and he picked it up for another assault, but this time his arm was arrested, and he was prevented from throwing the missile by Jagāi. Jagāi was less strong and more susceptible than Mādhāi. The earnest countenance, the tearful eyes, and the passionate appeal of Nitāi had, in spite

of himself, touched Jagāi and when Mādhāi attempted another assault, Jagāi caught hold of his arm with the remark, “I do not see any merit or glory in killing a stranger and an ascetic. Neither do I think that your action will bring you any blessing or advantage.”

News, in the meantime, was conveyed to the Lord, who was behind with the *kīrtana* party, that Jagāi and Mādhāi were killing Nitāi. The Lord was in the middle of his *bhaktas*, while Nitāi had gone ahead. So the Lord and those who surrounded him had no knowledge of the serious incident that had just occurred ahead of them. The Lord was rudely disturbed in the midst of his lovely dance by the message that they were killing Nitāi. “They are killing my Nitāi!” exclaimed the Lord, and he hastened forward. A passage was opened out for him by the *bhaktas*, and the Lord approached Nitāi. He saw that the face of Nitāi was besmeared with blood, that he was pressing the wound in his forehead with both his hands to prevent the blood from flowing, and that he was nevertheless dancing in the joy of his heart, and repeating the name of the Lord (Gaura).

Both the *Caitanya-maṅgala* and the *Caitanya-bhāgavata* say that Śrīpāda Nityānanda, when he was hurt, came to realize the fact that Mādhāi was saved, for it would be impossible for the Lord to ignore such an outrage as had been committed by Mādhāi. To take note of the outrage would be to save the brothers, for in this *avatāra* the Lord had foresworn punishment, he could only punish by giving salvation. He had also another cause of joy. With lightning rapidity he came to feel that the wound on his forehead meant not only the salvation of the brothers but good to all humanity. For if the brothers were converted, would not the whole world be converted by that miracle? And therefore it was that he danced in the height of his joy.

The first thing the Lord did was to take his own *caddara* (sheet) and wrap it round the forehead of Nitāi with a view to stop the blood. This done, he had time to look at the brothers and their party. As a matter of fact the touch of the Lord stopped the flow of blood and there was thus no further necessity to attend to Nitāi.

He saw that Mādhāi, who was being held fast by his brother, was yet violently foaming at the mouth, and trying to extricate himself to attack the *kīrtana* party, and that the fiendish followers of the brothers stood behind them, with deadly weapons in their hands awaiting orders. As for Jagāi, he had no doubt done a good service in restraining Mādhāi, but otherwise he remained as great a monster as he was before. He had, however, his wits about him, and seeing that hundreds of the leading men of the town were then assembled around the *bhaktas*, many of whom were their acquaintances, and some even their relations, he was no longer in favour of the actual “extermination of the Vaiṣṇavas” which the brothers had in their fury resolved upon when they left their beds for the attack, and which would have been

the result, if he had allowed his brother to have his own way. Although Mādhāi was for the extermination of the Vaiṣṇavas and Jagāi was not for such a terrible punishment, yet the latter was angry and defiant and not in the least disposed to allow the meddlesome humbugs i.e. the Vaiṣṇavas to go altogether scot-free.

The Lord, after taking care of Nitāi, stood surrounded by hundreds of *bhatkas*, face to face with the brothers, who on their side were supported by hundreds and hundreds of robbers and murderers. The Lord addressed the brothers. When he commenced, everyone was hushed into silence. Said he: “Are you not ashamed of the cowardly act of committing an assault upon an unarmed man, a stranger and an ascetic sworn never to hold a lethal weapon? How could you bring yourself to hurt him? Had he attacked you? Had he not at least meant to serve you?”

The brothers, irresistible in strength, never accustomed to be thwarted, much less reproved, always under the influence of passion, might have been expected at least to interrupt the Lord. They would, one would think, stop or even assault the Lord; but they did not. They allowed him to proceed as passively as if they were prisoners before a judge. And why? It was because they felt themselves paralysed!

“You are accumulating sin,” continued the Lord, “incessantly upon your heads, and you seem not to be growing tired of it. It never occurred to you that a day of reckoning would come eventually, when you would be made, in spite of your brute strength, to give a full account of yourself. That day, nay, that moment is come. You began in sin, and your assault upon Nityānanda, the humble slave of the Lord and the disinterested friend of the poor and fallen, is a fitting end. Now, Jagāi and Mādhāi, receive your due punishment.”

This threat of punishment was uttered against two men with whom the murder of a woman was a pastime, who, as *city-kotwals*, had absolute sway over the lives and property of the citizens, and who, with their numerous followers and armed men, were really in a position to exterminate the Vaiṣṇavas whom they had threatened. Their will was law in the city, and they were accustomed to be obeyed invariably and never to be thwarted, much less punished. And their passions, by constant misuse of the irresistible power enjoyed by them, had almost extinguished all the finer sentiments which they had inherited from God.

On the other hand, their would-be punisher was a young man of about twenty-three, a literary and unarmed man, followed by literary and unarmed and peaceful men like himself. The brothers had, therefore, no business to quail before the young *pāṇḍita*. As *city-kotwals*, they might have sent him to jail; as captains of robbers they might have slain all those who stood before them. As men of unruly passion and at that moment completely under its

control, the most natural thing for them would have been to fall upon their opponents with sword in hand and cut them to pieces.

But they did no such thing. They stood transfixed to the spot! They found themselves standing with folded hands in token of submission and trembling from head to foot with fear. They found that they had lost, not only all power of moving their limbs, but even of speech, and that the being who was standing before them was indescribably terrible and was their inexorable judge!

The Lord after delivering his judgment loudly summoned his *cakra*.⁵

It was then that the terrible being before the brothers revealed himself to them as the great judge. They and all those who witnessed the fire that surrounded the brothers came to feel that the last moment of the latter had arrived. Most men present felt satisfied, for the brothers were deservedly hated by them.

Nitāi, however, did not like this unexpected turn of events. He had gone there for their preservation and not for their destruction. When he was struck he danced with delight. It was because he felt that by that incident he had acquired a claim in regard to the souls of the two brothers. If the Lord meant punishment for the brothers, he would plainly tell him that they had offended him (Nitāi), that he had no business to interfere in the matter, and that he claimed the two souls by the severe wound on his forehead. But now the Lord, assuming his own inherent independence, was going to take the matter into his own hands! This, thought Nitāi, he should try to prevent, so he loudly cried: “Mercy!” and he fell at the feet of the Lord.

One fact Nitāi knew, which was that if he himself had any slight desire for the salvation of the brothers, the Lord had a greater desire to accomplish that end than he. For, was he not all-mercy, that is to say, only mercy? Of course, he had to assume the appearance of severity to maintain the superiority of righteousness over sin, but Nitāi knew full well that, in his heart of hearts, he was more tender than he himself or anybody else in the universe. So he thought, if he but once prayed to the Lord for the souls of the brothers, he would not only grant the request, but also be obliged to him for having preferred it. He was, therefore, exceedingly surprised to find the unforgiving attitude of the Lord; for though Nitāi, whom he called his elder brother, knelt before him and prayed for mercy, he yet remained utterly unmoved.

Nitāi was disconcerted. He remembered that Mādhāi had drawn blood from his forehead, and that the Lord had just cause of offence against the man. He therefore again addressed the Lord in these terms: “My Lord, I

⁵God Śrī Kṛṣṇa, as avenger of wrongs, is armed with the weapon called a *cakra* by which he destroys the wicked. The submissive attitude which the brothers assumed was attributed to what they and others witnessed when the Lord summoned the *cakra*. The brothers and others, it is stated, saw that a dreadful fire was approaching towards the former. Anyhow, the brothers stood transfixed.

see, it is the slight wound on my forehead which makes you unrelenting. But I assure you, it may all be little more than the result of accident. Mādhāi probably never meant to hurt me, but struck at me blindly under the influence of a sudden impulse. And then the wound is very slight, and, believe me, my Lord, I did not feel it in the least. So have mercy, my good Lord.”

But the Lord remained as immovable and terrible as ever. His face, which usually beamed with love and mercy, did not show the least sign of being affected by the passionate appeals of Nitāi.

Nitāi then changed his tactics. He said: “My Lord, assuming that they deserve punishment, please do not forget your promise. Did you not promise that in this *avatāra*, you would not wield any weapon of destruction, and that you would save the wicked by appealing to their better nature, by kindness, by your inexhaustible mercy, and by washing away their sins with your tears of sympathy? You have nothing to do with your *cakra* in this *avatāra*. Forget not that you have come to soften the hearts of the wicked, and if you now kill them with your *cakra*, whom will you save then?”

The Lord still remained unmoved! There was not a sound in the vast crowd while Nitāi was speaking. “What is the matter with the Lord,” thought he, “the Lord whom the misery of others throws into a convulsion of grief? It is no doubt the wound on my forehead.” Nitāi again changed his tactics. He said: “My Lord, you know best what to do under the circumstances. But yet you cannot kill both, for Jagāi saved my life.”

Immediately the Lord fastened his looks upon Nitāi and asked: “Explain! What do you mean? Jagāi saved your life!”

Now, as we stated before, when the assault was committed the Lord was in the midst of his *bhaktas*, far in the rear. Thus he had witnessed nothing. Nitāi now told him how, when Mādhāi sought to assault him a second time, Jagāi not only held him fast, but also rebuked him for his cowardly conduct.

Immediately an approving smile lighted the divine face of the Lord. He looked again all-mercy, all-good, “from the sole of his foot to the top of his head.” “So Jagāi saved your life?” said he, addressing Nitāi; and then looking up to Jagāi, “So Jagāi, you saved the life of my Nitāi? Yes, you have conferred an infinite obligation upon me. You deserve a reward from me. Here it is, let me embrace you.” Saying this the Lord, the incarnation of purity, held the loathsome moral leper in his bosom and gave him a warm embrace!

And what was the result? Jagāi fell down on his back as if struck by lightning, in a state of complete trance. His fixed and staring eyes, his motionless limbs indicated that life had left him. When Jagāi fell down in a trance, the incident was followed by a joyous shout, not only from the *bhaktas*, but also from others, including their opponents, who had, unperceived by them, caught the contagion of the moment.

Mādhāi was in a state of utter despair, indeed he had lost all hope, all volition, even all power of speech. The mercy shown to his brother, however, proved a ray of hope, which entered his heart, and brought back to him his life which had almost deserted him. This hope not only gave him life, but also produced a revolution in his mind. Previously he had felt that he was the greatest offender in the world; that he was a doomed man, and that it would be folly on his part to allow any ray of hope to enter his heart. But the mercy shown to Jagāi, without any effort on his part, made him feel in spite of himself, that his offences were not as great as he had thought them to be. With these thoughts he fell at the feet of the Lord, exclaiming, “Mercy, merciful Lord!”

Immediately the Lord retreated a step. He said: “Mādhāi! Your case is not so simple as you think.”

Mādhāi was disconcerted, but yet he did not lose all hope. Perhaps he thought the Lord was playing a part. Said he; “My Lord, we are all your children.” For he had then not the least doubt that the being before him was the Lord of the universe. He continued: “I am also one, and you cannot, therefore, cast me away.”

The Lord said: “You, a creature of God! Did you ever recognize it? Why, then, did you maltreat those who were your brethren? Fie! Mādhāi, you, the lord of all, you before whom men trembled with folded hands, to pose before me as a supplicant and a beggar in the presence of this crowd of people; you, the best dressed man in the town to roll, with your fine clothes on, in the dust, to weep as helplessly as those whom you often made to weep before you—are you not ashamed of yourself?

“Blinded by material prosperity,” continued the Lord, “you crushed out all your fine sentiments given you by a kind and merciful God that you might be a help and a comfort to your fellow men; you trampled the weak, the poor, the innocent, and the good underfoot, and now you claim your right as a child of the same father who created all? Mādhāi, have you no shame left?”

Mādhāi was again seized with utter despair. He muttered something to the effect that the Lord was impartial, that as his brother, his partner in guilt, had been excused and accepted, he expected the same treatment from the father of all.

The Lord again replied: “Mādhāi,” said he, “When the *bhaktas* came to give you the name of Hari, they of course thereby condoned your past misdeeds. Śrīpāda Nityānanda came to bless you and your brother. Your past misdeeds then would not have been taken into account, and you would have been accepted as Jagāi has been. But you have given fresh offence, you have drawn blood, not only from a *bhakta* who is besides an innocent man, but from one who was your well-wisher. No, Mādhāi, you can expect no service from me.”

Mādhāi was silenced, and he thought profoundly for a second. He, however, could not remain quiet, so he again addressed the Lord. He said: “I see it is all over with me; yet I don’t know why all hope does not yet desert me. Am I then to be abandoned thus, for ever and evermore? My Lord, I don’t ask forgiveness of you, nor am I afraid of punishment. Let it come, and I shall welcome it. Only tell me, is there any way, any penance, by which I can, at any future period, attain to your lotus feet? Only tell me the way if there be any, and then cast me off.”

When Mādhāi said this, the countenance of the Lord assumed its usual loveliness. The severity of his tone disappeared, and he addressed Mādhāi in the sweetest of voices. “Well, if you come to that,” said the Lord, “I think I can help you. You offended Śrīpāda Nityānanda. If you can, by any means, secure his forgiveness, I think, for his sake, your case might be taken into favourable consideration. You are absolutely at the disposal of Śrīpāda, the friend of the fallen; no one else, not even I, can help you.”

“Mercy, mercy,” cried Mādhāi, and he fell at the feet of Nityānanda. Simple Nitāi was overjoyed, and was going to show it, when the Lord caught hold of his hand and said: “Don’t permit that unfortunate creature, by too ready forgiveness, to think lightly of his misdeeds. Let me, therefore, implore your forgiveness, Śrīpāda, on behalf of this miserable being. Dear Śrīpāda, forgive him for my sake, and show the world the difference between a servant of the Lord and a sinner. Let Mādhāi know that his offences are so great that even I cannot excuse them, and that I have to implore you for his forgiveness.”

Nitāi, interrupted by the Lord, heard him with due submission. He then, addressing the Lord, said: “You hold the strings and make us do your wishes, as a magician does with his puppets. It is you who felt pity for your fallen child Mādhāi, and it is you who intend to save him through me. Always kind to your *bhaktas*, you are always ready to give them prominence—one of your amiable tactics is to transfer all your credit to your servants. Your object, kind Lord, is to show your regard for your servants, and, therefore, you place Mādhāi at my disposal. Let thy will be done. Let me be the means of his salvation. You say that, for his salvation, it is necessary that I should forgive him. I do forgive him from the bottom of my heart. Nay, I must tell you what I feel. Let all the dwellers in heaven and on this earth bear me witness. I not only forgive Mādhāi unconditionally, but also make over to him any merit that I may have earned by any good act of mine during the whole course of my existence.”

The announcement, when its significance was realised, was received with loud and repeated shouts of Haribala. Indeed, this was the first time that the stillness of the scene was broken by a continued demonstration. A large crowd of outsiders had very naturally collected there, but the all-engrossing scene before them had kept them enthralled. So it had become possible for

most of them to hear every word that was spoken there, by the Lord, by Mādhāi, and by Nitāi. Nitāi continued: “Now, my dear Mādhāi, come to my bosom, and let the world see that there is no longer any difference between us,” and so saying Nitāi caught hold of the arms of the great city-*kotwal*, drew him towards himself, and gave him a warm embrace.

Mādhāi, like his brother, fell down in a trance beside him. So they lay side by side, their eyes fixed and froth coming from between their lips.

The pressure of the crowd was very great. Everyone wanted to come and see the terrible brothers now rolling in the dust. The Lord whose work had been done, therefore, hastily withdrew his *bhaktas*, leaving the brothers where they were in a state of trance in the public street.

Chapter Sixteen: The Passive State

The Lord came home with his *bhaktas* and they all sat in the courtyard to take rest after their exertions. The season was the hottest, and the time the afternoon; the exertion and the excitement that they had gone through had made them perspire. They were yet in a state of bewilderment on account of the experience they had just gone through. The sun had just set, and they were preparing to go for a plunge in the river, when they heard loud calls of “*Ṭhākura*” at the door.

This word *ṭhākura* is an epithet sometimes applied to God, sometimes to holy men, and sometimes to big folk. Of course, they could all perceive that somebody was seeking the Lord, and was awaiting orders at the door. Someone hastened to enquire, and on his return he announced to the Lord and the *bhaktas* that it was Jagāi and Mādhāi!

They had now come to be saved. Now, this is the natural way, that is, men to be saved must come to their master or *guru* to be blessed. It is an unnatural arrangement for the *guru* to save his would-be disciple by going to him, as the Lord had done in the case of Jagāi and Mādhāi. He went there to give *Harināma* to the brothers, but for the purpose of salvation they should come to him. For the purpose of the germination of the seed of *bhakti*, sown in the heart of the *celā* (student) by his *guru*, it is necessary that the former should be in what is called an exceedingly passive state. His heart must long for the seed, he must knock and at last compel the seemingly unwilling, but, in reality, cautious *guru*, to satisfy his cravings. When, however, the process is reversed, when the *guru* seeks to save a *celā* against his will, he generally fails. The process adopted by the Lord was what never ought to be followed by ordinary men. To go in force to a man’s house, unwilling to be saved, and attempt to save him by force, is to create a spirit of resistance. Jagāi and Mādhāi were perfectly justified in resisting the action of the Lord and his *bhaktas*. Of course, Mādhāi was worsted, but then his *guru* was more powerful than ordinary men are, and so it was no disgrace to Mādhāi that he

was defeated by bim.

When it was announced that the brothers had come, Murāri, with the permission of the Lord, hastened to bring them in. Now, the two brothers had prided themselves on their brute force, and Murāri wanted to show them that even in that they had their masters. For, Murāri was a strong man and became irresistible in his ecstatic state, in which condition he was still, as also the other *bhaktas*. They entered into this condition when they had first left the house of Śrīvāsa and repaired to the brothers, and they were still under its influence. So what Murāri did was to bring in the two brothers in his arms!

They came before the Lord, and, with a shriek, crying for mercy, again fell down senseless.

The Lord was still in his divine state; indeed, he had ceased to be man the moment he had opened the doors and proceeded towards Mādhāi. Addressing Nitāi, the Lord said: “Śrīpāda! Take the two penitents to the Ganges, and there breathe *Harināma* in their ears. You wanted them for me, indeed you alone have claims upon them, and I make them over to you.”

There are many songs describing the salvation of the two brothers. Here is one, in which Nitāi addresses the brothers:

Come ye, two brothers, to the bank of Ganges.
 I shall give you two the name of Hari to-day.
 Do not, Mādhāi, mind the beating that you gave me,
 But come along dancing to the sacred river
 You struck me with the piece of an earthen jar,
 But should I, therefore, refuse to give you *prema*?
 You fling a piece of earthen jar at me,
 I shall now have my revenge by giving you *prema*.

So here was another incident which brought the Lord and the *bhaktas* in contact with the outside world. The door was again opened and the apparently dead bodies of the brothers were carried to the Ganges with the sounds of *khole*, *karatalas*, and Haribala. This time there were no jeers from the public, the procession passed through crowds who followed it with great reverence and wonder. When they had all entered the Ganges, the brothers recovered.

In the river, as was usual with the *bhaktas*, they became very frolicsome. Now, the Hindus are a sedate race, and the savants are bound to foreswear levity in every shape. They have to walk with a steady and slow gait, to speak in sedate and measured tones, and to represent a passionless exterior in every condition of life. If they bathe, they must do it only to wash themselves. But the Lord had been a restless infant and a restless boy, and continued to be a restless youth, in spite of his attaining to the position of savant. This

frolicsomeness did not forsake him even when the Lord was worshipped by his *bhaktas*, as the *avatāra* of the Lord Almighty. When he was under the ecstatic condition, of course, he had to act in unconventional ways. But when he was not, yet then he could not control the action of the ecstasy upon him, which constantly played through his nerves.

The cultivation of *bhakti* chastens the nerves and fills the heart with joy. This joy is carried by the chastened nerves to all parts of the body. The result upon the skin is *pulaka* (goosebumps), and upon the eyes and nose a flow of water. When the flow of joy is too great, the *bhakta* falls down in a swoon. Even when a *bhakta* is comparatively free from the immediate influence of *bhakti*, he is never deprived of small currents of joy that are constantly passing through his frame. This makes him jolly, mirthful, and frolicsome. Thus, in the streets, when even absolutely free from the influence, the Lord walked and sometimes ran in a manner which very much scandalized his brother-professors. In the river the Lord was frolicsome, too. He there engaged in all sorts of games with his *bhaktas*. For, as the Lord did, so did his *bhaktas*. Advaita was an old man of seventy-six, but when he came to take shelter with the Lord, he too became as light-hearted as a child.

The cultivation of *bhakti* makes a child of a man. A *bhakta* can never grow old. He feels, even in his eightieth year, as a child of five. One of the complaints brought against the religion of Śrī Gaurāṅga by learned *brāhmaṇas* was that it made people behave like, as they thought, mad men. In the river, after having played for some time, pelting each other with handfuls of water, in the midst of frequent and loud shouts of Haribala, the *bhaktas* were hushed into silence by a gesture from the Lord. A large crowd had gathered on the bank, the evening was clear for the moon had risen, and they stood all expectant to see how the matter would end. Said the Lord in a loud voice to Nitāi: "I make over these penitents to you, Śrīpāda. Purify them by giving them the name of Hari, and show to the world that his name is more potent than any accumulation of sin."

They all stood waist-deep in the water, surrounding the Lord who was in the middle. Nitāi was on his left and the two brothers, with folded hands, were before him. The Lord in solemn language then addressed the brothers: "Jagāi and Mādhāi, you have been accumulating sins since your birth. Deliver them to me with copper, *tulasī* and Ganges water, and thereby relieve yourselves of your burden and become pure!"

It took some time not only for the brothers, but even for the *bhaktas* of the Lord, to understand what he meant. When they realized the situation, they were all stupefied with awe.

Now, it must be borne in mind that to the people of Nadia, the two brothers were the greatest sinners in the world. To their notion, this meant almost eternal misery. Every deed done in the bosom of the sacred river Ganges is

irrevocable. If a man utters a lie while in touch with the water of the Ganges, he is almost eternally damned. Witnesses, therefore, were required in former days to touch that sacred water when giving evidence. In the same manner a promise made while in the bed of the river is to be religiously observed, and there is no escape whatsoever from it. When the Hindus execute any deed of gift it is registered with Ganges water, *tulasī* leaves, and copper. When a deed is registered in that way it becomes binding upon both the parties, for ever and evermore. Here then the Lord demanded all the “mountain loads” of sin that the brothers were carrying on their heads. There was no joke in it, the transaction was as real as anything could be. The deed of transfer which the Lord wanted to be sealed in the most sacred manner possible, therefore, gave a shudder, not only to the crowd who were witnessing the ceremony from the bank, but also to the *bhaktas*.

As for the brothers, when they realised the situation, they soon formed their resolutions. They were then fully aware of their wretched condition; the way out of their wretchedness was thus made clear for them by the Lord; but they refused to avail themselves of it. They declared: “Let us suffer for our misdeeds. My Lord, don’t please lepers as we are, we are not yet so mean and selfish as to be capable of doing what, my Lord, you command us to do.”

This reply of the brothers was received with approbation by all, and expressed by loud shouts of Haribala.

But the Lord remained unmoved. He again demanded of the brothers in a firmer tone to deliver all their sins to him.

Under the firmest belief that they were addressing the deity himself, the brothers felt that their duty was to obey. But yet they could not make up their minds to agree to the proposal. So they again expressed their refusal. They said: “My Lord, please excuse us. People offer you the choicest of flowers. If we now obey you, our fellow-creatures will never forgive us, wretches, for offering you our sins.”

The Lord was, however, inexorable. He again made the demand in the same language. Here Nitāi intervened. He advised the brothers to submit. He said: “You must not forget that nothing can soil fire, but fire purifies everything. As man you cannot help apprehending that the load of your sins will prove a burden to the Lord. Only remember who he is that demands your load, and that will relieve you of your apprehension. Everybody says that if God is merciful, he is also the avenger of sin. Let it be proved that the Lord also is himself the savior. It seems the Lord means to prove this through you. Don’t hesitate any longer, but do the Lord’s bidding, that is the safest and best thing for us, poor creatures, to do.”

The brothers, having submitted, stood before the Lord oppressed by diverse feelings. Now, the deed of transfer was to be effected according to the Hindu method. The giver must declare while in contact with the sacred wa-

ter, copper and *tulasī* that he makes a gift of such a thing to such a one and to the son and grandson of such a one; and the receiver has, in the same solemn manner, to declare, "I accept." No deed of gift is complete unless both the giver and the receiver express their perfect agreement. So the Lord extended his joined hands for the purpose of receiving the gift, and the brothers uttered the formula, as is written in the sacred laws. They said, and everybody heard the words distinctly, that they were making over all the sins that they had committed themselves, sons of Raghunātha and Janārdana and grandsons of Rāja Śivānanda Rāya,¹ during the period of their existence, to the Lord. And the Lord, in the same distinct manner, under the seal of the sacred things enumerated above, signified his acceptance. He said: **"I accept your gift!"**

It is impossible to describe the effect that the above few words had upon all those who were present, *bhaktas* and outsiders alike. Those who have no belief in what is called sin, or the possibility of its transference by a compact notified in the most solemn manner, with sacred water, *tulasī* and copper, will hardly be able to realize the significance of the transaction effected. To all those present the ceremony was no joke, everything was as real as anything could be. The transaction carried out was as real to them as the transfer of a cow or a piece of land. In the opinion of most of those present, sin was the greatest curse which could affect man. They had all come to feel that the greatest sinners in the world were the two brothers. They had no doubt that the brothers by this deed of transfer had been able to relieve their souls of their mountain loads of sin, and put them on that of the Lord.²

The outsiders whispered among themselves that such a deed of sacrifice had never been done in the world in any age. Of course, Nitāi tried to prove to the brothers that it was no sacrifice on the part of the Lord whom impurity in any shape could never touch, to accept this load of sin, but yet there was no one present who could be thoroughly satisfied by this assurance. They, of course, believed that their Lord was no other than he, the father of all. But they could not always realise in their minds what that meant. They could only realise it in some degree, when he himself revealed it. At other periods, they could never fully forget that he was a man. I have already stated that it is impossible for one to realise the presence of the Lord God and then associate with him for any length of time.

Everyone present looked at the Lord with the profoundest pity, admiration and love.

Here a miracle occurred. No sooner had the Lord said, "I accept," than his

¹Jagāi and Mādhāi were not uterine brothers but cousins.

²The popular notion is that anyone can relieve himself of his sins if another consents to accept them. When we were lads a ceremony like this was performed. A dying man refused to die though his sufferings were so acute that his nearest relations wished him relieved of his tortures. It was thought his sins kept him chained to the body, and his mother immediately undertook to relieve the dying man of his load.

golden hue changed and his complexion became dark. It being night nobody, except those who were near, could, however, perceive it. This change of colour in the Lord showed that the sins of the brothers had entered his body.

Nitāi breathed the name of Hari in the ears of the brothers. From that moment they were accepted by the Lord.

They then all returned to the house of the Lord, where *kīrtana* immediately commenced. There Nitāi danced with the two brothers, and danced like one who had gone mad in his joy. He sometimes danced on one leg, sometimes his dances were big jumps, and sometimes clean somersaults. Anyhow if the dance was not elegant, it served its purpose.

When the brothers took to dancing, it created the greatest possible wonder, and it is expressed by the following song of the period describing the feelings of those present:

“What a miracle! Lo! Mādhāi dances! Jagāi may dance, but lo! It is also Mādhāi who dances!”

Now dancing in a *kīrtana* is not a mechanical affair. To be able to dance, one must have the necessary purity and impetus in him. Dancing, as we said before, is not a genteel pastime in this country. But yet people do not dance even in this country, when under the influence of liquor. But those who yield to the influence, need a sufficient quantity of intoxicating drink to be able to conquer their bashfulness. In this manner, in *kīrtanas* one must have imbibed a sufficient quantity of the divine influence to be able to dance. The dance resulting from the influence of *prema* and *bhakti* is quite a different thing from a mechanical dance. A *kīrtana* dance has a powerful effect upon those who witness it. When Mādhāi danced, the *bhaktas* thought it was a very great miracle. So they declared amongst themselves: “Yes, Jagāi has proved himself to be the possessor of some redeemable qualities, and so we can understand his being able to dance; but how is it that Mādhāi should be able to dance under the influence of *prema* and *bhakti*, Mādhāi who only a few hours before was the greatest sinner on earth?”

As for the brothers, it was, not actually *prema* and *bhakti* that led them to dance, but hope. They had lost hope, and finding one ray of it, they could not help expressing it by a dance. For their dance ceased in a short time, and they began to weep.

Mādhāi refused to go home, and remained at Śrīvāsa's. He had no longer any desire but that of deserving the forgiveness of the Lord. He wept incessantly, and foreswore food and sleep. Nitāi, Śrīvāsa and others tried to soothe him; they told him that he had no longer any sin; that the Lord had made him pure, nay, had taken all his sins on his own shoulders, but this did not bring him consolation. The idea that the Lord had taken all his sins on his shoulders gave Mādhāi a shudder. Indeed, his greatest sorrow was that the Lord had relieved him of the punishment justly due to him. Mādhāi was

slowly starving himself, and Nitāi failed to afford him consolation, and so at last he appealed to the Lord. “My Lord,” said he, “we can scarcely save Mādhāi, for he has given up food and hope.”

The Lord was moved, even to tears. He hastened to Mādhāi, whom he saw weeping with a plate of rice before him untouched. The Lord sat before Mādhāi, and said, “Dear Mādhāi, don’t kill yourself; eat, please.”

Madhai opened his eyes and saw the Lord before him. The spectacle doubtless gratified him, but it also reminded him of his sorrow which he was trying to forget. He saluted the Lord with great humility and tried to receive him cheerfully. The Lord said, “Mādhāi! I must say this is a little selfish on your part. You have made Nityānanda, whose name denotes the constant ecstasy with which he has been blessed, miserable; you have made others miserable too. But what ails you? Are not your sins all forgiven?”

When the Lord spoke of the forgiveness of his sins, Mādhāi shuddered.

The Lord continued: “I am before thee ready to grant whatever thou wouldst have. Tell me, how further can I help thee?”

Mādhāi said: “My Lord, let me explain the cause of my sorrow. The highest blessing of man I have received. I know further that I am burdened no longer with sin. But yet I cannot restrain my tears, or put a stop to the sorrows which, like the waves of the Ganges, come one after the other in succession and overwhelm my heart. The cause of my sorrow is thy kindness. What am I that thou shouldst think of me? Thou art purity and I am dirt. Forgetting that, thou hast been treating me as if I were a pet child of thine. If I had been punished for my sins, I think I should have been less miserable than I am. I now see that it is a wise arrangement which visits sin with punishment. My Lord, the more thou are showering thy mercies upon me, the more miserable I am becoming.”

In the presence of the Lord, Mādhāi was somewhat soothed, and he wiped his tears and took his meal. He had to speak with restraint before the Lord, but he was more free with Nitāi, his spiritual *guru*, and the only being in the world with whom he thought he had then any relationship, for he had foresworn society, family and friends. To Nitāi he opened his heart. He said: “The acceptance of myself and of my sins by the Lord has given life to my heart. Previously it was dead, or under the absolute control of fierce passions. But the Lord’s blessing has awakened me, as it were, from a stupor, and my past life now stands to me revealed. And what do I see? There is nothing in it to flatter, to please, or to console me. It is one continued record of crimes and cruelties committed and inflicted for selfish purposes. I cannot remember all the crimes committed by me or all the parties I have injured, more especially because I was almost continually under the influence of liquor. But some of my acts I remember vividly and others faintly. They are now having their revenge upon me. Every act of mine has now, as it were, taken shape to

inflict punishment upon my most vital parts. In my waking state I see before me pictures of outraged women, of orphaned children and men in agony, all reduced to that condition by me. In my dreams things forgotten come to my mind to torment me. My revered *guru*,” continued he, addressing Nitāi, “it seems to me that when the Lord accepted me, he by that simply meant that he would give me the power of weeping. Yes, that is his greatest blessing. This weeping relieves me somewhat; indeed, but for this weeping I should have been burnt to ashes by the fire awakened in my heart by the Lord’s blessings upon me.”

A miracle ordinarily means the suspension of the laws of nature. But God never suspends the laws of nature, for he is not like a fitful king who does one thing to-day and, when he thinks he has committed a mistake, undoes his own act the next day. In the case of Mādhāi, God did not suspend the laws of nature, but followed them strictly for the purpose of saving him. It must be borne in mind that the Lord God is not like a fitful king who is only moved by his own impulses to favour a creature. Mādhāi was a sinner, and suddenly to make him a saint, because he had committed the atrocious crime of assaulting his best friend and a servant of the Lord,—a saint who had given up the world—would be a little unjust to his other creatures, and would cast a reflection upon his wisdom and impartiality. He had provided punishment for the infringement of his laws, and Mādhāi had to suffer for his transgressions.

As poison or food equally affects the body, so there are baneful and meritorious acts which affect the soul. The body when it receives nourishment, assimilates it with the greatest readiness. When poison is permitted to enter into the system, the body tries to expel it. But if the process is continued, that is to say, if the poison continues to be introduced, the body at last needs the administration of an antidote which enables it to free itself from the effects of the deleterious substance. In the same manner, an evil act produces an impulse in the mind to overcome its evil effects, and this is called repentance. But if the process is continued, the soul, at last, becomes powerless to be able to free itself from the consequences of its evil acts. Mādhāi had arrived at this morally moribund condition, and at that moment the Lord was pleased to instill a drop of *bhakti* into his heart. This gave vitality to his spiritual system, as an antidote does to the poisoned physical system, and made it strong enough to be able to expel the poison which had well-nigh destroyed his soul.

Thus the laws of God are immutable, and everyone must effect his own salvation. There is no royal road to the development of the spiritual nature of man, as there is no royal road to the development of his intellectual nature.

Mādhāi continued to give a description of the state of his mind to Nitāi. He said: “I hear the shrieks of my fellow-beings I have injured, and see the

agonizing faces of those I have subjected to torture. These spectres torment me day and night.” And Mādhāi wept. After having restrained himself he continued. “It strikes me that there is one way by which I can relieve myself of the torments which have beset me. It is this. If I now could only get hold of the men I have injured and obtain forgiveness from them, I think I could bring some solace to my soul. But where are they and who are they?” And Mādhāi wept again. He continued: “I have thought of a plan. I shall post myself at the bathing *ghāṭas*, where I shall meet all the men, women and children of the town. There let me ask forgiveness of all, whomsoever I come across. What do you say to this plan, my revered *guru*?”

Nitāi agreed to the proposal. Mādhāi then took his resolution. After resigning himself to God he came out of the house of Śrīvāsa where he was spending his days and nights in privacy. He came out the most miserable man in the world, utterly unconscious of the crowds that his presence had collected round him. Men who hated him, men whom he had injured, wanted to have their revenge upon him. But they did not venture on any familiarity, for when a tiger has been killed, people do not dare approach the spot at once. They had seen the tiger of the city of Nadia in the prime of his power; they had not seen the process by which he had become a changed man and they dared not trust him. They followed him, therefore, from a respectful distance. A man flung a stone at him and it struck him. The reveries of Mādhāi were broken, and he realized the situation at once.

At other times, if anyone had ventured to assault him, that man would have been slain or otherwise punished. But now Mādhāi, though struck, did not feel his equanimity disturbed in the least. And he smiled a smile of satisfaction; he was satisfied with himself, because the insult offered to him had not ruffled his temper. He was satisfied, because he thought he was now receiving a portion of that punishment which was due to him. Indeed, if the man who had cast the stone could but have had a glimpse of the chastened face of Mādhāi, with the deep anguish that was imprinted thereon, he would never have flung it.

Mādhāi sat on the bank, while a crowd stood around him. He gazed at the crowd, and the crowd gazed at him. Mādhāi tried to suppress his tears, because he wanted to address those who were before him. He rose and with folded hands said: “Behold in me Mādhāi, the Rāja of Nadia. In my pride of power I trampled everything sacred under foot. Will you now confer an inestimable obligation on me by trampling me under foot?” He said this and could not say more, for he burst into tears.

The crowd was petrified with surprise. Their hatred of the man evaporated in a moment. On the other hand, they felt a profound sympathy for the man whom they had followed, almost with hooting.

Then comes a bather, and Mādhāi falls at his feet. He says: “Kind sir, I

do not know whether I have ever injured you or not. but behold in me the greatest sinner in the world, yet the Lord has promised to accept me, on one condition. It is that you, his creatures, will forgive me. If you cannot, at least put your foot on my head.”

The man takes time to understand the situation. At first he cannot in Mādhāi recognize the terrible city-*kotwal* of Nadia. He then has to realise the purport of the address which seems so strange in his mouth. He understands the terms of the address, but yet he hesitates—is Mādhāi acting a part, is he mocking him, is he really Mādhāi at all?

“You cannot recognise me?” continues Mādhāi, seeing the embarrassment of the man he has accosted. “Yes, it is a miracle which has brought Mādhāi here. The Lord wants the greatest sinner on earth to bear witness to his infinite mercy, and the choice has very naturally fallen upon me.”

The man yet hesitates to accept Mādhāi at his word. Men like him, who have never known what self-control is, who are fitful, self-willed and passionate, are accustomed to perform many mad freaks. Possibly he is sincere now, but how long can a man like him remain a penitent? But Mādhāi had then been saved; everything about him showed that Mādhāi had obtained the grace of a man born again—the livery of God was upon him! A servant of God has his distinctive features which mark him out from others. He is sweet, he emits sweet fragrance, he speaks music, his company is soothing, ennobling, and fascinating.

Yes, there is a God and a very good God too. Do you want proof? Well, look at his servants. The man of power, the man of intellect, the man of personal charms, are but pigmies before a man of God. When I am assailed by doubts, I seek the company of a servant of God, and his company dispels them.

Well, Mādhāi, in a short time, became a potent influence to spread the religion of *bhakti*. “The greatest sinner on earth” soon began to be regarded as a saint. He himself, with a spade in hand, prepared a bathing *ghāṭa*, which is known as Mādhāi Ghāṭa. Mādhāi lives in his descendants, who are devotees of Śrī Gaurāṅga and are now proud of their ancestor, “the greatest sinner on earth,” who bore testimony to the infinite mercy and love of God.

Chapter Seventeen: One Greater than Mādhāi

Yes, Jagāi and Mādhāi were conquered, but one greater than they rose to oppose the Lord and maltreat his *bhaktas*.

The brothers clung to the lotus feet of Śrī Gaurāṅga with determination, as their descendants are doing now. The two brothers bore witness, not only to the divine character of the Lord but to his mercy, nay, to his love for human beings. People flocked to the standard of the Lord in hundreds and thousands, not only from the city but from the most distant parts of the country. Here is a free translation of an ancient song, describing how the advent of the Lord had influenced the popular mind:

The spotless moon of Nadia has risen to dispel all darkness
And the whole universe is swimming in happiness.
The sinner, the blind, the leper and the halt are flocking in crowds
to him.¹

It was in this manner that the country was thrown into a state of spiritual revolution. Those who, by ill-luck, remained outside the spiritual current, did not like this exhibition of joy on the part of their neighbours, in which they had no share. As the numerical and spiritual strength of the *bhaktas* increased, the opposition to the Vaiṣṇavas very naturally increased in proportion.

But there was another more solid reason why the Lord and his followers began to be regarded with bitter hatred. They commenced to make conversions in such large numbers as to frighten the higher classes, the leaders of the society, who apprehended a social disruption, and their consequent fall.

¹The Lord cured some lepers by his touch, and raised the dead or restored to health the dying, on some occasions, but as a rule the healing of diseases was a function which he himself did not perform but left to his followers. Yet, it is alleged that those who came to him were cured. They sat in rows in the street leading to his house, expecting to see the Lord when he came out to bathe. They prostrated themselves before him when the Lord appeared, and raised shouts of Haribala and were cured by their faith.

It has been stated before that caste-people, other than *brāhmaṇas*, flocked to the standard of the Lord almost in a body. Some of the intellectual and learned *brāhmaṇas* also did so, but not the majority. The reason was that his teachings were quite antagonistic to their material interests. The *brāhmaṇas* had enveloped all religious practices with mysteries, keeping the explanation to themselves. Other castes had no way of reaching the ear of God except through them. The *brāhmaṇas* lived by the profession of priesthood, and the other castes maintained them. The intellectual and spiritual progress of the other castes was thereby retarded, and the *brāhmaṇas* were thus able to reign supreme.

But the Lord taught the people that everyone was the child of God and had equal claims upon him: and that those who served him secured the greatest advantages, irrespective of creed, caste or social position. Such and similar other sentiments, which the religion of the Lord taught, laid an axe at the root of Brahminical superiority.

As we said before, the Lord and his followers never preached. The Lord taught mankind mainly by example. He lived as a humble worshipper and from him his companions learnt how to worship God Almighty. Yet he taught his intimate *bhaktas* now and then, especially when he revealed himself as Śrī Kṛṣṇa. He did not as a rule speak much when he spoke at all; he merely taught in simple words how they could improve their spiritual nature. Every day he was visited at his house by vast crowds. They came to bow to him and have a look at him. Oftentimes this was enough to give them a spiritual re-birth. They asked him to advise them how to behave themselves. Thus they asked of the Lord: “How are we to attain salvation, my Lord?” Under such circumstances he would advise them to repeat the name of God day and night; to repeat his name whenever they had an opportunity;² and to sit together—friends, members of the family, father and son, wife and husband, male and female—and perform *kīrtana*. “If you only do this,” he would say, “the merciful Father will fulfill your desire.” Thus his people were seen uttering the holy names constantly, even when engaged in the performance of household duties, and many began to do *kīrtana* in their own houses; and in the evening hardly anything was heard in the great city of Nadia but the sound of music, *khole*, cymbal and Haribala.

Here we must parenthetically remark that the Lord taught deeper things to his intimate *bhaktas* according to their respective capacities. The Vaiṣṇavas hold that one rule will not apply to all equally; each must worship according to his capacity. What is food for a man of higher capacity may be poison to one who is less favoured. A man ought to have only as much of mate-

²This teaching may seem to be antagonistic to the precepts of the Bible, where it is prohibited to take the name of God in vain. But here the names are to be repeated not in vain but with the highest object in view. Besides I am assured that the prohibition refers to swearing and cursing by the name of God.

rial food as he can hold and digest, and this rule applies equally to spiritual food. A man can, however, develop his capacity for higher spiritual food by culture and discipline. Thus what is poison to a man in the beginning, may be wholesome to him when he has grown spiritually. Wells are dug for water, and the deeper the well, the clearer and more copious becomes the flow of water. The human body is like earth, where the worshippers dig for the divine nectar. The deeper a man can dig, the clearer and more copious becomes the liquid he obtains.

The Lord taught the simplest as well as the subtlest of things to his *bhaktas* according to their several capacities. The heart was searched with the eyes of a competent seer, and the position of *prema* and *bhakti* therein ascertained. These two ethereal sentiments were then analyzed, and that in as careful a manner as a chemist does the object of his research and experiment. Language fails to give one an idea as to what minute lengths the analysis of *prema* and *bhakti* was carried by the followers of the Lord. Subtle as the subjects *prema* and *bhakti* were, the saints analyzed and treated them as material objects. The *bhaktas* obtained their inspiration from the Lord, and wrote hundreds of books on those subjects. The wonderful books written by the *bhaktas* of the Lord which contain the analysis of *prema* and *bhakti*, and the researches of these spiritual savants extending into the innermost regions of the human heart, are yet extant, though unfortunately they are not generally read. These books will enable any man to see the capacity and constitution of his own heart, his own position as regards God, the different ways by which men can approach God, the pitfalls which beset him on his way to Godhood, etc., etc.

But to resume. The great city of learning was almost entirely converted into a holy city of spirituality and *kīrtana*. The leaders under the old regime found that they were fast losing influence. An ordinary man hitherto would have stood speechless and paralysed before a savant, but now the savant's presence was scarcely noticed by the *bhaktas*, whose hearts were entirely occupied by other holier thoughts, and with the image of the Lord. So at last the conservative party resorted to physical force for the purpose of putting a stop to the spread of Vaiṣṇavism. While Jagāi and Mādhāi reigned, they found in them champions who were both willing and able to act against Nimāi Paṇḍita. But now that those champions had been appropriated by the Lord, his opponents sought the help of the Mahomedan governor or the *kāji* of the city!

The feelings between the Hindus and the Mussalmans were then very bitter as one can readily understand from their respective positions. The governor was not, therefore, the best party to be invited to take sides in a purely Hindu matter like this. The opponents of the Lord took a false step, and we are almost ashamed to mention it. But then, their vital interests were

at stake, and they lost the power of discriminating between right and wrong. They approached the governor, known as Chand Kāji, grandson of the then king of Gauḍa, that is to say, of Bengal. This young man was therefore highly connected, and he had absolute power, and thousands of Pathan soldiers to enforce his authority.

The opponents of the Lord told him that the young *paṇḍita* Nimāi was destroying Hinduism by his strange doctrines, and that the governor, as representing the king, was bound to put a stop to it. “You are the Lord of the town and represent the sovereign,” said they, “and it is your duty to afford protection to the Hindus.”

The opponents of the Lord had nothing heretical to urge against the Lord, for he was only following the philosophy of the holy *Bhāgavata* in his mode of worship, and the *Bhāgavata* is admitted by the Hindus to be a book of authority. But, they urged that according to the Hindus, God sleeps in the heart, and must be addressed silently. The followers of Nimāi Paṇḍita, however, dance and make a good deal of noise when worshipping him. Such a procedure is likely to alienate God Almighty and lead him to destroy the city. The opponents of the Lord thought that if the Kāji, who was regarded with absolute terror, could be only induced to show his disapproval of the doings of the Vaiṣṇavas, that community would give up their pretensions from sheer fright.

Here was a strange experience for a Mussalman governor. According to him the Hindus worshipped devils, and it was of no moment to him whether they agreed or not in their mode of *pūjā*. But here was an opportunity of exercising authority, and in a matter in which he and his predecessors had never been permitted to interfere. What man of the world would let slip such an opportunity? He further saw that many of the leading Hindus of the town were for the suppression of Nimāi, and he readily promised to take the matter seriously in hand.

The Kāji first sent his men to stop *kīrtana*. But the city was big and his men found it impossible to stop. While *kīrtana* was being suppressed in one quarter, the Vaiṣṇavas in other parts of the town continued it; and the quarters in which it had been suppressed resumed it as soon as they were left alone. The suppression of *kīrtana* was thus found to be an arduous task by the Kāji’s men. They reported accordingly, and the opponents of the Lord also prayed for more energetic measures.

Needless to say that these violent proceedings of the men of the Kāji threw the *bhaktas* in a state of consternation. They knew not what to do. To speak to the Lord, they did not like. They would await events and see whether the Lord would take note of their sufferings of his own accord. They thus bore everything patiently. But the Kāji was not disposed to desist from further interference. His authority had been indirectly defied and his self-love had

been hurt. So, one evening he invaded the town with “thousands” of Pathan soldiers!

A good deal of oppression was practised by these soldiers upon the citizens who were found doing *kīrtana*. People were beaten indiscriminately, *kholes* broken,³ and houses invaded and even looted. The Kāji marched triumphant from one part of the town to the other, promising dire penalties to those who would again do *kīrtana*! Be it said to the credit or discredit of the Kāji that he avoided the higher classes of *bhaktas*, and punished only those belonging to the lower orders.

The misery occasioned to the *bhaktas* by these proceedings can scarcely be described. They were in utter despair. They were men humble as grass, innocent as lambs, and their only offence was that they sang hymns in their own houses with the members of their respective families and their friends. So there was no help for it, thought they, but to speak to the Lord on the subject of their grievance, and accordingly they approached him the following morning.

To him they detailed all their sorrows,—how they had suffered at the hands of the Kāji, how he had prohibited *kīrtana* by proclamation, and how he had threatened dire punishment to those who would venture to disobey the order.

The Lord was not, however, the least ruffled by this threatening attitude of the irresistible Kāji. He told them that in a matter like this, they should show their faith in Śrī Kṛṣṇa by disregarding all earthly considerations. “Worship Śrī Kṛṣṇa with faith,” said he, “and he is bound to protect you.”

Thus encouraged they came back. The word flew from mouth to mouth that the Lord had ordered them not to desist, but to continue worshipping Kṛṣṇa as usual. So they again defied the authority of the Kāji and commenced *kīrtana*.

When the Kāji heard this, he returned to the city accompanied by “thousands” of soldiers and again began his oppressions. Be it said here that he did not treat the offending party with as much severity as people expected of him. Indeed, the efforts that he made to stop *kīrtana* were very feeble, and it seemed that he had no heart in the business. If the *bhaktas* had patiently held out, they might have won in the long run. But the Afghans always carried with them a reputation for cruelty, and their presence always created fear and even consternation. Besides, the social customs of the Hindus made it easy for the Mussalmans to intimidate them. If a Mussulman only entered the house of Hindu, the latter lost his caste and became something of an out-caste. The followers of the Lord, moreover, had foresworn the use of lethal weapons on becoming the servants of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. They endured their suffer-

³One quarter of the city got the name of *khole-bhaṅga*, or the place where the *kholes* were broken, from the above incident.

ings with great patience for a time, but at length brute force succeeded in overcoming the spiritual strength of the *bhaktas*. In short, the *kīrtana*, day by day, grew weak, and finally ceased!

The *bhaktas* again appeared before the Lord. They wanted permission to leave the city, as they could not live without *kīrtana*, and the Kāji was too strong to make it expedient for them to ignore his prohibition in the matter. They begged permission from the Lord to leave, and they—burst into tears!

We have said that the face of the Lord has been likened to a full-moon, for it imparted joy to those who beheld it. Indeed, it seemed to have been sculpted out by a master artist of consummate skill. Besides, it gave evidence that the owner was an intelligent, guileless being of infinite love. Such was the face of the Lord, the most perfect that ever was seen on this earth. But when the *bhaktas* recounted their sorrows and burst into tears, all its tenderness of expression disappeared. He then looked terrible, so terrible that the *bhaktas* feared to look at him!

Said he: “Does the Kāji mean to stop the *kīrtana* of God? Let him then first stop me! Citizens! I mean tonight to do *kīrtana* in every part of the town. Let us see how the Kāji will stop it. Do one thing; come every one of you in the afternoon so provided that you can accompany me with a light. Go proclaim my orders (here the Lord revealed himself) to every part of this vast city. Śrīpāda Nityānanda, do you also issue this proclamation of mine as against that of the Kāji all over the city. Today I shall annihilate the authority of the Kāji. Today I shall deluge Nadia with a shower of *prema*, and wash away every opposition to the *kīrtana* of God.”

The citizens, feeling assured that it was God Almighty who was issuing the command, departed from the presence of the Lord to execute his commands.

The terms of the proclamation came to be known all over the vast city with the speed of lightning. At about four, people began to flock to the house of the Lord. His intimate companions filled the courtyard, and others, finding no place inside, assembled outside the house. People poured in from all quarters of the town. They had each of them a garland of flowers around his neck, and a lamp in his hand. “If the father brought a lamp so did his son.” Others who intended to carry more than one lamp brought one or more servants with them. In this manner some “wealthy men brought a thousand men with them provided with lamps.”⁴

It came to be rumored among those who were indifferent as also among the enemies of the Lord, that he would in the evening perform *kīrtana* in all parts of the town. They naturally did not put much credence in the report. Nimāi Paṇḍita was accustomed to do things in secret, so that the general public were not permitted to see what his *kīrtana* was. Some people had, indeed, witnessed it at the time the two brothers were saved, but the number

⁴Caitanya-bhāgavata.

who did so was very small. Why should Nimāi Paṇḍita, they thought, throw away all his previous reserve and now appear in public?

Besides, they were almost sure that Nimāi, who was at least an intelligent man, would never venture in this manner to defy the authority of the Kāji, supported by thousands of brutal soldiers. Was it not a ruse on the part of the Pandit, they took counsel of one another, to give some sort of consolation to his discredited followers for the beating they had received? “Take my word for it,” said one, “there will be no *kīrtana* in the town at all, and Śacī’s darling will excuse himself on some plea or other.” If the traitors had any idea that the Lord would really besiege the city with a general *kīrtana* they would probably have run to the Kāji with the information.

The followers of the Lord, however, had no such doubts in their minds. They all prepared themselves to perform his bidding and to undergo any sacrifice that might be required of them. They passed the day in holy thought and in the expectation of passing a holier and more delightful evening. They washed themselves, anointed their bodies with sandal, decorated their persons with garlands of flowers. The females, in like manner, put on their best dresses, as befitting the joyful and holy occasion. The joy of the *bhaktas*, men and women, exceeded all bounds. Would they not, on that day, see the Lord pass by their houses dancing? So they made preparations for a general illumination at night of their houses. Each worked for himself, and they vied with one another in their holy zeal. And as the Lord might pass by their doors (none knew the route that he would take), everyone made preparations to give him a warm welcome. Every householder, among his followers, arranged jars, filled with sacred water and covered with mango leaves, and planted plantain trees at his door. They decorated the outer walls with green branches. They gathered cowries (small shells used as coins) and *khai* (baked paddies) and flowers to be showered into the street before him, if the Lord should pass by their doors.

Numerically the followers of the Lord formed the strongest party in the town, though he had only revealed himself a few months earlier. Next came those who were either indifferent or hostile. Those who were indifferent, seeing that their neighbours were making preparations for the purpose of celebrating the city-*kīrtana*, allowed themselves to be caught in the current of joy which had convulsed the town. They, therefore, imitated the followers of the Lord in making preparations by illuminating and decorating their houses. Eventually the opponents also had to submit. For, it oftentimes happened that while the father was a deadly opponent of the Lord, the son was, on the contrary, a devoted adherent. In like manner, sometimes the husband was an opponent, while the wife was a devotee. The result was that almost every man in that vast city contributed his mite towards celebrating the city-*kīrtana* with becoming grandeur.

As stated before, the followers of the Lord, in their excess of zeal, had flocked to him before it was evening, each carrying one or more torches in his hands, and a garland of flowers round his neck. The throng that gathered there was immense. Gradually, others who were not followers of the Lord joined the assemblage. Wherever there is a concourse of the people, the crowd draws others. In this manner almost the whole town was moved to swell the gathering which then filled the streets adjoining the house of the Lord and the strand. The number of men that gathered round the house of the Lord was so immense that, say the chroniclers, “any computation was out of the question.” It seemed that everyone in the town had come to join the procession. People were amazed to see that the city of Nadia had such a large population.

As the sun had not as yet set, the vast crowd whiled away the time in loud and joyous peals of “Haribala,” repeated one after the other, in rapid succession.

The Lord was in his room. Gadādhara, Narahari, and a few others were dressing him. The Lord sat there as a bride does before a looking-glass surrounded by dressing maids, submissive and patient. They would not let him go out till they had dressed and adorned him to their entire satisfaction. They began to decorate his face with *alakā* (white paint). The Lord smiled and desired to be excused. But they would take no denial. So his black and shining hair was combed, and made into a *cūḍā* (knot) like that of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. They gave him an exquisitely beautiful silk *dhūti* to wear, and a *cādara* (shawl) with which to cover himself. Round the *cūḍā* they arranged a wreath of sweet scented flowers. They made a large garland of *bakula* (a scented flower) for his neck which reached down to his feet. Thus dressed, and when he was declared to have eclipsed Cupid himself in every way, he was allowed to come out.

The Lord came out into the courtyard, and the crowd made way for him. They gazed at him with wonder, admiration and joy. The Lord in his new dress looked more beautiful than ever. A good many, in silent admiration, began to shed tears of joy, for as palatable things draw water from the tongue, so a beautiful sight draws water from the eyes. Others in their excitement announced the presence of the Lord by a loud “Haribala.” Hitherto the “Haribalas” had come from outside, now the exclamation came from within the courtyard, by which the people outside knew that the Lord had issued from his house, and there was indescribable tumult for a moment.

The Lord surveyed his immediate followers and smiled with the pleasure which the sight of their numbers and enthusiasm gave him. They had come neatly dressed and anointed with sandal. They had all decorated themselves with garlands of flowers and put on their musical anklets for the purpose of enhancing the effect of their dancing during the *kīrtana*. A good many also

had come with *khole*, cymbals, bugles, horns, flags, streamers, etc.

The Lord uttered his *Huṅkāra*.⁵ Such *huṅkāras* can be heard only from a short distance. But when the Lord uttered it, it was heard by not only those inside, but many of those outside. By this *huṅkāra* the Lord gave assurance to his followers that they had nothing to fear from any thing or any person, for he was there with them.

As a matter of fact, this *huṅkāra* inspired them with *bhakti*, new life, and courage. The Lord uttered his *huṅkāra* again and again. Every such effort of the Lord resulted in his followers being inspired with additional life and courage. They all became impatient to proceed, though the sun had not yet set.

The Lord then formed four *kīrtana* parties. The first was put under the charge of Advaita, the second under Śrīvāsa, and the third under Haridāsa. The fourth and the last he kept under his own control. Nitāi and Gadādhara were in this party. This was in the beginning, for subsequently hundreds of *kīrtana* parties were formed. In each party were two *kholes*, and about a dozen singers. Advaita and his men began first, and singing awhile proceeded, still singing the praise of the Lord God. The crowd opened a passage for them. As soon as Advaita and his men had left the place, Śrīvāsa's turn came. After a while Śrīvāsa left, and his place was occupied by Haridāsa. And when Haridāsa had left, the Lord himself prepared to start. The charming youth of twenty-four, dressed in a silken *dhūti* and covered with flower garlands, issued from his house. For what? It was to fight the ferocious Afghan leader, provided with swords and guns and surrounded by thousands of brutal soldiers! It is thus that spiritual force and brute force have been incessantly fighting for mastery since the creation of the world.

The torches were lighted immediately. As evening approached, the whole town was illuminated. The concourse was so immense that the people of Nadia themselves were amazed to find that there were so many people in the town. Superstitious people even now believe that the dwellers of heaven had taken human shapes to enjoy the inestimable privilege of dancing with God Almighty. "The Gods must have come down, or else whence came all these men?" said they. "Surely it is not possible that the town could support so large a population." The torches in the hands of the processionists and the general illumination of the town made the night appear like broad day-light; and the spectacle was beautiful beyond description.

⁵This *huṅkāra* may be translated into a whoop. The war-whoop is uttered by the captain, to encourage the soldiers, or by the soldiers themselves to encourage one another. In the excess of his *bhakti* the devotee frequently feels somewhat as the soldier does, because he considers himself an officer in the service of the great father of all. And when under the influence of this feeling, he is apt to give vent to a peculiar note of defiance to all evil, and to all danger, worldly or spiritual. The meaning of this *huṅkāra* of a *bhakta* under the influence of the holy spirit is a feeling of security—a feeling that God's soldiers had nothing to fear.

In the midst of all this vast assemblage the figure of the Lord was prominent; “everybody could see him,” says the *Caitanya-bhāgavata*, “for he was the tallest and fairest of all.”

They passed by the river-side, dancing and following the Lord spell-bound. The dancing figure of the Lord was like the full moon, distributing gladness all around him. The Lord then no longer looked like a being of the world. The vast crowd saw that a holy light was being emitted from his body, while a bright crown-like halo enveloped his head. The Lord was dancing with uplifted arms, and his gaze directed upwards, while the following song was being sung: “Let my heart cling to thy feet, O my Kṛṣṇa!”⁶

Presently the Lord falls down in a swoon, and those who surround him are hushed into silence. Presently he rises, his gold-hued body besmeared with dust, but his copious tears of joy, which drench all those who surround him, wash him thoroughly. Now, he sits down with his eyes closed like a man in communion with God, or as God himself. Now, he gazes at those near him, and his look is so tender that a thrill of pleasure passes through their frames.

When the traitors came to know that Nimāi Paṇḍita had actually come out to celebrate the *kīrtana*, they counselled among themselves that the governor should be informed of this move on the part of “Śacī’s darling.” To make things sure, however, they came to reconnoitre and see everything for themselves. They felt that by this imprudent and reckless defiance of authority, “Śacī’s darling” had placed himself at the mercy of the irresistible governor, so they were in a happy state of mind.

“Let us first see what the real matter is,” thought they, “and then there will be time enough to inform the Kāji about it. And when the Kāji comes with his thousands of soldiers,”—and the contemplation gave them infinite pleasure—“will not there be fun then? Will not “Śacī’s darling” then jump into the Ganges and swim across the river?”

What they saw, however, took away their breath and filled them with wonder and awe. They saw that the crowd was immense beyond calculation. They felt that their opponent, the Paṇḍita, carried with him a physical force which was not inferior to that of even the governor himself. They saw that almost every one of the vast crowd was beside himself with joy and prepared to do anything, however reckless, for the sake of the Lord. Their wonder, however, knew no bounds when they saw the dancing figure of the lord.

So this is Nimāi Paṇḍita, the boastful scholar, thought they, with wonder and amazement. They had seen the Lord when he was a scholar, and very little of him after he had come from Gayā and revealed himself. They had no notion whatever that the object of their contempt, Nimāi, had suddenly become so inaccessibly high as to be beyond their reach. It was clear that if

⁶তুয়া চরণে মন লাগুই রে.

the Kāji was the nominal master of the town, the real master was the Paṇḍita. But what startled them most was the divine figure of the Lord. They at once came to the conclusion that the dancing being before them, if he was a man at all, was certainly a higher being than the rest of the throng.

They stood awe-stricken, humble, penitent and frightened. “Lucky is Śaci to have given birth to such a being,” said one, “Lucky is Nadia, that Nimāi is one of its citizens,” said another. “Is this Nimāi Paṇḍita, or a god in disguise?” said yet another. And they did not know how to settle the question. They agreed that if he was not a god, he was at least an incarnation of *bhakti*, and, as such, the dearest servant of Śrī Kṛṣṇa; and they soon came to feel that God Almighty would not suffer a holy man like the Paṇḍita to be interfered with, much less punished. They were violently moved to see the *bhakti* of the Lord, which they declared was beyond the reach of earthly man. They were so violently moved as to fall prostrate before the procession.

The procession passed by the strand; on one side was the river, on the other the dwelling-houses of citizens. Every house was illuminated, every door was decorated with emblems of welcome of every possible design. The stream of human beings is passing along the streets, and the ladies on the terraces, the only parties who on account of their sex are not taking an active part in the triumphal procession, seem to have eyes only for the Lord. At last comes the dancing figure of the Lord before their expectant gaze, and they raise the joyful sound of “ulu” and throw shells, flowers, and *khai* before him. They, with tearful eyes, then salute the Lord with great humility and devotion.

As for the innumerable men who formed the procession, they gradually became intoxicated with joy, and under its influence, they behaved like men beside themselves. Strangers embraced one another, as if they were old and dear friends. Some sat down and besmeared themselves with dust, as if it was the most pleasant occupation in the world. Others sat and wept, and wept incessantly. Some took it into their heads to besmear themselves with dust, taken from the feet of anyone they came across, and thus please themselves and Śrī Kṛṣṇa by their humility. Some danced with up-lifted hands, totally forgetful of the presence of others. Some found themselves impelled by excessive *bhakti* to prostrate themselves before everyone they found before them.

Others became stark mad. Some of them ascended trees and thence jumped to the ground, indifferent to the risk to their limbs. A few combined together and proceeded to arrest Yama himself. Now, Yama is the god who judges the merits and demerits of men after death, and hurls those to hell who were fallen unrepentant. Their idea was that since the Lord had come to save all mankind, the occupation of the lesser divinity, Yama, was gone, and he had no longer any business to live and torment the unfortunate

creatures of God.

Though most of them had forgotten it, a few yet remembered that they had a certain business before them. Was it not for the sake of the opponents of the Lord that they had been insulted and assaulted by the governor? And were they not going to punish the aggressive Kāji? Some of those who happened to remember this broke off branches of trees and converted them into lethal weapons with which to assault him. But where was he? In their mad state of mind they fancied that he was before them, and they began, as they thought, to beat him, their blows, of course, falling upon the earth. Others, in the same fanciful manner, proceeded to bind the opponents of the Lord, hand and foot, and bring them before the Lord as prisoners.

The mass of the processionists, however, forgot the Kāji and their opponents. A celestial feeling of joy had taken possession of them and they felt that they were in heaven, secure in the lap of the almighty father, under his kind protection. They were then under the influence of universal love, not only love for every man but for every living thing. That feeling had driven away from their minds all bitter feeling against the Kāji and all remembrance of his oppression.

The crowd was immense and many different *kīrtana* parties had been formed. Some of the songs that were sung on that occasion are on record. We have already noticed one. Here is the first stanza of another: “The son of Nanda (i.e. Śrī Kṛṣṇa) has revealed himself in Nadia with his flute and garland of wild flowers.”⁷ The other begins thus: “Let us exclaim Hari and Ram. The God has appeared in the house of every citizen of Nadia.”⁸

The effect of the *kīrtana* upon the processionists is thus graphically described in the *Caitanya-bhāgavata*:

Some danced, some rolled on the ground, forgetful of themselves.
Some played on different instruments and sang songs with their
mouths. Some jumped upon the shoulders of others, some wept
while holding the feet of others, some contented themselves with
weeping, and some with embracing whomsoever they came across.⁹

One forgot his own personality, and fancied that he was Nimāi Paṇḍita; and seeing that none acknowledged him, he addressed the company thus: “Where are you going? Are you in search of Paṇḍita Nimāi? Here I am Śrī Kṛṣṇa himself, come to save all mankind, all—all—all,” and then he danced, in imitation of the Lord.

Supernatural incidents occurred also. They saw celestial sights, angels dancing, beautiful paradisaal scenes which have no parallel on earth. Some

⁷বিজয় হইল নন্দে নন্দযোষের বালা| হাতে বাঁশী গলে দোলে বনমালা.

⁸বল ভাই হরি ও রাম রাম, হরি ও রাম| এই মতে নগরে উঠিল ব্রহ্মনাম.

⁹Vṛndāvana Dāsa, *Caitanya-bhāgavata*, 2.23.313-16.

sang beautifully who had never sung before; some spoke in tongues which they had never known. The Lord was dancing as he alone could dance, like an incarnation of ecstasy. Suddenly he took the road leading to the house of the governor!

Now, as stated before, almost everyone had forgotten all about him. He, as a Mussalman, lived outside the town. The Lord in proceeding to that quarter could have no other object than that of visiting the governor, to whom, as a follower of the Prophet, his *Hari-kīrtana* was an abomination. Moreover, to confront him with such a crowd, after what had already occurred, was tantamount to an attack upon his house with the almost certain consequence of a hand-to-hand encounter. When the Lord, however, proceeded towards the house of the Kāji, everyone remembered him as the cause of all the present arrangements and movements. Everyone could then see that though the Lord was dancing in his celestial joy, he had not forgotten the governor, the main object of the mighty city-*kīrtana*.

Then the opponents of the Lord repented! The figure of the Lord, dancing under the influence of his love for God, had softened their hearts towards him. The sight was irresistible; indeed, it was impossible for a man of the world, however brutal, to resist the influence of that spectacle. The chroniclers of the *līlā* of the Lord record in deep sorrow that non-believers opposed the Lord because they chose to stand aloof. If they had only come, say the chroniclers, and seen things for themselves, they would have surrendered to his lotus feet with joy. But they saw nothing, and so they ridiculed the Lord and his *bhaktas*. Such was the *māyā* (delusion) which seized them that they never made the slightest effort to discover how this young man of twenty-three [?] had been able to convert many thousands of men, some of them savants of Indian celebrity, in the course of a few months. Had they done so they would have seen things calculated to lead them irresistibly to fall at the feet of the Lord. The bitterest opponents of the Lord had an opportunity, during this great city-*kīrtana*, of seeing him, and the sight not only took away their hostility to him, but led some of them to surrender to him and become ardent *bhaktas*.

The opponents having forgotten their animosity towards the Lord, nay, having suddenly imbibed a feeling of deep regard for him, did not like the turn events had taken. They apprehended the shedding of blood, and they did not desire it. Would not an encounter between hundreds of thousands of unarmed Hindus and thousands of ferocious Pathan soldiers mean the massacre of the former? In the procession, moreover, were their neighbours, friends, and, in many instances, dear relations. Then again, their bitter prejudice against the Lord having completely disappeared from their minds at the sight of his divine figure, they could not help being convinced that in him they beheld a man of extraordinary merit, and an unparalleled *bhakta*, op-

position to whom therefore meant hostility to God himself. They could see that their opponent, Nimāi, was utterly under the influence of his religious feeling, and that it was this feeling and not worldly sense that was leading him to the house of the dreaded Kāji. In fine they thought that this gifted and holy man was, under the influence of *bhakti*, going to sure destruction, and that they were the cause of this threatened calamity! Remorse seized them, and their greatest desire now was to prevent it.

As a matter of fact, the action taken by the Lord was hazardous in the extreme. He, with a crowd of delirious followers, armed only with garlands of flowers, *kholes* and cymbals, flags and trumpets was about to court a hand-to-hand fight with regiments of pitiless soldiers whose creed was that the destruction of unbelievers would be their sure passport to heaven. The fidelity of his followers was sorely tested. But none faltered, none forsook him, they clung to him, unarmed as they were, and risked being cut to pieces.

When the Lord took the road leading to the house of the Kāji everyone could see that he was going there, and they were thus reminded of the object of their present movement. So they raised the shout of “To the Kāji!” Their *bhakti* had softened their hearts and made them susceptible, so that they were easily led from one extreme of feeling to the other; and now they became filled with furious resentment at the conduct of the governor. The cry “*Mār Kāji*,” that is to say, “beat the Kāji,” was raised by thousands of men.

The governor knew nothing of this movement, so he had made no preparations. Those who had led him to oppose the *kīrtana* never believed, till the last moment, that Nimāi Paṇḍita would actually venture to defy the Musalman Governor of the city. And then, all the preparations had been made in a few hours, and the Lord in getting up the demonstration, had shown that he possessed more than human power. Say the chroniclers: How was it that the whole of this vast city was illuminated at such short notice? Who told the householders to illuminate their dwellings? And if no direction was given, what invisible force impelled them to make such an elaborate display? And if any direction were given, why were they obeyed so universally? How was it that every door was decorated? How was it that opponents—bitter opponents—were led to do likewise? There was no previous arrangement at all. In the morning only a few *bhaktas* had come to complain against the governor, and the Lord said that he would that night lead a public *kīrtana* himself. He asked the *bhaktas* and Nityānanda to issue a proclamation to that effect. That was all he had done. How was it that hundreds of thousands of men were led by this proclamation to flock to his standard with millions of torches? And how was it that these men, unarmed and non-combatants, were led to risk their lives and everything they held dear for the Lord? Is it possible for a mere human being to collect a vast population at one spot at a moment's notice? None tarried at home, no one excused him-

self. The *Caitanya-bhāgavata* triumphantly exclaims that this city-*kīrtana* is proof enough to show that the Lord possessed more than human power, and that it was his will alone that had brought about the extraordinary success of the arrangements.

Well, when the procession neared the house of the governor (it was then about 9 o'clock at night) he heard the noise. He came out to see what the matter was. He saw that the whole town was illuminated. He could further see that somebody was leading a very big procession. Curious to know what the matter was, and fancying that it was the marriage procession of a very big man, he directed his men to enquire and bring him information. These men went forth confidently, but did not return.

The procession continued its progress towards the house of the governor, and when it had come nearer, it struck him that it might be a *kīrtana* party, for he could distinctly hear the sounds of *kholes*, cymbals and clarions, mingled with that of faintly audible songs. The idea that it might be a *kīrtana* party caused him to fly into a rage. He spoke to his followers: "Do not the sounds indicate that this is the devil's *kīrtana*, and that the party belongs to Nimāi Paṇḍita? This is disobedience of authority indeed! If my conjecture be not at fault, I must this very night exterminate these new Vaiṣṇavas. What impudence! It seems they are coming to me! Go forth well-armed, arrest all those whom you can get hold of, and bring them here, even Nimāi Paṇḍita himself."

A large number of soldiers hastened to carry out the orders of the governor. He expected every moment the sounds to cease, but they did not. Nay, they continued to increase, naturally as the procession neared his house. The governor had then no doubt whatever that it was a *kīrtana* party that was coming to interview him!

This assurance not only inflamed his rage, but also made him a little anxious. He could perceive that the procession was made up of a vast concourse of people. How was it that instead of avoiding him they were coming to visit him? How was it that his soldiers had not been able to arrest the progress of the procession? He apprehended that perhaps his men had been overpowered. He hastily sent forward re-inforcements; he sent forward almost everyone he had at his disposal to oppose the current, which he then felt to be vast. He expected the *kīrtana* to cease; he expected groans of the wounded and the arrested to take the place of the hymns of the processionists. But he was disappointed; the noise increased, nay, he could now hear them declare that they were thirsting for his blood. In short, he distinctly heard the cry of "*Mār Kāji*." In a few moments he found himself and his house surrounded by hundreds of thousands of men!

The few soldiers that he had at first sent out found the processionists at a great distance from their own quarters. They went to make enquiries

but found themselves swallowed up by the crowd. They, however, found something more, namely, that the crowd was advancing with the intention of punishing their master! Now a clean-shaven Hindu is easily distinguished from a Mussalman, who is almost always bearded, and the Kāji's men had therefore no way of disguising themselves, more especially as the blazing light of the torches had converted night into day. They were, however, not molested; indeed, their presence was scarcely perceived or noticed by the crowd.

When the armed soldiers came next, they too found themselves helplessly entangled. People joined the *kirtana* from all sides, the soldiers never expected resistance or any hostile forces to cross them. They, therefore, had come negligently attired and not in battle array, with the result that they were soon separated from one another, and thereby incapacitated from acting in concert. They too found themselves swallowed up by the crowd.

The re-inforcements found the infuriated Hindus too many for them, and prepared for any turn of events; so they fled, or rather, they tried to do so but there was no place where they could conceal themselves. They were engulfed by the crowd. They were thus seen one here, another there, says the *Caitanya-bhāgavata*, in the crowd, in a state of the utmost trepidation. but whether they were or not recognised as the men of the Kāji, for they had thrown away their arms, the crowd could do nothing without the order of the Lord, and no one meddled with them in any way.

When the Kāji found his house surrounded on all sides and heard the cries of "*Mār, mār,*" he, not knowing what to do, entered the inner apartments to protect the ladies, at the cost of his own life, if necessary. The crowd entered his gates and the more violent amongst them dragged down some of his out-houses and demolished everything that they could get hold of. "A few," says the *Caitanya-bhāgavata*, "plucked flowers from the garden, stuck them in their ears, and began to dance."

All these un-Vaiṣṇava-like proceedings were stopped as soon as the Lord appeared on the scene. The thoughtless crowds who formed the advance-guard had done all the mischief that was possible for them to do under the influence of their excitement, and under the belief that such proceedings would be pleasing to their Master; but when the Lord came up and saw their doings, he reproved them for their conduct and everyone was hushed into silence. The word flew from mouth to mouth that the Lord commanded silence and forbearance, and all these thousands of people submitted in an instant, cheerfully, without a murmur, forgetting all the injuries that they had sustained at the hands of the Kāji.

The Lord inquired where the Kāji was and it was soon ascertained that he had fled into the inner apartments to protect himself and his family. He then deputed some of the leading men well-known to the Kāji, to convey to

him a message to the following effect: that he, the Kāji, should come out at once, and that he had nothing to fear.

This friendly message at once assured the Kāji and he felt that he had actually nothing to fear. He could rely on the word of the men who had come to summon him. He saw, besides, that the people had ceased to show acts of hostility. He could also feel that, if the Lord had any hostile intentions, there was nothing to prevent him from attacking him where he had concealed himself, almost alone and unattended. So he came out, yet not altogether without suspicions of the intentions of his victors, though he did not show it. He came and stood before the Lord with bent head, as an inferior does before a superior.

The Lord, who had seated himself for a moment, rose on his arrival, and received him with the honour due to his position. The Lord himself then sat, and induced the Kāji to sit before him. Śaci's father Nīlāmbara and the Kāji had been friends, and they had formed an artificial relationship, as is the custom here in India, between themselves. Indeed, the Kāji called Nīlāmbar his uncle or *cācā*. This entitled the Lord to call him, the Kāji, *māmu* or maternal uncle. So the Lord addressed the Kāji thus: "How is it, *māmu*, that on my coming to your house, you, instead of giving me a welcome, tried to hide yourself?"

The Kāji thereupon at once saw that he had no reason to fear. Assured in this respect he replied in the same familiar manner: "You see, nephew, I had given you offence, and when you arrived, I saw that your people were bent upon revenge. So what could I do but endeavour to avoid their presence? Now, as it seems you have forgiven me, I have come out without hesitation to give you welcome."

To which the Lord replied: "I have to ask you but one question: kindly reply frankly. Why did you stop my *kīrtana* which is only a way of worshipping the deity? You may not like it, but why should you not permit others to worship the Lord in the way they think best, especially when there is nothing objectionable or immoral in it?"

Said the Kāji: "I fully agree with you. Then let me tell you the whole history. But I feel a difficulty in addressing you. To call you nephew I venture not, for it seems that you can scarcely be a creature of this world, and must have come from on high."

Let us remark parenthetically that the Kāji had never seen the Lord in his glory. He had heard of him and also that he was regarded as not only a prophet, but something more, even; as the incarnation of God Almighty himself. Of course, being a Mahomedan he could have had no faith in the claim of divinity put forward on behalf of Nīmāi Paṇḍita, and he had therefore felt no scruple in oppressing the followers of the Lord. It, however, came to his notice that some miracles had been worked by the Lord. A few Mus-

salmans had been converted by him, though there was nothing very strange in that. Some Mussalmans, however, presented a curious psychological phenomenon. They had gone to some followers of the Lord as enemies, and had come back bewitched, inasmuch as they found that they could not help uttering the name of Kṛṣṇa. When brought before the Kāji they said that they could not help it and that their tongues had gone beyond their control.¹⁰ These men, in every instance, eventually became followers of the Lord. The fact is that with those, as with many others, conversion commenced with the body or some member of the body, and subsequently took possession of the heart.

As a result of this, the Kāji had come to regard Nimāi Paṇḍita with a certain degree of awe, and it was due to this that the *bhaktas* had been latterly treated by him with some consideration. He had come to feel that there was something in Nimāi which deserved respect and that his most prudent course would be to leave him alone, as far as was consistent with his own dignity, and the maintenance of discipline and contentment among his numerous followers.

The Kāji was just then moved by another consideration. He was a worshipper of brute force. He found the Paṇḍita, whom he had formerly regarded simply as a poor savant incapable of offering any resistance, to be a man of authority, a man of greater authority than himself, nay, a man who had hundreds of thousands at his call prepared to sacrifice themselves at his bidding. There are minds which are subdued more by brute force than appeals to sentiment, and the Kāji's very nature was one of those. He confessed himself defeated, and was, therefore, inspired with profound respect for the Paṇḍita.¹¹ Indeed, there was no longer any doubt in the mind of the Kāji that the Paṇḍita was really a prophet of great powers.

While speaking he had raised his head to look full into the face of the Lord, and the sight altogether bewildered him. He was fascinated in a moment;

¹⁰The phenomenon of people repeating the name of Kṛṣṇa or Hari in spite of themselves, simply because they had seen the Lord or come in contact with him, was a very common sight with his contemporaries. Indeed, so familiar they were with the spectacle that they expressed no surprise when recording them. The Kāji, a superstitious man, was very much impressed by the spectacle and subsequently he came to regard the Lord with dread as one who had the power of doing him mischief.

¹¹What the Lord usually did was first to subjugate a powerful man on his own ground before planting the seed of *bhakti* in his heart. For, as said before, to attain to *bhakti* one must first be in a negative state of mind and purged of all vanity and arrogance. Otherwise the seed will not germinate. Thus he first humbled the spirit of Keśava, the savant conqueror, before he blessed him. It was in this manner Jagāi and Mādhāi were first humiliated. The Kāji prided himself on his brute force; he was shown that even in that the Lord was his superior. The great Sārvabhauma, the Nyāya savant, was first defeated in learning before he was accepted, and the great savant and *sannyāsi* Prakāśānanda, then the greatest Vedantist living, was defeated in the Vedas, before he was blessed. The explanation is, as said above, that so long as there is vanity in the heart, the seed of *bhakti* will not germinate there.

he felt that he was being overpowered and that the being before him was irrevocably taking possession of his heart, and that in spite of himself.

The Kāji continued, “I cannot venture to address you as my nephew; let me, therefore, call you Gaurahari,¹² the name by which you are called by your people. Well, Gaurhari, it is not all my fault that I objected to the *kīrtana*. The leading Hindus of the town came to me to complain against you and your method of worship, and my followers threatened me with the displeasure of the king of Gauḍa, if I allowed you to go on drawing such vast crowds of people towards you. They actually made a conspiracy to report me to his majesty. And it was then that I was led to take action. Of course, I began very energetically, but I could see that your *kīrtana* had the sanction of God Almighty and therefore subsequently I desisted.” He now described how the name of Kṛṣṇa had stuck to the tongues of some of his followers, and eventually admitted that he had no longer any doubt in his mind about the divine character of the *kīrtana*.

The Kāji stopped, for he found it difficult to proceed. While he was speaking, there was a commotion going on in his heart which made him forgetful, incoherent, and restless. He could, however, no longer keep his counsel to himself; so he betrayed what was passing in his mind. Said he abruptly, “There is only one God and the Hindus call him Nārāyaṇa. People say that you are he. Is it so? Don’t deceive me.”

The Lord smiled the sweetest of smiles, and those who saw it felt a thrill of pleasure pass through their frames. To the question of the Kāji he replied nothing, but he caught one of his fingers, and said: “You have uttered the holy names of Hari, Kṛṣṇa, and Nārāyaṇa, so your sins have been forgiven.”

The effect of this pronouncement was instantaneous. The Kāji was violently affected, and tears gushed from his eyes in such torrents as to wet his beard. “Yes, you are the Lord,” said he, and he fell at the feet of the Lord. “Forgive me and accept me. I am a great sinner and I rely upon your mercy alone for salvation.”

The Lord restrained him. He said: “The holy names of God have saved you. Now, I have a request to make to you; cease meddling with the *kṛṣṇa-kīrtana*.” The request, however, was uttered now in a tone of command.

The Kāji replied with warmth: “Stop *kīrtana* again? No, I shall never do so. But I will do this: I will leave a legacy to my heirs for the protection of *kīrtana*. My curse be upon their heads if they ever meddle with it.”

No sooner had the Kāji said this than the Lord rose and gave a sign for the *kīrtana* to commence. The Kāji wished to follow the retreating procession, but the Lord implored him to desist.

¹²The Lord was called Gaurahari because his colour was “*gaura*” or fair. Now Hari is a name of Kṛṣṇa who is of dark complexion. But the Lord was fair or “*gaura*,” so they called him “Gaurhari” or the “Fair Kṛṣṇa.”

From thence the Lord went to the house of Śrīdhara and there drank a glass of water which he found in an iron pot. This condescension on his part filled Śrīdhara with so much gratitude that he swooned away!

In the morning the town presented a novel appearance. The vast crowd had trampled everything under foot, so that the streets now seemed as if they had been swept and made clean by thousands of sweepers. The streets were found strewn with shells, flowers and *khai*, which had all been thrown before the dancing Lord.

Thus the enemies of the Lord were conquered. His bitterest enemies came to acknowledge him as the greatest *bhakta* that ever appeared on the face of the earth, others accepted him as the Lord himself without reserve.

The Kāji's grave exists at Nadia. It is held in great veneration by the Vaiṣṇavas. Whoever goes on pilgrimage to Nadia takes care to visit the grave and salute it.

In the case of the Kāji, brutal ferocity succumbed to spiritual beauty, the flower garland vanquished the sword! And in what a miraculous manner was he brought under subjugation! The Lord went to him in force as his antagonist to his house, humiliated him before the world, and yet completely won his heart! What but divine power could achieve such a tremendous result?

Chapter Eighteen: Śrīvāsa's Aṅgana (Courtyard)

It was at Śrīvāsa's that the Lord first revealed himself. It was there that the first *kīrtana* party was formed. It was there that the *kīrtana* was usually held, and it was there that the Lord spent most of his time when away from his own house. It was at Śrīvāsa's house that *Caitanya-bhāgavata*, the famous book on the *līlā* of the Lord, was written by Śrīvāsa's grandson, Vṛndāvana Dāsa.¹ In this chapter I purpose to give my readers an idea of the absolute faith in the Lord, with which his devotees were inspired.

It is evening. The *bhaktas* are coming one by one to join the *kīrtana* at Śrīvāsa's. They are all in a hurry, for they know that the door will be closed as soon as the lamps are lighted, and that none will be admitted when the doors have been shut. The *bhaktas* come, and the entrance door is firmly barred, and Gaṅgādāsa stands there on guard.

The ladies sit in the verandah by themselves, while the members of the *kīrtana*-party sing and dance in the courtyard in praise of the Lord.² On that

¹ According to Radhagovinda Nath Vṛndāvanadāsa was the son of Nārāyaṇi who was Śrīvāsa's niece. Thus, he was not exactly his grandson. When Śrī Caitanya was participating in *kīrtana* at Śrīvāsa's house, she was only four years old (Vṛndāvanadāsa, *Caitanya-bhāgavata*, 2.2.170). See Radhagovinda Nath, *Śrī Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛter Pariśiṣṭa*, 405-408. (Kalikātā: Sādhana Prakāśanī, 4th edn. n.d.) [ed.]

² The advent of the Lord created a revolution in the land; social, moral, intellectual, and spiritual. Under the influence of the religion of Śrī Gaurāṅga, Hindu women acquired a status which they did not enjoy before or had lost at the advent of the Mussalmans. Some of these Hindu women, under the influence of this revolution, became goswamis or entitled to initiate others, a position which they had never before enjoyed. Indeed, female education, which had been almost put to a stop, began to be encouraged by the Vaiṣṇavas, the followers of the Lord. Bengali literature also got its first impetus from this religious revival. Besides, the caste-rules were relaxed under its influence. All the castes which had been kept under absolute control by the *brāhmaṇas*, obtained their freedom by this religion of *prema* and *bhakti*. When Subuddhi Rāya, the ex-king of Gauḍa, had been deposed from his throne by the Mussalmans and made to drink water polluted by the touch of a Mussalman, the *paṇḍitas* provided for him a fearful penance. It was laid down that to wipe out his sin, he should die by swallowing clarified butter scalding hot! Subuddhi, unwilling to die in this manner, saw the Lord Gaurāṅga and sought his

evening the verandah was, however, empty, for the ladies of the neighbourhood, who entered Śrīvāsa's house by the back-door and came to it through the inner apartment, had come to know of a certain fact which led them to keep away from the *kīrtana*. The *bhaktas* were dancing in great joy, when a female servant silently entered into their midst and made a sign to Śrīvāsa to follow her. Śrīvāsa thereupon left the *kīrtana* and followed the female servant to his inner apartment.

Śrīvāsa's only son was ill. The disease, which is supposed to have been cholera, had suddenly taken a serious turn. But the Lord and the *bhaktas* had come and Śrīvāsa must join them. Śrīvāsa therefore left his boy to the care of his attendants while he joined the *kīrtana* party. Of course, he had come to suspect that the disease, which was gaining upon his son, was serious. But he was then, like the other *bhaktas*, in a peculiar state of mind. They had acquired the conviction that a loving God was always taking care of them. Nay, they had come to believe as strongly as they did in their own existence, that the same God was then with them in the person of Śrī Gaurāṅga. They had, therefore, voted many things to be illusionary which ordinary people considered most real and important. Secure of the companionship of the Lord of the universe for ever and ever in Goloka, they felt that there was scarcely anything in this world which could give them pain or anxiety. Śrīvāsa felt that his son was getting worse, but what could he do?

He had put him under medical treatment, and when the Lord and the *kīrtana*-party came, he joined them, leaving his son in the charge of his mother, aunts and uncles, and in the bosom of the Lord God himself.

The ladies of the neighbourhood, who had come to see the *kīrtana*, finding the inmates of the house so seriously embarrassed, returned home, without joining the *kīrtana* party. The *kīrtana* had commenced, and the *bhaktas* were dancing in a state of ecstasy when Śrīvāsa was called in. He hastened and saw that the soul of his boy was about to quit the body!

Śrīvāsa was greeted with a suppressed outburst of agony by his wife and others. He saw the situation at once; he saw that his only son was dying in his house, while the Lord was in another apartment dancing. He formed his resolution at once, and addressed the members of his family, especially his wife. He said: "Why do you weep? Why do you weep for my son, being about to pay the debt which every one of us must pay? Let us congratulate ourselves on his good fortune. Where is there a mortal so fortunate as he? That being, whose name saves the worst of sinners, is dancing in my house just at the moment that my boy's spirit is quitting the flesh. The greatest of saints might envy his good luck. Don't be fools, therefore, crying when you ought to rejoice."

advice. The Lord advised him to take the protection of the lotus feet of Hari. The practice of *sati* was likewise discouraged by the Vaiṣṇavas.

Śrīvāsa stopped, for his feelings were too strained to allow him to proceed further. He continued after a while: "Yet I see some of you are women, and human creatures are weak. At a moment like this, it is but natural that you should shed some tears over the departing dear one. But wait a few moments, please. If you go on weeping, the matter will be out, and eventually disturb the ecstatic dance of the Lord. The *kīrtana* will be soon over, and then you will have ample opportunities of giving vent to your feelings. But if you now make a noise over it, and my Lord is disturbed in his dance, I tell you, I shall throw myself into the Ganges and put an end to my life."

The ladies and his brothers submitted, and they all sat silent around the body, which by this time was lifeless, while Śrīvāsa hastened out. There he joined the *kīrtana* party, and, as if nothing had happened, with lifted arms, began to dance with the others, crying "Haribala."

The matter, however, could not be kept a secret for any length of time. It came to the notice of the *kīrtana* party. As soon as one follower heard of it, the current of his joy received a check, and he stood still to discover what Śrīvāsa was doing. There he saw Śrīvāsa before him dancing with uplifted hands! But has Śrīvāsa heard the news? He makes enquiries secretly and comes to know that Śrīvāsa has heard of it, and that he has enjoined on his family to promise that the matter should be kept a secret, lest the information should taint the pure flow of ecstasy which the Lord was then enjoying. With this information in his possession, he again gazes at Śrīvāsa to read if possible his heart. And what does he see? He fails to find any trace of sorrow in his face! It seems that Śrīvāsa is enjoying the usual ecstasy like the others, and that his bereavement has not touched him in the least.

Another heard the news and he too stopped to see how the blow had affected Śrīvāsa. They all gazed at the lord, and saw that he was dancing with his accustomed vigour, his golden form dispensing glory and gladness all around him. They gazed at the Lord and they gazed at Śrīvāsa. They were overpowered by divers feelings: Śrīvāsa then looked less like a man than a God. "And is it meet," thought some, "that the Lord should afflict such a *bhakta* as Śrīvāsa, while dancing with him in his house?" And they thought again, "Why, what is the harm? Śrīvāsa has been afflicted, it is quite true; but as a matter of fact, he does not feel his affliction. Lo! Is he not dancing? Why then should we say that the bereavement of Śrīvāsa was a punishment at all?"

The *bhaktas*, however, stopped one by one, and the sound of the *kīrtana* ceased. When all had become still, the Lord resumed his normal state, seeming as if he had just awakened from a dream, while he gazed appealingly at his *bhaktas*. He, however, got no response. He then gave vent to his feeling in these words: "How is it that I do not feel any joy to-day? How is it that I feel so ill at ease?" The *bhaktas* gave no reply. He again asked: "How is it

that my heart is weeping? Can it be possible that any danger has overtaken you?” And he looked at Śrīvāsa for an explanation.

Śrīvāsa said, “You, my Lord, the life of my life, are here, transforming into gold the dust of my courtyard by the touch of your lotus-feet. Any danger to me is simply impossible.”

Advaita, however, volunteered the information. He said: “Alas! It is too true, my Lord. A great misfortune has overtaken the *paṇḍita*. His son is dead.”

Said Gaurāṅga: “His son dead? When?” Advaita replied: “He died at about nine in the evening, that is, some seven or eight hours ago.”

The Lord then looked at Śrīvāsa and subjected his face to a moment’s rigid inspection. The examination was satisfactory. He said, “Śrīvāsa! Thou hast to-day won over Śrī Kṛṣṇa; it is such devotion alone which can purchase Śrī Kṛṣṇa.” And then he burst into tears. He said—his voice broken by emotion—“It breaks my heart to think of parting company with such noble souls and devoted *bhaktas*.”

It was then Śrīvāsa wept, not because of his bereavement, but for quite a different cause. Said he: “My Lord, I could suffer ten thousand such bereavements rather than see tears in your eyes. It was lest the incident should give any pain to you that I kept it secret. Be consoled, my Lord, the matter does not affect me. Why should it? Are you not before me? Is not my son the luckiest of beings, having left his body while in the same house with you? I feel as assured of your kindly feeling towards me, because of this incident of my son dying while you were dancing in my courtyard, as I can hardly express the extent of my overpowering joy.”

Said the Lord: “I agree with you. A servant of Śrī Kṛṣṇa has no sorrow, he cannot possibly have any sorrow. Besides, let me remind you of one thing. Neither you nor I have come here to enjoy. It is misery all around us. We live to remove the misery of others as far as that is possible. Surely we have no time to think of our own. Śrīvāsa, you have set an example by which men will profit in future ages. You have been overtaken by the greatest of misfortunes, the death of an only son. The only effect that it has upon you is that it has brought you nearer to Śrī Kṛṣṇa and made you a happier man than before. Does not this prove that a servant of Śrī Kṛṣṇa has no misery? Besides, your example will prove to mankind what a servant of the Lord is capable of doing. Alas! I must, however, speak some words of consolation to the mother of the child.” So saying, the Lord desired that the dead child should be brought before him.

The body was brought from the inner apartments to the courtyard where the *kīrtana* was being held. The ladies and other relatives of the child followed the dead body, weeping in a subdued tone. “Put him here,” said the Lord, “and let me look at him.” And the body of the dead child was placed

before the Lord, while others surrounded it.

The Lord then addressed the dead child, and commanded him to speak. No sooner had he done so than the soul of the boy, which had quitted the body, again entered it. The boy then spoke and said: "I am quitting this body for a better existence." And the boy addressing the Lord said: "May my soul cling to thy lotus feet." Saying this, the soul again quitted the body.

Everyone was profoundly surprised at what they witnessed. The father and mother of the boy wept for joy; they had no longer any pangs for their bereavement. People are afraid of death, and people mourn over their dear departed ones, because they are not sure of an after-existence and a reunion. To those for whom death is a new life and not annihilation, a reunion and not an eternal separation, it has no terrors.

The Lord then addressed the mother and the father of the boy, that is to say, Mālinī and Śrīvāsa. He said: "Rest assured that I and Śrīpāda Nityānanda will take the place of your departed son. Then Śrīvāsa, his brothers and all the other members of the family began to express their obligations to the Lord. They said: "We are thine for ever and ever, in sorrow and in happiness."

The dead body of the child was then removed for the purpose of cremation. Thus ended this *līlā* of the Lord, which had one great saddening effect upon the minds of the *bhaktas*. What did the Lord mean when he said that it broke his heart to part with such company, meaning his *bhaktas*? Has he then any intention of leaving them, thought they? "If he leaves us we shall throw ourselves into the Ganges," they all resolved in their minds.

We cannot afford to increase the bulk of the book, so we have to stop here, though we have only begun our work. If permitted, it shall be my humble effort to continue and let my fellow-beings know the rest of the sweet *līlā* of the Lord.

The Lord had so long confined himself to the domain of *bhakti* which he taught by precept and example to mankind.

The *prema* he taught afterwards. No one will thoroughly understand what *bhakti* is who has not gone through the *prema-līlā* of the Lord. I have tried to explain *bhakti* by calling it "loyalty to God," and *prema* by "love." The Christian prayer is a good specimen of communion with God by *bhakti*. The better and higher method, communion with God by *prema*, is no doubt noticed in the Bible. But Śrī Gaurāṅga developed it in a manner as was never done before.

A few weeks or so after the conversion of the Kāji, the Lord entered the domain of *prema* and began to show, by practice, how God should be loved. He taught little by precept, but most by example. The love he displayed for God is unattainable by man, and it showed that he was either God himself or Rādhā. His *bhaktas* made him their model and thus learnt how to love God. A few months after, he renounced society; and the day the Lord became a

sannyāsi, Bengal wept, and hundreds of thousands were moved to surrender themselves at his feet, unconditionally and for ever and ever. As a *sannyāsi* he is known as Śrī Kṛṣṇa Chaitanya.

May God bless all mankind, and may man remember the beloved partner of his soul.

Part II

Murāri Gupta's Kṛṣṇacaitanyacaritāmṛta

Introduction

One of the most interesting and unexpected aspects of Shishir Kumar Ghosh's presentation of the life and teachings of Śrī Caitanya in his *Lord Gaurāṅga* is connected with the sources from which he draws. Unlike most other accounts of the life of Caitanya he does not appear to have taken much from the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* of Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja (1518-1612 C.E.). Kṛṣṇadāsa's hagiography was begun some seventy years after the end of Caitanya's life in 1533 C.E. and became in many respects the "final word" on the tradition's understanding of the meaning and purpose of the saint's life. Though naturally based on the materials of many of the earlier hagiographies, it presents a theologically more refined and fixed picture of Gaurāṅga (golden-complexioned Caitanya) that also takes into account the reflections, insights, and speculations of the vast literature that sprang from Caitanya's followers under his inspiration over the seven decades following his death. As such, it came to overshadow the earlier hagiographies and some all but disappeared.³ The immediacy and adventure of Caitanya's capricious presence was replaced by a theologically remodeled, scoured, polished version of him and the random and puzzling events of his life were transformed into cosmic events, all carefully choreographed to be of the greatest possible salvific value for humankind. Caitanya the man vanishes into a cloud of theological luminosity and numinosity, no longer easily traceable on human radar.⁴ Most modern accounts of Caitanya's life and teachings, whether in Bengali or English or any other language, for that matter, rely almost exclusively on Kṛṣṇadāsa's work. Ghosh, however, took a different approach thankfully.

One of works that was almost lost is the Sanskrit poem called the *Kṛṣṇa-caitanya-caritāmṛta-mahākāvya* of Murāri Gupta (1471-1540?) which was the

³Not only this, because the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* of Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja contains Readers Digest-like summaries of the main works of the Gosvāmins of Vṛndāvana many members of the later tradition preferred it to the originals and the study of those original works also suffered.

⁴The most extreme version of this is without a doubt Nisikanta Sanyal's half-historical, half-phantasmagorical treatment of the life Caitanya, *Sree Krishna Chaitanya*. He out does even Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja in hyper-divinization and sectarian polemic.

earliest of the hagiographies of Caitanya.⁵ Murāri Gupta was approximately fifteen years older than Caitanya; he was one of his elder classmates in school and a neighbor as well. He was in a good position to be a direct witness to much of Caitanya's early life in Navadvīpa and an indirect witness to Caitanya's life in Purī. His work was the first hagiography of Caitanya written and was used by several of the later writers in their works on him, most notably Kavi Karṇapūra, Locana Dāsa, and Vṛndāvana Dāsa. B.B. Majumdar thinks that, in spite of the verse in the text giving its date of completion as 1435 Śaka (1513 C.E.), the work was composed after Caitanya's death at the request of some of Caitanya's close followers, probably Dāmodara Paṇḍita among others. Dāmodara Paṇḍita is Murāri's main interlocutor in the text. This would have occurred between the years of 1534 and 1542 which is when Kavi Karṇapūra completed his first hagiography of Caitanya which depends so heavily on Murāri's work.⁶

In addition to drawing on Murāri's work, Shishir Kumar Ghosh also draws on Kavi Karṇapūra's earlier work, the *Kṛṣṇa-caitanya-caritāmṛta-mahākāvya* which is also not a source many modern works on the life of Caitanya make use of. Ghosh also draws from Vṛndāvana Dāsa's *Caitanya-bhāgavata* and from Locana Dāsa's *Caitanya-maṅgala*, sources more commonly found in modern works on Caitanya. Frequently, he draws on some of the early Bengali songs written by great poets and singers who were contemporary followers of Caitanya. But he has not used Kṛṣṇadāsa's text much, at least not in this first volume (of his two-volume work) which focuses more on his early life. I have compared Ghosh's original and much longer Bengali work, called the *Amiya Nimāi Carita* ("The Story of Beautiful Nimāi") with his shorter English version and I can't think of a single place where it is referred to. It may be that in the second volume Ghosh will use Kṛṣṇadāsa's work more often, since the second half of Caitanya's life, his years in Purī as a renunciant, is covered in that work in more detail. Whatever the reason, the use of sources other than Kṛṣṇadāsa's work is refreshing and in many ways liberating. It brings us back into the living presence of a Caitanya, a real, albeit enigmatic person, a Caitanya as his friends and neighbors knew him before he was too overladen with the burden of mythology.

Because of Ghosh's role in publishing Murāri's work and in order to get a stronger sense of what that Caitanya was like, I have decided to present here a translation, along with the original text, of part of Murāri Gupta's

⁵The first modern edition of the text, in fact, was published by Shishir Kumar Ghosh himself in 1897 on the basis of two manuscripts, one from Dhaka, from the library of Madhusūdana Gosvāmī of Advaita's lineage, and the other from an undisclosed source in Brindaban. He had Śyāmalāla Gosvāmī, a great Caitanyite scholar and publisher at the end of the 19th century, edit the text. The fact that Shishir Kumar Ghosh himself published the book explains in part, perhaps, why he makes such valuable use of it.

⁶Majumdar, *Śrī Caitanyacariter Upādān*, 81.

work which is also sometimes referred to his *kaḍacā* or “notes.”⁷ There is no reason to refer to Murāri’s work like that. It is not a collection of disconnected observations or notes. It is a complete work modeled on classical Sanskrit *mahākāvya*s or “great poems” and despite its critics and the poor condition the manuscripts seem to have survived in, it is not without its poetic merit and grace. Murāri was not as great a poet as a Kavi Karṇapūra or a Rūpa Gosvāmin, but very few are. He was a good poet with considerable skill with and control over the Sanskrit language. His work probably fell out of use and favor because so many of his ideas and descriptions were borrowed and incorporated into much more accessible works like those of Kavi Karṇapūra’s, Vṛndāvana Dāsa’s, and Locana Dāsa’s poems. The latter two works have the added advantage of being in Bengali which was much more accessible to the less educated members of the Caitanya tradition. It has survived, however, and though the manuscripts are quite corrupt, it has been reconstructed as best we are able.

Murāri Gupta was, like many of the early followers of Caitanya, a Vaidya or physician by caste and thus not a *brāhmaṇa*. One can imagine that his study of Sanskrit was mostly for the purpose of accessing the medical texts written in Sanskrit. Nevertheless, he seems to have had a good grounding in grammar and some of the other topics commonly studied in the schools and academies in the 15th and 16th centuries in Bengal: logic, literary criticism, literature, Purāṇic studies, and if not Vedānta at least works on the quest for liberation (*adhyātman*).⁸ In fact there is a passage in Vṛndāvana Dāsa’s *Caitanya-bhāgavata* that gives us a peek into Murāri’s student life with Caitanya and suggests he was a brilliant scholar. Apparently it was the practice in Gaṅgādāsa’s school for students to discuss and debate the meanings of the texts with each other. Caitanya excelled at that and was often surrounded by many of the other students debating the meaning of the texts. There were other students, however, and Murāri was among them, who kept to themselves and studied by themselves. Caitanya was in the habit, according to Vṛndāvana Dāsa, of ridiculing them. This is where we pick up the scene:

The Master (Caitanya) said: “Who is a big shot here?
Let’s see him come and refute my theories.

⁷There are three editions of the text that I am aware of: the third edition of Shishir Kumar Ghosh’s version edited by Ghosh’s nephew Mrinal Kanti Ghosh with a Bengali translation by Haridāsa Dāsa Bābājī, the edition of Haridas Sastri of Kaliyadhaha, Brindaban, with a Hindi translation, and a recent edition by Dr. Vijan Goswami of Nabadwip with a Bengali translation. I have copies of all of them. These are the editions I consulted for this translation. See the bibliography for publication details of these works and other works I have used in this introduction.

⁸Vedānta, being the study of the final portions of the Veda, were, in the more conservative societies in India, considered the sole domain of *brāhmaṇas*. Members of other castes were not allowed to study it. Other texts, like the *Yoga-vāsiṣṭha*, though on the similar in subject were available to them. Even the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, since it was considered by some a commentary on the *Vedānta-sūtras*, was restricted in some communities.

Without knowing the effects of *sandhi*,⁹
 Some people study the texts themselves
 And enlighten themselves as to their meaning.
 Egotistic are such people;
 Unfortunately they are fools.
 Whoever studies with them
 Will not understand the texts.”
 Murārigupta heard this arrogant speech,
 Said nothing, and went about his business.
 Still the Master always challenged him.
 Seeing his servant (Murāri)
 The king of twice-born was very happy.
 The Master said: “Doctor (Vaidya),
 Why do you study here? Go collect
 Some plants and leaves and cure the sick.
 Grammar is the extreme limit of difficulty;
 The conditions of phlegm, bile, and indigestion
 Are not found in it. Think it over.
 What will you comprehend here?
 Go home! Go heal someone who’s sick!”
 Murāri is part of Rudra
 And he is very sharp of tongue;
 Still, without showing any anger
 He merely looked at Viśvambhara.
 Then he gave him a reply:
 “Why do you ask for a big shot, Ṭhākura?
 Challenge anybody, let’s see.
 Your boasting will be dashed.
 Aphorisms, elucidations,
 Almanacs, commentaries, all that you do,
 Have you asked me about something
 And I not given an answer?
 Without even asking me anything
 You say ‘what do you know?’
 You are a *brāhmaṇa*, Ṭhākura.
 What will I say?” The Master said:
 “Explain what we have read today.”
 Gupta gave his explanation;
 Master began to refute it.

⁹Sandhi rules are the rules about the euphonic changes letters undergo when combined with other letters. Without knowing the *sandhi* rules well one cannot even read a passage in Sanskrit and know where to break up the words in a sentence or compound. It is fundamental to reading Sanskrit. Therefore, it is usually taught first.

Gupta explained one meaning;
 Master explained another.
 Between master and servant,
 Neither could defeat the other.
 By the power of Master
 Gupta became the foremost scholar.
 Hearing Gupta's explanation,
 He became filled with joy.
 With satisfaction he placed
 His lotus hand on Gupta's body.
 Murāri's body became filled with joy.
 Murāri Gupta thought to himself:
 "This person is not at all
 An ordinary man. Does such
 Learning occur in ordinary men?
 And at his touch my body is
 Filled with the highest bliss.
 I feel no embarrassment
 If I study the texts with him.
 There is no one as bright as he
 In all of Navadvīpa."
 With great pleasure the best of Vaidyas said:
 "Listen, o Viśvambhara,
 I will study with you."
 After sporting with his servant
 In this way, the Lord went with everyone
 To bathe in the holy Ganges.
 After bathing in the Ganges,
 The Master returned to his home.
 In such a way did the Lord play
 In the joys of cultivating knowledge.¹⁰

¹⁰Vṛndāvana Dāsa, *Caitanya-bhāgavata*, 1.7.16-37:

prabhu bole "ithe kon baḍa jana|
āśiyā khaṇḍuka dekhi āmāra sthāpana|| 16
sandhi-kāryya nā jāniyā kona kona jana|
āpane cintayē pūthi prabodhe āpanā|| 17
ahaṅkāra kari loka bhāle mūrkhā haya|
yebā jāne tāra thāñi pūthi nā cintayā|| 18
śunayē murāri-gupta āṭopa-taṅkāra|
nā bolayē kichu kāryya kare āpanāra|| 19
tathāpi prabhu tāre cālena sadāya|
sebaka dekhīyā baḍa sukhi dvijarāya|| 20
prabhu bole "baidya tumi ihā kena paḍha|

Here we are possibly witnessing the moment in which Murāri Gupta “discovered” Caitanya, experienced something usual about him, and began the journey of friendship and admiration of Caitanya that culminated in this work. We also get the sense, if this description is based on first reliable accounts, that Murāri Gupta was a good scholar and knew his grammar well. That sense agrees with what we find in the text here, provided we make allowance for neglect the manuscripts of the work seem to have suffered. Moreover, we see Caitanya represented here as a rather obnoxious know-it-all, the sort of gifted student a teacher loves and hates to see. Murāri says it all when he calls Caitanya “arrogant” (*garva*) in this passage.

From certain indications in Murāri’s own work and in the works of Kavi Karnaṇpūra, he seems to have had an abiding interest in the *Yogavāsīṣṭha*, a massive Sanskrit text filled with stories illustrating the non-dualistic way to liberation and framed by a conversation between Rāma and the teacher Vasiṣṭha. He seems to have gotten in trouble with Caitanya because of this. In

latā pātā niñā giyā rogī kara daḍha|| 21
 vyākaraṇaśāstra ei viṣama abadhi|
 kapha-pitta-ajirna-vyavasthā nāhi ithi|| 22
 manemane cinti tumi ki bujhibe ihā|
 ghare yāha tumi rogī daḍha kara giyā|| 23
 rudra-aṁśa murāri parama-kharatara|
 tathāpi nahila krodha dekhi viśvambhara|| 24
 pratyuttara dila “kene baḍa ta ṭhākura|
 sabhārei cāla dekhi, garba hava cūra|| 25
 sūtra, vṛtti, pāji, ṭikā yata hena kara|
 āmā jijñāsiyā ki nā pāiyā uttara|| 26
 binā jijñāsiyā bola ‘ki jānis tui’
 ṭhākura brāhmaṇa tumi ki baliba mui||” 27
 prabhu bole “vyākhyā kara āji ye paḍhilā|”
 vyākhyā kare gupta, prabhu khaṇḍite lāgilā|| 28
 gupta bole eka artha, prabhu bole āra|
 prabhu-bhṛtye keho kāre nāre jinibāra|| 29
 prabhura prabhāve gupta parama-paṇḍita|
 murārira vyākhyā śuni hana haraṣita|| 30
 santoṣe dilena tāra aṅge padma-hasta|
 murārira deha haila ānanda samasta|| 31
 cintaṇe murāri gupta āpana hṛdaye|
 “prākṛta manuṣya kabhu e puruṣa nahe|| 32
 emana pāṇḍitya kibā manuṣyera haye|
 hastasparśe deha haila parānandamaṇe|| 33
 cintile ihāra sthāne kichu lāja nāñi|
 emata subuddhi sarva-navadvīpe nāñi||” 34
 santoṣita haiyā bolena vaidyavara|
 “cintiba tomāra sthāne śūna viśvambhara||” 35
 ṭhākura sevakē henamate kari raṅga|
 gaṅgāsnāna calilā laiṇā saba saṅga|| 36
 gaṅgāsnāna kariyā calilā prabhu ghare|
 eimata vidyārāse īśvara vihare|| 37

Kavi Karṇapūra's play, the *Moonrise of Śrī Caitanya* (*Śrī Caitanyacandrodaya-nāṭaka*), we hear Śrīvāsa describe how, before the birth of Caitanya, he was warned in a dream about his coming death and brought back to life after dying by a great soul (*mahāpuruṣa*). Caitanya admits to being that great soul. Immediately after that, we find the following conversation between Caitanya and Advaita:¹¹

Lord

As from contact with a touch-gem (*sparsāmaṇi*)
Iron turns into gold, so does
Your body become like another,
From the entry of Nārada-power.¹²

Advaita: This is so. Otherwise the dead would not live again. But, Lord, all of these, your companions, whose innate nature is profound feeling, they are that way, too. This is ascertained by the Lord, whose bliss never diminishes, through the teaching, "by worship of me a person attains another body."¹³ Truly this Śrīvāsa of yours is a the blessed abode of *bhakti* and possesses this greatness.

Lord: Advaita! This is true.

Advaita: Lord, these others of yours, too, headed by Murāri, Mukunda and the rest are givers of feelings of servitude and bestowers of pleasure to the eyes.

Lord: Advaita! In the hearts of these two (Murāri and Mukunda) there is a great misfortune.

(Then those two (Murāri and Mukunda) began to tremble in fear just as if lightning had just struck.)

Advaita: Lord, what is that?

Lord: The taste for *bhakti* has not been achieved in Murāri's mind. There is an obstinate interest in him in the jungle of reflection on the Self (*adhyātman*) which is bitter, wide spread, and as foul smelling as garlic, such that he, even now, spends moment after moment on the subject of the *Vāsiṣṭha*.

¹¹Kavi Karṇapūra, *Śrī Caitanya-candrodaya-nāṭaka*, ed. Puridāsa, 12-13. (Kalikātā: Haridāsa Śarma, 1954)

¹²

*śparśamaṇeḥ sparśavaśātkanakibhāvaṃ prayātamiva lauham|
tava tu tadeva śarīraṃ nāradaśaktipraveśato'nyadiva||*

¹³*madbhajanena janena śarīrāntaramiva labhyate*

Advaita: What is offensive about the yoga of the Self?

Lord: Why do you need to ask?

One who has *bhakti* for Lord Hari,
Who is the unsurpassed controller,
Plays about in an ocean of nectar.
What need for a ditch's water has he?¹⁴

In Murāri's own book, there is no mention of this event or of Caitanya's anger with him. There is, however, a verse that suggests Caitanya was critical of him for just such a reason, a fascination with impersonal knowledge of the Self:

Why do you write, o Vaidya
Songs about the Self?
If you wish to live, or
If you desire love for Hari
Then give those songs up
And write verses about Hari himself.¹⁵

The funniest episode, however, connected with Caitanya's displeasure at Murāri's interest in the non-dualistic pursuit of knowledge of the Self is recounted in Chapter One of Ghosh's book:

One day Murāri, while proceeding on his way, was discussing with some friends the philosophy of *Yogavāsīṣṭha*. He was speaking with some warmth, and gave emphasis to his ideas by shaking his head and waving his hand. Just at this moment, he heard a peal of laughter behind him. He looked back and saw that he was being followed by Nimāi and his companions. The former was imitating the student's voice and gestures, while his companions were being thrown into fits of laughter by his audacious mimicry. Murāri doubtless resented the impertinent conduct of Nimāi; but, being of a serious turn of mind, he said nothing, and immediately resumed the discussion. But as soon as he did so, Nimāi returned to his mimicry, and the result was the renewed merriment of the other boys! Murāri losing his patience, turned to his ridiculer and remarked: "How rude and unmannerly of Jagannātha's son!

¹⁴Bhāg. 6.12.22.

¹⁵Murāri Gupta, 2.14.22-23:

kathaṁ tvam kṛtavān vaidya gītamadhyātmataṭparam|
jīvite yadi vāñchāsti premni vā te hareḥ sprhā|
tadā gītaṁ parityajya kuru ślokaṁ hareḥ svayam||

What a perverted child!” Nimāi being offended by these observations, said, addressing Murāri, “I will teach you a lesson at your dinner time.” Murāri, of course, did not pay any regard to this threat. Indeed, he forgot all about it in a few minutes.

When Murāri sat down to eat his meals, he heard a child’s sweet voice calling him by name from outside; and in a moment afterwards, the charming little figure of Nimāi stood before him, looking down at his plate of rice. Murāri having just glanced at the intruder, unconcernedly resumed his meal. But Nimāi was there with an object in view. When the physician had almost finished it, the child in the execution of his threat uttered in the morning, performed a certain natural office upon the contents of the philosopher’s plate!

For a moment, Murāri was stunned with surprise and indignation. But Nimāi, after a short pause, aroused him from his stupor by addressing him in these unexpected terms: “Murari,” said he, “give up teaching your false and dangerous philosophy and learn to worship Śrī Hari with your whole heart and soul. Thus do I treat the plate of rice of him who pretends to believe that he is the self-same with God Almighty.” So saying, quick as a flash of lightning, he vanished!

This is also a story not found in Murāri’s work. Where then did it come from? Checking Ghosh’s the original Bengali work (*Amiya Nimāi Carita*) which is the source of *Lord Gaurāṅga*, I find that it comes from a song by Balarāma Dāsa who Ghosh hints several times is his own name, either a *nom de plume* or perhaps his initiation name. Here is a direct translation from that song:

When I was eating my noonday meal,
Someone called to me in a deep voice.
As soon as I heard it and asked who it was,
There was Nimāi standing in front of me.
I continued to eat there and he stood watching.
After that he pissed on to my plate.
Saying “chi chi,” I stood up, very angry.
At that time Nimāi looked at me and spoke,
Seeing the fire burning in his eyes I was afraid.
“Murāri, quit tossing about your hands and head.
Give up your knowledge and lecturing and worship Hari.
Anyone who does not distinguish
Between the living being and God
I piss on his plate.”

What a delightful tale! And still Murāri loved him!

Murāri Gupta's hagiography has four parts. I have only translated the first part, consisting of sixteen chapters, here. The events described in the first part end with Viśvambhara's journey to Gayā in order to perform the last rites for his father (although a brief summary of the rest of his life is given at the very end of Chapter 16). While there he met Īśvara Purī (again) who at that time became his *guru* and then Caitanya underwent a powerful religious experience when he visited the temple housing the footprints of Viṣṇu. This experience brought about the profound change in Viśvambhara's life that led him to sainthood and to inspiring the movement of *bhakti* for Kṛṣṇa known as Caitanya Vaiṣṇavism. That movement swept through Bengal and other parts of India in the 16th and 17th centuries and is still a powerful religious movement in India and around the world today. The second part of Murāri's text describes many of the ecstatic experiences and "manifestations" that Viśvambhara underwent during the year after his return to Navadvīpa from Gayā and before his decision to undertake renunciation (*sannyāsa*). Perhaps in later editions of this work that part will be added to the appendix, since it fits with the subject matter of this volume. Volume Two of Ghosh's work, which covers the rest of Caitanya's life, will have the part of Murāri Gupta's text that covers that part as well.

murāri baliyā dila ḍāka||
 svara śuni smaṇarila, viśvambhara ye balila,
 guptabejā camakitacita|
 henakāle gaurahari, ki kara ki kara bali,
 seikhāne haila upanita||
 tvarasta nā hao tumi, eikhāne āchi āmi,
 bhojana karaha vāṇī baila|
 madhyāhna bhojana belā, dhire dhire niyaḍe gelā,
 thāla bhari emata mutila||
 ki ki bali chichi kari, uṭhila se murāri,
 karatāli diyā bole gorā|
 kara śira nāḍiyā, bhaktiyoga chāḍiyā,
 tarjā bola ei abhipārā||

The passage is also found with slight variations in Locanadāsa, *Śrī Śrī Caitanya-maṅgala*, ed. Śrī Mṇṇalakānti Ghoṣa, 52. (Kalikātā: Sucārukānti Ghoṣa, 3rd ed. Baṅgābda 1354 [1948])

Onset of the Descent

(प्रथमसर्गः)

स जयति शुद्धविक्रमः कनकाभः कमलायतेक्षणः ।
 वरजानुविलम्बिसद्भुजो बहुधा भक्तिरसाभिनर्तकः ॥ १ ॥
 स जगन्नाथसुतो जगत्पतिर्जगदादिर्जगदार्तिहा विभुः ।
 कलिपापकलिभारहारको ऽजनि शच्यां निजभक्तिमुद्वहन ॥ २ ॥
 स नवद्वीपवतीषु भूमिषु द्विजवर्यैरभिनन्दितो हरिः ।
 निजपित्रोः सुखदो गृहे सुखं निवसन् वेदषडङ्गसंहिताम् ॥ ३ ॥
 निपपाठ गुरोगृहे वसन् परिचर्याभिरतः शुचिब्रतः ।
 स च विश्वम्भरसंज्ञको हरिर्युगधर्माचरणाय धर्मिणाम् ॥ ४ ॥
 हरिकीर्तनमादिशत्स्मरन् पुरुषार्थाय हरेरतिप्रियम् ।
 स गयासु पितृक्रियां चरन् हरिपादाङ्कितभूमिषु स्वयम् ॥ ५ ॥
 निजसंस्मृतिमात्रसम्पदः पुलकप्रेमजडो बभूव ह ।
 स तदा निजमेव मन्दिरं समगादशरीरया गिरा ॥ ६ ॥
 भक्तवर्गमुखवेष्टितः प्रभुः प्रेमपाकपरिपूर्णविग्रहः ।
 हरिकीर्तनसत्कथासुखं मुमुदे दानवर्सिहमर्दनः ॥ ७ ॥
 अथास्य कीर्तिं श्रवणामृतां सतामुदारकीर्तेः श्रुतिभिः पिपासुभिः ।
 विगाहितुं श्रीयुतसत्कथां शुभामुवाह हर्षाश्रुविलोललोचनः ॥ ८ ॥
 भक्तः श्रीवासनामा द्विजकुलकमलप्रोल्लसच्चित्रभानुः
 प्राहेदं श्रीमुरारि त्वमिह वद हरेर्श्रीचरित्रं नवीनम् ।
 तस्याज्ञामाकलय्य प्रकटकरपुटैस्तं नमस्कृत्य भूयः
 श्रीमच्चैतन्यमूर्तेः कलिकलुषहरां कीर्तिमाह स्वयम् सः ॥ ९ ॥
 अथ स चिन्तयामास वैद्यसूनुर्मुरारिकः ।
 कथं वक्ष्यामि बह्वर्थां चैतन्यस्य कथां शुभाम् ॥ १० ॥
 यद्वक्तुं नैव शक्नोति वाचस्पतिरपि स्वयम् ।
 तथापि वैष्णवादेशं कर्तुं युक्तं मतिर्मम ॥ ११ ॥

Glory to him whose prowess is pure, whose complexion is golden, whose large eyes are like lotus petals, and whose fine arms reach down to his knees, a dancer who creates the many flavors (*rasas*) of *bhakti*. (1)

He, Jagannātha's son, is lord and origin of the universe, destroyer of the afflictions of the universe, its sovereign, remover of the sins and burdens of the Age of Kali. He was born of Śacī, bringing with him *bhakti* for himself. (2)

He is Hari, welcomed by the finest of the twice-born in the land of the nine islands (Navadvīpa). Giving joy to his parents, he lived happily at home. He studied the Veda and its six ancillary subjects and was faithful in vow while living in the house of his teacher, engaged in menial service for him. He is Hari by the name of Viśvambhara ("support of the universe"), [come] to enact the *dharma*²⁰ of the age for the [benefit] of the pious. (3-4)

He taught the glorification (*kīrtana*) of Hari²¹ as the goal of human life, remembering how very dear to Hari praise-singing is. He (Viśvambhara) himself performed the funeral rites for his father in Gayā, the land imprinted with the footprints of Hari. (5)

[There,] exuberantly with the recollecting himself [as Kṛṣṇa] he became paralyzed with love and [covered with] goose bumps. He then returned to his own home, guided by a disembodied voice. (6)

Surrounded by the leading *bhaktas*, the Master, who embodied thoroughly ripened love and yet could vanquish the lion of the demonic, enjoyed the pleasure of holy stories and praising Hari. (7)

Now he [Murāri Gupta], whose eyes tremble with tears of joy, brought forth this auspicious, holy history containing the glory of the greatly famous one [Hari] to inundate the saintly who want to imbibe it like nectar through their thirsty ears. (8)

The *bhakta* named Śrīvāsa, a shining and wonderful sun enlivening the lotus-like community of twice-born,²² said this to Murāri: "Tell us now of the new doings of Hari." Receiving his request and offering respect repeatedly with folded hands, he [Murāri] himself recounted Śrī Caitanya's story, which removes the defilements of the Age of Kali.²³ (9)

Then Murāri, son of a Vaidya, wondered: "How will I present the auspicious story of Caitanya which has so many meanings, which even Vācaspati²⁴

²⁰*Dharma*, always difficult to translate, means here the religious practices recommended for the current age, the Age of Kali.

²¹This is the religious practice recommended for this age mentioned in the previous verse. *Kīrtana* means praising or singing in praise of someone, especially of a god or goddess. Here Hari or Viṣṇu or Kṛṣṇa is the one so praised.

²²The "twice-born" here means the *brāhmaṇa* or priestly community in India.

²³The age of quarrel and discord. The losing age.

²⁴Vācaspati means "Lord or Master of Speech," someone who has complete mastery over language.

himself is unable to recount? Still, my mind is intent on carrying out the request of a Vaiṣṇava. (10-11)

निमला भाति सततं कृष्णस्मरणसम्पदा ।
 वैष्णवाज्ञा हि फलदा भविष्यति न चान्यथा ॥ १२ ॥
 इत्युत्तवा वक्तुमारेभे भगवद्भक्तिबृंहिताम् ।
 कथां धर्मार्थकामाय मोक्षाय विष्णुभक्तये ॥ १३ ॥
 नमामि चैतन्यमजं पुरातनं
 चतुर्भुजं शङ्खगदाब्जचक्रिणम् ।
 श्रीवत्सलक्ष्माङ्कितवक्षसं हरिं
 सद्भालसंलग्नमणिं सुवाससम् ॥ १४ ॥
 वदामि किञ्चिद्भगवत्कथां सतां
 हर्षाय किञ्चित्सुखलनं यदा भवेत् ।
 तदात्र संशोधयितुं महत्तमाः
 प्रमाणमेवात्र परोपकारिणः ॥ १५ ॥
 नवद्वीप इतिख्याते क्षेत्रे परमवैष्णवे ।
 ब्राह्मणाः साधवः शान्ताः वैष्णवाः सत्कुलोद्भवाः ॥ १६ ॥
 महान्तः कर्मनिपुणाः सर्वे शास्त्रार्थपारगाः ।
 अन्ये च सन्ति बहुशो भिषक्शूद्रवणिग्जनाः ॥ १७ ॥
 स्वाचारनिरताः शुद्धाः सर्वे विद्योपजीविनः ।
 तत्र देवव्रताः सर्वे वैकुण्ठभवनोपमे ॥ १८ ॥
 श्रीवासो यत्र रेजे हरिपदकमलप्रोल्लसन्मत्तभृङ्गः
 प्रेमाद्रौत्तुङ्गबाहुः परमरसमदैर्गायतीशं सदोत्कः ।
 गोपीनाथो द्विजाग्र्यः श्रवणपथगते नाम्नि कृष्णस्य मत्तो
 ऽत्युच्चै रौति स्म भूयो लयतरलकरो नृत्यति स्मातिवेलम् ॥ १९ ॥
 बालोद्यद्भास्कराभो बुधजनकमलोद्बोधने दक्षमूर्तिः
 कारुण्याब्धिर्हिमांशोरिव जनहृदयोत्तापशान्त्येकमूर्तिः ।
 प्रेमध्यानातिदक्षो नटविधिकलासद्गुणाढ्यो महात्मा
 श्रीयुक्ताद्वैतवर्यः परमरसकलाचार्य ईशो विरेजे ॥ २० ॥
 यत्र सर्वगुणवानतिरेजे चन्द्रशेखरगुरुद्विजराजः ।
 कृष्णनामकृषिताङ्गरुहः स प्रस्खलन्नयनवारिभिरार्द्रः ॥ २१ ॥

“The order of a Vaiṣṇava, enriched by remembering Kṛṣṇa, is always flawless. It will certainly bring success.” (12)

Saying this, he began to recount the history, filled with *bhakti* for the Lord, for the sake of piety, wealth, sensual enjoyment, liberation, and *bhakti* for Viṣṇu.²⁵ (13)

I bow to Caitanya who is Hari, the unborn, ancient one, with four arms holding conch, club, lotus, and discus, his chest marked with the Śrīvatsa,²⁶ a jewel on his forehead, and finely dressed. (14)

I will relate a little of the history of the Lord for the pleasure of good people. When I stumble, may the great ones correct it as proof that they are indeed helpers of others. (15)

In the exalted Vaiṣṇava land known as Navadvīpa [Nine Islands] the *brāhmaṇas* are all holy, peaceful, devoted to Viṣṇu, born of good families, magnanimous, skilled in rites, and deeply learned in the meanings of scripture. And there are many others: doctors, *śūdras*, and merchants. All are engaged in their own customs, pure, and sustained by knowledge. All are devoted to the gods in that land, which is like Vaikuṇṭha. (16-18)

There Śrīvāsa lived, an intoxicated bee rejoicing at the lotus-like feet of Hari. Always enthusiastic, he sang of his Lord with the liqueurs of the highest *rasa*, his arms raised up in love. Gopīnātha, too, foremost of twice-born, intoxicated when Kṛṣṇa’s name reaches his ears, shouts loudly over and over and dances for hours clapping his hands to the rhythm. (19)

There blessed Śrī Advaita lived, master of the arts of the highest *rasa*, himself the Lord. He was like the newly rising sun, expert in awakening the lotus-like wise folk, an ocean of compassion, and he was like the cool-rayed moon, the only image of peace for the overheated hearts of the people, superior in his meditations of love, possessed of good qualities in the art and method of dance, a great soul. (20)

There lived the king of the twice-born, Guru Candraśekhara, possessor of all good traits, his lotus-like body drawn to the name of Kṛṣṇa, moistened by the flowing waters of his eyes. (21)

²⁵Here *bhakti* is added to the usual four goals of human life. The implication is that the four by themselves are insufficient.

²⁶A white mark or curl of hair on the chest of Viṣṇu.

यत्र नृत्यति मुनौ हरिदासे दासवत्सलतया जगदीशः ।
 खेचरैः सुरगणैः समहेशैर्लास्यमाशु परिपश्यति हृष्टः ॥ २२ ॥
 यत्र विष्णुपदसम्भवा सरिद्वेगवत्यतितरा करुणाद्रा ।
 स्पर्द्धया रविसुता सरयूणां या दधार कनकोज्ज्वलं हरिम् ॥ २३ ॥
 जगन्नाथस्तस्मिन् द्विजकुलपयोधीन्दुसदृशो
 ऽभवद्वेदाचार्यः सकलगुणयुक्तो गुरुसमः ।
 स कृष्णाङ्घ्रिध्यानप्रबलतरयोगेन मनसा
 विशुद्धः प्रेमाद्रौ नवशशिकलेवाशु ववृधे ॥ २४ ॥
 इति श्रीचैतन्यचरिते महाकाव्ये प्रथमप्रक्रमे अवतारानुक्रमः प्रथमसर्गः ।

There, when the sage Haridāsa dances, the Lord of the Universe, with the sky-travelling gods including Maheśa, watches the dance thrilled with affection for his servant. (22)

There is the rapidly running river [Gaṅgā], born from the feet of Vṣṇu, flowing with compassion, prouder than both the Sarayū and Yamunā because it held the golden-hued Hari. (23)

Jagannātha was born there from that ocean of twice-born families like the moon, he was a master of the Veda like Guru [Sage Bṛhaspati] and possessed of all good traits. Like the phases of the new moon, he grew quickly, purified by a mind possessing yoga, strengthened by meditation on the feet of Kṛṣṇa, and moistened by divine love. (24)

Thus ends the First Chapter of the First Movement in the poem called the Immortal Acts of Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya called "The Onset of the Descent."

The Lamentation of Nārada **(द्वितीयसर्गः)**

अथ तस्य गुरुश्चक्रे सर्वशास्त्रार्थवेदिनः ।
 पदवीमिति तत्त्वज्ञः श्रीमन्मिश्रपुरन्दरः ॥ १ ॥
 तमेकदा सत्कुलीनं पण्डितं धर्मिणाम्बरम् ।
 श्रीमन्नीलाम्बरो नाम चक्रवर्ती महामनाः ॥ २ ॥
 समाहूयाददत् कन्यां शचीं स कुलकृत्शदः ।
 तां प्राप्य सोऽपि ववृधे शचीमिव पुरन्दरः ॥ ३ ॥
 ततो गेहे निवसतस्तस्य धर्मो व्यवर्धत ।
 आतिथ्यैः शान्तिकैः शौचैर्नित्यकाम्यक्रियाफलैः ॥ ४ ॥
 तत्र कालेन कियता तस्याष्टौ कन्यकाः शुभाः ।
 बभूवुः क्रमशो दैवात्ताः पञ्चत्वं गताः शची ॥ ५ ॥
 वात्सल्यदुःखतप्तेन जगाम मनसा पतिम्²⁷ ।
 पुत्रार्थं शरणं श्रीमान् पितृयज्ञं चकार सः ॥ ६ ॥
 कालेन कियता लेभे पुत्रं सुरसुतोपमम् ।
 मुदमाप जगन्नाथो निर्धि प्राप्य यथाऽधनः ॥ ७ ॥
 नाम तस्य पिता चक्रे श्रीमतो विश्वरूपकः ।
 पठता तेन कालेन स्वल्पेनैव महात्मना ॥ ८ ॥
 वेदांश्च न्यायशास्त्रञ्च ज्ञातः सद्योग उत्तमः ।
 स सर्वज्ञः सुधीः शान्तः सर्वेषामुपकारकः ॥ ९ ॥
 हरेर्ध्यानपरो नित्यं विषये नाकरोन्मनः ।
 श्रीमद्भागवतरसास्वादमत्तो निरन्तरम् ॥ १० ॥
 तस्यानुजो जगद्योनिरजो जज्ञे स्वयं प्रभुः ।
 इन्द्रानुजो यथोपेन्द्रः कश्यपाददितेः सुतः ॥ ११ ॥
 हरिकीर्तनपरां कृत्वा च त्रिजगतीं स्वयम् ।
 उषित्वा क्षेत्रप्रवरे पुरुषोत्तमसंज्ञके ॥ १२ ॥
 कृत्वा भक्तिं हरौ शिक्षां कारयित्वा जनस्य सः ।
 श्रीवृन्दावनमाधुर्यमास्वाद्यास्वादयन् जनान् ॥ १३ ॥
 तारयित्वा जगत् कृत्स्नं वैकुण्ठस्थैः प्रसादितः ।
 जगाम निलयं हृष्टो निजमेव महर्द्धिमत् ॥ १४ ॥

²⁷ हरिम् — हरिदासदासः.

Thus his teacher gave him [Jagannātha Miśra], who knew the meaning of all the scriptures, the title: Tattvajña (Knower of Truth) Śrī Miśrapurandara (Foremost of the Miśra clan). (1)

Noble-minded Śrī Nīlāmbara Cakravartin, once called for him, a pious scholar from a good family, and, himself the product of a good family, gave him his daughter Śacī in marriage. Receiving her, he [Jagannātha Miśra], too, flourished like an Indra²⁸ with his Śacī. (2-3)

Thereafter, while living at home, his piety increased through [visits by] peaceful and pure guests and the results of daily (*nitya*) and desired (*rites*). (4)

Then after a while eight splendid daughters were born, but as fate would have it they all died one after another. Śacī, her mind scorched by the sadness of parental love, went to her husband,²⁹ her shelter, for a son. He performed a sacrificial rite for the forefathers. (5-6)

After a while Jagannātha obtained a son like a son of the gods, and he became joyful like a poor man finding a treasure. (7)

The father gave his son the name Śrī Viśvarūpa (“universal form”). Great minded, as a student he learned the Veda and texts of logic in a short time. Possessed of yoga, he was all-knowing, intelligent, peaceful, and a helper of all. (8-9)

Always in meditation on Hari, his mind didn’t dwell on objects of the senses. He was constantly intoxicated by the taste of the *rasa* of the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*. (10)

The Lord himself, the unborn source of the universe, was born as his younger brother just as Upendra, younger brother of Indra, son of Aditi, was born from Kaśyapa. (11)

After himself making the three worlds intent on glorifying Hari, residing in the foremost of holy places named Puruṣottama [Jagannath Puri], performing *bhakti* to Hari, instructing people about it, tasting the sweetness of Vṛndāvana and causing the others to taste it, too, and after delivering the whole world, he [Viśvarūpa’s younger brother, Viśvambhara/Śrī Caitanya], worshiped by the residents of Vaikuṇṭha, returned thrilled to his own enormously opulent abode. (12-14)

²⁸King of the gods.

²⁹Haridāsa Dāsa and Vijana Goswami have *hari* here in place of *pati* in their editions of this text. In other words, according to their reading, Śacī took shelter of Hari for a son, not her husband.

एतच्छ्रुत्वाद्भुतं प्राह ब्रह्मचारी जितेन्द्रियः ।
 श्रीचैतन्यकथामत्तः श्रीदामोदरपण्डितः ॥ १५ ॥
 कथयस्व कथां दिव्यामद्भुतां लोकपावनीम ।
 यां श्रुत्वा मुच्यते लोकः संसाराद्धोरकित्विषात ॥ १६ ॥
 श्रीकृष्णचरणाम्भोजे परमाः प्रेमसम्पदः ।
 जायन्ते सर्वलोकस्य तद्वदस्व हरेः कथाम् ॥ १७ ॥
 कस्य हेतोः पृथव्यां स जातः सर्वेश्वरो विभुः ।
 कृतं किमिह तेनैव जगतामीश्वरेण च ॥ १८ ॥
 वक्तुमर्हसि भद्राणि कर्माणि मङ्गलानि च ।
 जगतां तापशान्त्यर्थं प्रेमार्थं सुमहात्मनाम् ॥ १९ ॥
 तच्छ्रुत्वा वचनं तस्य पण्डितस्य महात्मनः ।
 उवाच वचनं प्रीतो मुरारिः श्रूयतामिति ॥ २० ॥
 साधु ते कथयिष्यामि यथाशक्त्या द्विजोत्तम ।
 संक्षेपाद्विस्तरान्नालं वक्तुं शक्नोति भार्गवः ॥ २१ ॥
 अथ नारदो धर्मात्मा वर्षे भारतसंज्ञके ।
 वैष्णवाग्र्यो महातेजाः पूर्णचन्द्रसमप्रभः ॥ २२ ॥
 कैलाशशिखराकारो मेखलावरभूषणः ।
 ऐणचर्मधरो विष्णोरंशः सर्वजनप्रियः ॥ २३ ॥
 सर्वेषामुपकाराय बभ्रामाकाशमण्डले ।
 महतीं रणयन् प्रीतो हरिनामप्रगायतीं ॥ २४ ॥
 द्रक्ष्यामि वैष्णवं कुत्र तत्र वत्स्यामि साम्प्रतम् ।
 इतिसञ्चिन्त्य मनसा ददर्श पृथ्वीमिमाम् ॥ २५ ॥

Hearing of this wonder, the celibate conqueror of his senses, Dāmodara Paṇḍita, intoxicated by the story of the Śrī Caitanya, said: (15)

“Tell the story, divine, wondrous, world-purifying, hearing which the world will be liberated from the horrible calamity of the cycle of rebirth and will gain the highest treasures of love at the lotus feet of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Tell that story of Hari. (16-17)

“For what reason was the Lord of all, the all-pervading one, born on earth and what did he, the controller of the universe, do while here? (18)

“You should speak of his benevolent and auspicious actions to quell the sufferings of the world and to arouse love [for him] among the great-souled.” (19)

Hearing that speech of the great-souled *paṇḍita*, Murāri was pleased and said “Listen then.” (20)

Well put! I will narrate for you as well as I can, O best of twice-born, but only in brief, for even Bhārgava³⁰ is not able to present this subject at length. (21)

Now in the land called Bhārata was the very soul of piety, Nārada, foremost of Vaiṣṇavas, great in might, radiant as the full moon. (22)

Built like the peak of Kailāśa, decorated with the best of belts, clothed in an antelope hide, he is a portion of Viṣṇu and is dear to everyone. (23)

In order to benefit all he wandered about in the sky, happily playing his lute which sings the names of Hari. (24)

“I will see where there is a Vaiṣṇava and there shall I now reside.” Thinking this in his mind he surveyed this earth. (25)

³⁰Śukra, the eloquent guru of the Asuras.

कलिना पापमित्रेण प्रथितमलपङ्किलाम ।
 गामेव ह्येच्छहस्तस्थां प्रचण्डकरशोषिताम् ॥ २६ ॥
 जनांश्च ददृशे तत्र पापव्याधिसमाकुलान् ।
 परापवादनिरतान् शठान् ह्रस्वायुषः कृशान् ॥ २७ ॥
 राज्ञश्च पापनिपुणान् शूद्रान् सयवनान् खलान् ।
 ह्येच्छान् विकर्मनिरतान् प्रजासर्वस्वहारकान् ॥ २८ ॥
 शास्त्रज्ञानपि साधूनां निन्दकानात्ममानिनः ।
 एतान् बहुविधान् दृष्ट्वा चिन्तयामास नारदः ॥ २९ ॥
 इति श्रीकृष्णचैतन्यचरिते महाकाव्ये प्रथमप्रक्रमे श्रीनारदानुतापो नाम द्वितीयः सर्गः

[He saw] the earth muddied with the impurities spread by the Age of Kali, the friend of sin, and in the hands of Mlecchas, desiccated by violent hands, and he saw the people there, troubled by the miseries of sin, engaged in reproaching others, deceitful, with short lives, emaciated; and [he saw] kings skilled in sin, Śūdras with Yavanas, villains, Mlecchas, engaged in evil works, stealers of the possessions of the citizens. (26-28)

Seeing many varieties of them, who though knowers of the scriptures were blasphemers of the saintly, and self-enamored, Nārada became worried. (29)

Thus ends the Second Chapter entitled “The Lamentation of Nārada” in the First Movement of the poem called the Acts of Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya.

Nārada's Request (तृतीयसर्गः)

कलेः प्रथमसन्ध्यायां निमग्नेयं वसुन्धरा ।
 सर्वेषां पापदग्धानां हरिनामरसायनः ॥ १ ॥
 तारको ऽयं भवत्येव वैष्णवद्वेषिणं विना ।
 आत्मसम्भाविता ये च ये च वैष्णवनिन्दकाः ॥ २ ॥
 ये कृष्णनाम्नि देहेषु निन्दयुर्मन्दबुद्धयः ।
 ते ऽन्त्या इति वक्ष्यन्ते तेषां निरय एव हि ॥ ३ ॥
 अत्र किं स्यादुपायो ऽयमिति निश्चित्य शुद्धधीः ।
 वैकुण्ठाख्यं परं धाम जगाम करुणानिधिः ॥ ४ ॥
 अथ त्रिवेदीपरिगीयमानं ददर्श वैकुण्ठमखण्डधिष्यम ।
 स्वतेजसा ध्वस्तरजःसमूहं दिशां दशामाप गुणात् परां मुनिः ॥ ५ ॥
 मधुव्रतानां निवहैर्हर्यशः प्रगीयमानं कमलावलीषु ।
 विराजितं रत्नतटाभिरामवापीभिरामुक्तलतासुगन्धिभिः ॥ ६ ॥
 माणिक्यगेहैर्वडभीभिरन्वितं गजेन्द्रमुक्तावलिभूषिताभिः ।
 सार्वर्त्तवैः शाखिभिरन्वितं खगैर्विकूजितं चन्द्रशिलापथाढ्यम ॥ ७ ॥
 तत्र श्रिया जुष्टमजं पुरातनं लसत्किरीटद्युतिरञ्जितालकम् ।
 विकाशिदिव्याब्जजितेक्षणं लसत्सुधाकराराधितसन्मुखोल्लसम् ॥ ८ ॥
 लसन्महाकुण्डलगण्डशोभितं सुकम्बुकण्ठं कनकोज्ज्वलांशुकम् ।
 कृष्णं चतुर्भिः परिघोपमैर्भुजैर्नीलाद्रिशृङ्गं सुरपादपैरिव ॥ ९ ॥
 विराजमानं कनकाङ्गदादिभिर्मुक्तावलीभिर्वरहेमसूत्रैः ।
 सकिङ्किणीजालनिबद्धचेलोल्लसन्नितम्बं वरपादपङ्कजम् ॥ १० ॥
 तदीयपादाब्जमनोज्ञगन्धमाघ्राय हर्षाश्रुतनूरुहोद्गमैः ।
 विसंज्ञ एवाशु पपात भुमौ स दण्डवत् कृष्णसमीपतो मुनिः ॥ ११ ॥
 ततः प्रसार्याशु करं कृतज्ञो रत्नाङ्गुरीभिन्नखप्रभं प्रभुः ।
 मुदा स्पृशन्मूर्द्धिन् मुनेर्मनोहरं बभाष ईषत्स्मितशोभिताननः ॥ १२ ॥

This bountiful earth is inundated in the first segment of the Age of Kali. The medicine of the names of Hari is for all those scorched by sin. It [the medicine of the names of Hari] is the savior of all except for those who hate Vaiṣṇavas. Those who adore themselves, who belittle Vaiṣṇavas, dullards who put down the forms and name of Kṛṣṇa, they will say “they [Kṛṣṇa’s forms and name] are impermanent.” For them, indeed, there is hell. (1-3)

The pure-minded sage [Nārada], an ocean of compassion, deciding what should be the strategy here, went to the supreme abode called Vaikuṇṭha. (4)

Then he saw Vaikuṇṭha, which is always being praised by knowers of the three Vedas.³¹ Its power is unlimited; its radiance destroys the gloom of the directions. The sage attained a state beyond the qualities (*guṇa*). (5)

[There] the fame of Hari is being sung [even] by groups of bees among rows of lotuses. The place is adorned by charming ponds with jewel-enlaid banks and the sweet fragrance of blossoming vines. (6)

It has houses made of gems with sloping roofs decorated with strings of Gaṇḍa pearls, trees of all the seasons, the calls of many birds, and paths made of moonstone. (7)

There [Nārada saw] the unborn, ancient one, together with Śrī, the curls of his hair colored by the glow of his shining crown, his eyes more beautiful than divine lotuses in bloom, the radiance of his face worshiped by the shining moon, his cheeks lighted by large sparkling earrings, his neck shaped like a conch shell, his clothes bright gold in color, Kṛṣṇa with four arms like thick beams, looking like the peak of a blue mountain surrounded by divine trees. (8-9)

[He is] radiant with gold armbands, strings of pearls, gold chains, his hips brightened by a garment bound by a network of small bells, and lovely lotus-like feet. (10)

Smelling the enchanting fragrance of his lotus-like feet, the sage, with tears of joy and hair standing on end, suddenly fell like a stick to the ground near Kṛṣṇa, unconscious. (11)

Then stretching out his hand, the shining of his nails divided by jeweled rings, the grateful Lord touched the sage on the head and spoke charmingly, his face lit up with a smile. (12)

³¹The Rk, Yajus, and Sāman.

स्वायम्भुवोत्तिष्ठ मुने महात्मन् यन्नो वदस्यद्य करोमि तत्ते ।
 ममैव कालो ऽयमुपागतः स्वयं युगेषु धर्माचरणाय धर्मिणां ॥ १३ ॥
 ततः समुत्थाप्य महर्षिसत्तमं महत्तमैकान्तपरायणो हरिः ।
 समादिदेशासनमाशु तस्मै तस्मिन्निविष्टो मुनिराज्ञया हरेः ॥ १४ ॥
 अथान्वपृच्छद्भगवान् मुने कथं संप्राप्तवान् मामिह किं तवेप्सितम् ।
 पूर्णस्य कार्यं करवाणि साधो परोपकाराय महद्विचेष्टितम् ॥ १५ ॥
 इत्थं सतोयाम्बुदतुल्यघोषं वचो ऽमृतं कृष्णदयामृताब्धेः ।
 उवाच पूर्णस्मितवीक्षया हरेर्नमामि लोकान्परिपाहि दुःखितान् ॥ १६ ॥
 क्षितिः क्षिणोत्यद्य समाकुला विभो जनस्य पापौघयुतस्य धारणात् ।
 जनाश्च सर्वे कलिकालदष्टाः पापे रतास्त्यक्तभवत्प्रसङ्गाः ॥ १७ ॥
 तान् पाहि नाथ त्वदृते न तेषामन्यो ऽस्ति पाता निरयात्तु सद्गतिः ।
 एवं विचार्य कुरु सर्वलोकनाथ स्वयं सद्गतिरीश नानयः ॥ १८ ॥
 इत्थं समाकर्ण्य मुनेर्वचो हरिर्विदन्नपि प्राह किमाचरिष्ये ।
 केनाप्युपायेन भवेद्धि शान्तिस्तद्ब्रूहि तं प्राह पुनः स्वभूसुतः ॥ १९ ॥
 स्वयं सुशीतः शतचन्द्रमा यथा भूदेववंशे ऽप्यवतीर्य सत्कुले ।
 वात्स्ये जगन्नाथसुतेति विश्रुतिं समाप्नुहि स्वं कुरु शं धरण्याः ॥ २० ॥
 रामादिरूपैर्भगवन् कृतं हि यत्पापात्मनां राक्षसदानवानाम् ।
 वधादिकं कर्म न चेह कार्यं मनो नराणां परिशोधयस्व ॥ २१ ॥
 तानासुरं भावमुपागतान् हि यदा हनिष्ये क्व तदास्ति लोकः ।
 एवं व्यवस्य स्वधियात्मनो यशः प्रख्याहि लोकाः सुखिनो भवन्तु ॥ २२ ॥
 तत्रैव रुद्रेण मुनिप्रवीराः कर्तुं हि साहाय्यमवातरिष्यन् ।
 तथेति तं प्राह हरिः सुरर्षिं सो ऽपि प्रणम्याशु जगाम हृष्टः ॥ २३ ॥
 इति श्रीकृष्णचैतन्यचरिते महाकाव्ये प्रथमप्रक्रमे नारदप्रश्नो नाम तृतीयः सर्गः ॥

“O Sage, son of the self-born one, o great-soul, get up! Whatever you ask now, I will do for you. My time has arrived among the ages to practice the *dharma* of the pious myself.” (13)

Then, raising up the foremost of great sages, Hari, who is keenly intent on the greatest ones, quickly offered him a seat. The sage was seated at Hari's request. (14)

Then, the Lord asked: “Sage, why have you come here to me? What do you desire? Let me accomplish what is to be done by the full;³² helping others is the work of the great.” (15)

[Hearing] this nectar-like speech from the ocean of the nectar of Kṛṣṇa's mercy, which resonated like a cloud filled with water, [the sage] said, wishing to see the Lord's full smile, “I offer obeisance to Hari! Please save the people who are now in distress. (16)

“The earth is degenerating at present, overwhelmed, O lord, by carrying the weight of people burdened with sin. Everyone is bitten by the Age of Kali, given to sin, and devoid of your association. (17)

“Save them, lord. Apart from you, they have no one to protect them from hell. Considering this, bring about best course, O lord of all the worlds. Lord, you are yourself none other than the best course.” (18)

Hearing thus the words of the sage, Hari, though knowing the answer, said: “What shall I do? By what means will there be peace? Tell me that.” The son of the self-born said again to him:

“You yourself, as cooling as the light of a hundred moons, will descend into a good family of *brāhmaṇas* and reside there. Become famous as the son of Jagannātha and create your own well-being for the earth. (20)

“O lord, this time don't do what the forms of Rāma and the rest did, that is, the killing of sinful, demonic beings. Instead purify the minds of human beings. (21)

“When you kill those who have become demonic in nature, where does that leave the world? Firmly determining so in your mind, make your own fame known and let the worlds become happy. (22)

“In this, the most excellent of sages will descend along with Rudra to give you help.” “So be it,” he [Kṛṣṇa] told him, the sage of the gods, and he [Nārada], bowing, quickly departed, feeling pleased. (23)

Thus ends the Third Chapter entitled “Nārada's Request” in the First Movement of the poem called the *Acts of Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya*.

³²A reference to the full or complete incarnation, Kṛṣṇa.

Recounting the Descents (चतुर्थसर्गः)

अथ श्रुत्वा तु तत्सर्वं श्रीदामोदरपण्डितः ।
 उवाच परमप्रीतः कथ्यतां नृहरेः कथाम् ॥ १ ॥
 के के तत्रावतारेषु स्ववतीर्णा महीतले ।
 अवताराश्च कतिधा तान्वदस्वानुपूर्वशः ॥ २ ॥
 इति श्रुत्वा द्विजाग्र्यस्य वचनं श्रीमुरारिकः ।
 उवाच परमप्रीत्या श्रूयतामिति सादरम् ॥ ३ ॥
 अथ ते कथयाम्यन्यत्स्वांशावतरणं हरेः ।
 शुद्धभक्ततया ख्यातान् भक्तानीश्वररूपिणः ॥ ४ ॥
 आदौ जातो द्विजश्रेष्ठः श्रीमाधवपुरी प्रभुः ।
 ईश्वरांशो द्विधा भूत्वा ऽद्वैताचार्यश्च सद्गुणः ॥ ५ ॥
 तयोः शिष्यो ऽभवद्देवश्चन्द्रांशुश्चन्द्रशेखरः ।
 स आचार्यरत्न इति ख्यातो भुवि महायशाः ॥ ६ ॥
 श्रीनारदांशजातो ऽसौ श्रीमच्छ्रीवासपन्दितः ।
 गन्धर्वांशो ऽभवद्वैद्यः श्रीमुकुन्दः सुगायनः ॥ ७ ॥
 श्रीमच्छ्रीहरिदासो ऽभून्मुनेरंशः शृणुस्व तत ।
 कथितं नागदष्टेन ब्राह्मणेन यथा पुरा ॥ ८ ॥
 आदौ मुनिवरः श्रीमान् रामो नाम महातपाः ।
 द्राविडे वैष्णवक्षेत्रे सो ऽवात्सीत् पुत्रवत्सलः ॥ ९ ॥
 तस्य पुत्रेण तुलसीं प्रक्षाल्य भाजने शुभे ।
 स्थापिता सा ऽपतद्भुमावप्रक्षाल्य पुनश्च ताम् ॥ १० ॥
 पित्रे ऽददात्पुनः सो ऽपि श्रीरामाख्यो महामुनिः ।
 ददौ भगवते तेन जातो ऽसौ यवने कुले ॥ ११ ॥
 स धर्मात्मा सुधीः शान्तः सर्वज्ञानविचक्षणः ।
 ब्रह्मांशो ऽपि ततः श्रीमान् भक्त एव सुनिश्चितः ॥ १२ ॥

Then, hearing all that, Dāmodara Paṇḍita was extremely pleased and said: “Tell the story of Nṛhari. (1)

“Who are they who came down to earth in the descents and how many descents are there? Describe them for me in proper order.” (2)

After hearing the request of the foremost of the twice-born, Śrī Murāri, with great pleasure and respect, said: “Please listen, then. (3)

“Now I will tell you of another descent of parts of Hari, famous as pure *bhaktas*, *bhaktas* having the form of the Lord. (4)

“First was born the best of the twice-born, the Master Śrī Mādhava Purī, and, a part of the Lord having split into two, Advaitācārya, possessing good qualities. (5)

“The deity possessing the light of the moon became their disciple, Candrasekhara. That great one is famous as Ācāryaratna on earth. (6)

“Born of a part of Śrī Nārada was Śrī Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita. A part of a *gandharva* became the Vaidya [doctor] Śrī Mukunda, an excellent singer. (7)

“Śrī Haridāsa was a part of the sage (Nārada). Listen to that story as it was told previously by a *brāhmaṇa* bitten by a snake.³³ (8)

“Once there was a great sage by the name of Śrī Rāma, great in austerity. He lived in a Vaiṣṇava holy place in the South and was fond of his son. (9)

“He had his son cleanse *tulasī* and place it on a shining plate. The *tulasī* fell on the ground and without washing it again he gave it to his father. And he in turn, the great sage known as Śrī Rāma, offered it to the Lord. Because of that he was born in the family of a foreigner (Yavana).³⁴ (10-11)

“He [Haridāsa] was a pious soul, intelligent, peaceful, learned in all branches of knowledge. Though a part of Brahmā he was a confirmed *bhakta* nevertheless. (12)

³³It is not certain what this refers to, but this is probably a reference to a story from one of the Purāṇas.

³⁴Yavana is an old word that used to refer to the Greeks, the Ionians, who were left behind by Alexander the Great after his aborted attempt to conquer India. Here it refers to the Muslims who were then living as the ruling class in Bengal.

अवधूतो महातेजा नित्यानन्दो महत्तमः ।
 बलदेवांशतो जातो महायोगी स्वयं प्रभुः ॥ १३ ॥
 न तस्य कुलशीलानि कर्माणि वक्तुमुत्सहे ।
 अपि वर्षशतेनापि बृहस्पतिरपि स्वयम् ॥ १४ ॥
 वक्तुं नेशे ऽपरे किंवा वयं हि क्षुद्रजन्तवः ।
 श्रीकृष्णद्वितीयश्चापि गौराङ्गप्राणवल्लभः ॥ १५ ॥
 अन्ये च शतधा जाता देवाश्च मुनिपुङ्गवाः ।
 पृथिव्यामंशभावेन तान्न सङ्ख्यातुमुत्सहे ॥ १६ ॥
 अथावतारो द्विविधः पुरुषस्य प्रकीर्तितः ।
 युगावतारः प्रथमः कार्यार्थे ऽपरसम्भवः ॥ १७ ॥
 युगावताराः कथ्यन्ते ये भवन्ति युगे युगे ।
 धर्मं संस्थापयन्ति ये ताञ् शृणुष्व यथाक्रमम् ॥ १८ ॥
 सत्ये युगे ध्यान एकः पुरुषस्यार्थसाधकः ।
 तदर्थे ऽवतरत् शुक्लश्चतुर्बाहुर्जटाधरः ॥ १९ ॥
 सहस्रचन्द्रसदृशः सदा ध्यानरतो मौनिः ।
 सर्वेषामेव जन्तूनां ध्यानाचार्यो बभूव ह ॥ २० ॥
 त्रेतायां यज्ञ एवैको धर्मः सर्वार्थसाधकः ।
 तत्र यज्ञः स्वयं जातः स्रक्स्तुवादिसमन्वितः ॥ २१ ॥
 याज्ञिकैर्ब्राह्मणैः सार्द्धं यज्ञभुक् स जनार्दनः ।
 यज्ञमेवाकरोज्जिष्णुर्जनान् सर्वानशिक्षयत् ॥ २२ ॥
 द्वापरे तु युगे पूजा पुरुषस्यार्थाय कल्पते ।
 इति ज्ञात्वा स्वयं विष्णुः पृथुरूपो बभूव ह ॥ २३ ॥
 पूजाञ्चकार धर्मात्मा लोकानाञ्चानुशासनम् ।
 कारयामास पूजायां सर्वेषामभवन्मनः ॥ २४ ॥

“The ascetic (*avadhūta*) of great power, Nityānanda, greatest of the great, was born from a part of Baladeva, a great yogī, the Lord himself. (13)

“I am unable to describe his family, character, or acts even in a hundred years. Even Bṛhaspati himself cannot describe them, not to speak of others. We are only insignificant creatures. And he is Kṛṣṇa’s second, dear to the heart of Gaurāṅga. (14-15)

“Others, gods and sages, were born by the hundreds on the earth by means of their parts. I am unable to count them. (16)

“Now, the descents of the supreme being are proclaimed to be of two kinds. The first is descent connected with ages and the other is an appearance for some specific purpose. (17)

“The descents of the ages are said to be those which occur in every age and which establish religious institutions. Hear about them according to their order. (18)

“In the Age of Satya [Truth],³⁵ meditation is the only means of achieving the goal of human life. For the purpose [of teaching] that, the white one, with four arms and matted hair, descended. (19)

“As bright as a thousand moons, always engaged in meditation, practicing silence, he was the exemplary teacher of meditation for all living creatures. (20)

“In the Age of Tretā [Three-dot die], the sacrificial rite is the one religious institution that brings about all objectives. Then, Yajña was himself born with garlands, sacrificial ladles, and the rest. (21)

“Along with the *brāhmaṇa*, performers of sacrificial rites, the enjoyer of sacrifice, Janārdana, performed only sacrifice—and the Victorious One taught it to all people. (22)

“But in the Age of Dvāpara [Two-dot die], ritual worship or *pūjā* is able to bring about the goal of human life. Knowing this, Viṣṇu took the form of Pṛthu. (23)

“The very self of religion performed worship and brought about the obedience of the people. Everyone’s minds became fixed in ritual worship. (24)

³⁵The four ages or *yugas* of Hindu chronology are named after the various throws of the dice in the Indian dice game. The winning or best throw has four dots and is called *kṛta* or complete or as here *satya*, truth. The other ages are named after the other throws in descending order: *tretā*, three-dots, *dvāpara*, two dots, and finally, the worst throw of all *kali*, one dot. Similarly, the ages start out great but become progressively worse and worse until one reaches the final age, Kali, the age in which we are believed to live, which is the worst. This ratio, 4-3-2-1, is also represented in the durations of each of the ages: Satya (4x432,000 = 1,728,000), Tretā (3x432,000 = 1,296,000), Dvāpara (2x432,000 = 864,000), and Kali (1x432,000 = 432,000). Altogether they add up to 4,320,000 years. We are about 5,000 years into the Kali Yuga.

कलौ तु कीर्तनं श्रेयो धर्मः सर्वोपकारकः ।
 सर्वशक्तिमयः साक्षात्परमानन्ददायकः ॥ २५ ॥
 इति निश्चित्य मनसा साधूनां सुखमावहन ।
 जातः स्वयं पृथिव्यान्तु श्रीचैतन्यो महाप्रभुः ॥ २६ ॥
 कीर्तनं कारयामास स्वयं चक्रे मुदान्वितः ।
 युगावतारा एते वै कार्यार्थे चापराज् शृणु ॥ २७ ॥
 मात्स्ये तु वेदोद्धरणं कौर्म मन्दारधारणं ।
 वाराहे धारणं भूमेर्नारसिंहे विदारणम् ॥ २८ ॥
 चक्रे दनुजशक्रस्य वामने भुवनश्रियं ।
 जिग्ये तु भार्गवः क्षौणीं जित्वा राज्ञः सुदुर्मदान् ॥ २९ ॥
 ददौ गां ब्राह्मणायैव विष्णुर्लोकैकतारणः ।
 श्रीरामे रावणं हत्वा यशसा पूरितं जगत ॥ ३० ॥
 श्रीमत्कृष्णावतारे तु भूमेर्भारवतारणं ।
 स्वयमेव हरिस्तत्र सर्वशक्तिसमन्वितः ॥ ३१ ॥
 बौद्धे तु मोहनं चक्रे वेदानां भगवान्परः ।
 म्लेच्छानां निधनञ्चैव कल्किरूपेण सो ऽकरोत् ॥ ३२ ॥
 एवंविधान्यनेकानि कर्माणि बहुरूपिणः ।
 कार्यावतारा नृहरेः कथिताः परमर्षिभिः ॥ ३३ ॥
 इति श्रीकृष्णचैतन्यचरिते महाकाव्ये प्रथमप्रक्रमे ऽवतारानुकरणं नाम चतुर्थः सर्गः ॥

“In the Age of Kali, the best religious practice, praising (*kirtana*), is the helper of all, the possessor of all powers, the direct bestower of the highest joy. (25)

“Ascertaining this in his mind, Śrī Caitanya, the Great Master, was born himself on earth bringing with him happiness for the good. (26)

“He encouraged praising in song and himself performed it with pleasure. These are the descents of the ages. Now hear of the others done for some particular reason. (27)

“In the Fish Descent the Veda was lifted up. In the Tortoise Descent, Mount Mandāra was supported. In the Boar Descent, the earth was held secure. In the Man-lion Descent, he split open [the chest of Hiraṇyakaśipu]. (28)

“In the Dwarf Descent, he made beautiful the world of the Danuja king. But as Bhārgava he conquered the earth defeating, the power-drunk kings. (29)

“Viṣṇu, the world’s only ferry, gave the earth to the *brāhmaṇas*. In the Rāma Descent, he killed Rāvaṇa, filling the world with his fame. (30)

“In the Kṛṣṇa Descent, however, Hari himself, joined with all his powers, removed the burden of the earth. (31)

“In the Buddha Descent, the supreme Lord of the Veda deluded [its abusers] and in his Kalki Descent he killed³⁶ the barbarians. (32)

“Such are the many works of the multi-formed one. Nṛhari’s descents for various purposes are described by the greatest sages.” (33)

Thus ends the Fourth Chapter, entitled “Recounting the Descents,” of the First Movement in the poem, the *Immortal Acts of Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya*.

³⁶This is in the future of this current cycle of ages. But since the cycle has occurred many times before and will occur many times after this cycle, the “killing” is put in the past tense.

Śrī Caitanya's Appearance

(पञ्चमसर्गः)

शृणुष्वावहितं ब्रह्मन् चैतन्यस्यावतारकम् ।
 नवीनं जगदीशस्य करुणावारिधेर्विभोः ॥ १ ॥
 गते देवर्षिवर्ये तु स्वाश्रमे भगवान् परः ।
 जगन्नाथस्य विप्रर्षेर्मनस्याविशदच्युतः ॥ २ ॥
 तेनाहितं महत्तेजो दधार समये सती ।
 एतस्मिन्नन्तरे साध्वी शची पतिपरायणा ॥ ३ ॥
 लेभे गर्भं हरेरंशं गङ्गेव शाम्भवं शुभा ।
 तस्यास्तेजो ऽतिववृधे शुक्लपक्षे यथा शशी ॥ ४ ॥
 तां दृष्ट्वा रूपसम्पन्नां तप्तचामीकरप्रभां ।
 श्रिया युक्तो जगन्नाथो मुमुदे हृष्टमानसः ॥ ५ ॥
 अथ तां तादृशीं दृष्ट्वा देवा ब्रह्मादयो ऽपरे ।
 गन्धर्वा अमरा ये च ये च सेन्द्रा नभोगताः ॥ ६ ॥
 कृताञ्जलिपुटा हर्षात्साश्रुकण्ठविलोचनाः ।
 तुष्टुवुर्मुदिताः सर्वे प्रणामानतकन्धराः ॥ ७ ॥
 नमामि त्वां सदागर्भामदितिं जननीं हरेः ।
 चन्द्रार्काग्निप्रभागर्भा सत्त्वगर्भा धृति क्षमां ॥ ८ ॥
 अद्वेषगर्भा संसिद्धिं वेदगर्भा स्वयं हरेः ।
 देवकीं रोहिणीञ्चैव यशोदां सर्वथाभवां ॥ ९ ॥
 तं वै विभर्षि गभे त्वं यो यज्ञं प्रथयिष्यति ।
 कीर्तनारख्यं महापुण्यं यद्यज्ञैर्नोपपद्यते ॥ १० ॥
 कीर्तनं नृहरेः श्रुत्वा निमिषार्धेन या भवेत् ।
 प्रीतिरस्मादृशां सा तु कोटियज्ञैर्भवेन्न हि ॥ ११ ॥
 अहो मह्यं पुरा दत्तममृतं हरिणा स्वयम् ।
 समुद्रमन्थनं कृत्वा ततः कोटिगुणाधिकम् ॥ १२ ॥
 रसं पश्याम एवात्र शृण्वन्तः श्रीहरेर्यशः ।
 मोक्षमप्यनृतं चेतो मन्यते कीर्तनाद्धरेः ॥ १३ ॥
 एवमुक्त्वा ततो देवाः सेन्द्रा जग्मुः प्रणम्य तां ।
 ब्रह्माणमग्रतः कृत्वा गायन्तः श्रीहरेर्यशः ॥ १४ ॥
 स्वां पुरीं श्रीपतेरंशो जातो भुव्यतिहर्षितः ।
 कलेर्भाग्यं प्रशंसन्तो नृत्यन्तः प्रेमविह्वलाः ॥ १५ ॥

Listen carefully, O *brāhmaṇa*, to the new descent of Caitanya, Lord of the World, the ocean of mercy, the supreme. (1)

When the sage of the gods (Nārada) had returned to his own home, the Supreme Lord Acyuta entered into the mind of Jagannātha, the sage among *brāhmaṇas*. (2)

In this period, the chaste and good Śacī, devoted to her husband, took possession of the great power that was implanted in her by him in time. (3)

She became pregnant with a part of Hari, as the radiant Ganges had with one of Śiva. Her brilliance increased like that of the moon in the light fortnight. (4)

Seeing her possessed of such beauty, complexion like molten gold, fortunate Jagannātha felt joy and his mind filled with exultation. (5)

Then seeing her in that condition the gods headed by Brahmā and others like the Gandharavas and immortals along with Indra gathered in the heavens above. (6)

With folded hands and eyes and throats moist with tears of joy, they all, well pleased, their shoulders bowed in homage, offered prayers. (7)

"We bow to you, the mother of Hari, an Aditi, womb of the eternal, womb of him as brilliant as the moon, the sun, and fire, womb of truth himself, possessor of fortitude and forbearance, womb of one without envy, full perfection, womb of the Vedas, like Devakī, Rohiṇī, and Yaśodā, the source in all ways of Hari himself. (8-9)

"You carry him in your womb who will promote the sacrifice called praising in song (*kīrtana*), most meritorious, unmatched by other sacrifices. (10)

"The love that arises after hearing, even for half a second, the praise of Nṛhari does not arise through billions of sacrifices of persons like us. (11)

"Indeed! The *rasa* we see here of a person hearing the praise of Hari is billions of times greater than the nectar given to us previously by Hari himself after churning the ocean. From praise of Hari the mind considers even liberation false." (12-13)

After saying this the gods along with Indra bowed down to her and, placing Brahmā in front and then, singing praises of Hari, went to their own abodes, praising the fortune of the Age of Kali saying, "a part of the Lord of Śrī is born on earth," extremely thrilled, dancing all the way, unsettled by love. (14-15)

ततः पूर्णे निशानाथे निशीथे फाल्गुने शुभे ।
 काले सर्वगुणोत्कर्षे शुद्धगन्धवहान्विते ॥ १६ ॥
 मनःसु देवसाधूनां प्रसन्नेषु च शीतले ।
 स्वर्नद्याः शुद्धसलिले जाते जातः स्वयं हरिः ॥ १७ ॥
 तं विकाशिकमलेक्षणं लसत्पूर्णचन्द्रवदनं कनकाभम् ।
 तेजसा वितिमिरा दिशः स्वयं कारयन्तमुपलभ्य सुतं सः ॥ १८ ॥
 प्रीतिसागररसस्य न पारं प्राप पद्मनिधिना यथा ऽधनः ।
 श्रीजगन्नाथमिश्रपुरन्दरः प्रेमगद्गदमुखं सदा दधे ॥ १९ ॥
 तस्य जन्मसमये ऽनुशशाङ्कं राहुरग्रसदलं त्रपयैव ।
 कृष्णपद्मवदनेन निर्जितः प्राविशत्सुररिपोर्मुखं विधुः ॥ २० ॥
 तत्र पुण्यसमये मनुजानां कीर्तनं नरहरेः कृतं जनैः ।
 पूजनं सपदि जाह्नवीजले स्नानदानमघमार्जनं शुचौ ॥ २१ ॥
 जहृषुः सुरगणाः समहेन्द्राः पद्मसम्भवमहेशपुरोगाः ।
 अप्सरोभिरतिनृत्यपराभिर्नायकाश्च सुमनांसि ववर्षुः ॥ २२ ॥
 नीलाम्बरश्चक्रवर्ती जन्मना तस्य हर्षितः ।
 आजगामाश्रमं तूर्णं जामातुः सर्वशास्त्रवित ॥ २३ ॥
 जगन्नाथं समाहूय शचीं सम्बोधयन् सुधीः ।
 दौहित्रजन्मकालज्ञ इदं वचनमब्रवीत् ॥ २४ ॥
 अये पुरुषसिंहो ऽयं जातः प्रोच्चे बृहस्पतौ ।
 असौ सर्वस्य लोकस्य पाता नित्यं भविष्यति ॥ २५ ॥
 सुशीलः सर्वधर्माणामाश्रयो न्यासिनां वरः ।
 प्रीतिदः सर्वभूतानां पूर्णामृतकरो यथा ॥ २६ ॥
 समुद्धर्ता सदैवायं पितृमातृकुलद्वयम् ।
 एवमुक्ते द्विजे तस्मिन् सर्वे प्रमुदिता जनाः ॥ २७ ॥
 माता हर्षमतीवाप श्रुत्वा तत्पितृभाषितम् ।
 वात्स्यश्चकार पुत्रस्य जातकर्ममहोत्सवम् ॥ २८ ॥
 ताम्बुलं चन्दनं माल्यं गन्धं प्रादाद्विजातये ।
 क्रमेणोत्थानकर्मादिमङ्गलानि चकार सः ॥ २९ ॥
 इति श्रीकृष्णचैतन्यचरितामृते महाकाव्ये श्रीचैतन्याविर्भावो नाम पञ्चमः सर्गः ।

Then on a night when the moon was full, in the auspicious month of Phālguna, at a time exalted by all good qualities, filled with pure fragrances, when the minds of the gods and the holy were peaceful and when the pure water of the Ganges was cool, Hari himself was born. (16-17)

Viewing that son, whose eyes were like blossoming lotuses, his face a shining moon, his complexion golden, and who was lighting up all the directions with his effulgence, Jagannātha, like a poor man finding a great treasure, found no limit to the *rasa* of the ocean of love. Śrī Jagannātha Miśra began to stammer out of love. (18-19)

At his birth time, Rāhu swallowed the moon.³⁷ The seemed, however, as if, out of embarrassment for being defeated by the lotus face of Kṛṣṇa, the moon willingly entered the mouth of the enemy of the gods (Rāhu). (20)

At that auspicious, pure time, the people performed glorification of Nara-hari along with ritual worship and the cleansing of their sins by bathing at that moment in the pure Ganges and giving in charity. (21)

The gods, headed by Indra, Brahmā, and Śiva, rejoiced. The leaders, with Apsarases³⁸ dancing wildly, showered down *sumanas*³⁹ flowers. (22)

Nilāmbara Cakravartin was thrilled by his grandson's birth. A knower of all scriptures, he went to the house of his son-in-law immediately. (23)

The wise one, who knew the time of his grandchild's birth, calling Jagannātha and informing Śacī, made this statement: (24)

"This is a lion among men who is born when Bṛhaspati is ascending. He will always be the protector of all the world. (25)

"He will be of good character, an abode of all *dharmas*, the best of renunciants, and, like the moon, a bestower of affection on all living beings. (26)

"He will ever uplift the families of both his mother and father." When the *brāhmaṇa* said this everyone was pleased. (27)

His mother became thrilled when she heard the words of her father. The child's father performed the great festival of the birth of his son. (28)

He gave betel nut, sandalwood, garlands, and fragrances to the twice-born and in proper order performed the auspicious rites of rising up and so forth. (29)

Thus ends the fifth chapter, named "Caitanya's Appearance," of the First Movement of the poem, the *Immortal Acts of Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya*. (5)

³⁷This is the way lunar eclipses are imagined in Hindu mythic cosmology. Rāhu, a demon swallows, the moon temporarily and then regurgitates it.

³⁸The beautiful dancing women of the heavens, entertainers of the gods in Hindu mythology.

³⁹A kind of jasmine.

Description of the Birth and Other Sports (षष्ठसर्गः)

ततः कालेन कियता जानुचङ्क्रमणं शिशोः ।
 दृष्ट्वा प्रहर्षमाप्तौ तौ दम्पती कलभाषिणः ॥ १ ॥
 शोणपद्माभवदने द्विजराजस्य रश्मयः ।
 सुस्मिते भान्ति साधूनां मनोद्वान्तापहारिणः ॥ २ ॥
 पुरा विभर्त्यसौ विश्वमिति चक्रे पिता स्वयम् ।
 श्रीमद्विश्वम्भर इति नाम तस्य सुशोभनम् ॥ ३ ॥
 तप्तकाञ्चनगौराङ्गो लसत्पद्मायतेक्षणः ।
 प्रभञ्जनाम्बरो रौप्यहारी मालालको हरिः ॥ ४ ॥
 राकासुधाकरमुखः कलवागमृतान्वितः ।
 मधुराकृतिरामुक्तकङ्कणाङ्गदभूषणः ॥ ५ ॥
 भङ्गहिङ्गुलरक्ताब्जकरपादतलः शुचिः ।
 ववृधे कलया नित्यं शुक्लपक्ष इव द्युराट् ॥ ६ ॥
 ततः कालेन शोणाभ्यां पादाभ्याममितद्युतिः ।
 अटन् विरहजं तापं मेदिन्याः संजहार सः ॥ ७ ॥
 तीर्थभ्रमणशीलस्य द्विजस्यान्नं जनार्दनः ।
 भुक्त्वा तं स्मारयामास नन्दगेहकुतूहलम् ॥ ८ ॥
 वयस्यैर्बालकैः सार्द्धं विहरंस्तरुपल्लवैः ।
 आहताः शिशवः सर्वे विचक्रुः पुरतो मुदा ॥ ९ ॥
 भुवि तिष्ठन्पदैकेन जानुनान्यस्य जानुकं ।
 पस्पर्शं मर्कटीं लीलां कुर्वन्मायार्भको हरिः ॥ १० ॥

Then, after some time, the couple saw their babbling son crawling about on his knees and were very pleased. (1)

Like a golden lotus, the light in the smiling face of the king of the twice-born (Viśvambhara) seemed capable of removing the darkness from the minds of even good people. (2)

His father thought “he supported the universe”⁴⁰ and gave him the beautiful name, Viśvambhara.⁴¹ (3)

With a light complexion the color of molten gold, big eyes like blossoming lotuses, only the wind for his clothes, a silver necklace, curly hair like a garland, Hari— his face like the moon, his soft babble like nectar, his shape so sweet, wearing armlets inlaid with pearls, the palms of his hands and feet reddish like crushed vermilion— Hari grew daily like the moon in the light half of the month. (4-6)

Then in time he, glowing brightly, removed the suffering of the earth, caused by separation, by wandering about it on his two golden feet. (7)

Janārdana once ate the food of a twice-born man visiting the holy sites and reminded him of the delightful events in the house of Nanda.⁴² (8)

While playing with boys his age, he and all the children swiped at each other with twigs, in glee. (9)

The pretend child Hari stood on the ground with one foot and touched the knee of another with his knee, playing like a monkey. (10)

⁴⁰ As Viṣṇu or in one of the previous descents of Viṣṇu.

⁴¹ *Viśvam* = world, *bhara* = holder, supporter. Viśvambhara means “the supporter of the world.”

⁴² Nanda, king of cowherds, was the father of Kṛṣṇa during the first part of Kṛṣṇa’s descent in Vṛndāvana.

एकदा धर्तुमात्मानमुद्यतां जननीं रुषा ।
 वीक्ष्य कोपपरिपूर्णो भाजनानि बभञ्ज सः ॥ ११ ॥
 पुरा भग्ने च भाण्डे यं यशोदा पशुरज्जुभिः ।
 बबन्ध वेपिता तस्य भयाद्वीक्ष्य मुखं शची ॥ १२ ॥
 उपर्युपरिविन्यस्तत्यक्तमृद्भाण्डसंहतौ ।
 उपविश्याशुचौ देशे मातुरग्रे जहास सः ॥ १३ ॥
 तं दृष्ट्वा सा शची प्राह त्यज तात जुगुप्सितं ।
 स्थानं शुद्धं पुनः स्नात्वा ममाङ्कारोहणं कुरु ॥ १४ ॥
 एवमुक्ते तु तां प्राह भगवान्सर्वतत्त्ववित ।
 दत्तात्रेयस्य भावैकपूर्णः सर्वज्ञपूरकः ॥ १५ ॥
 शृणु शुचिरशुचिर्वा कल्पनामात्रमेतत्
 क्षितिजलपवनाग्निव्योमवित्तं जगद्धि ।
 विततविभवपूर्वाद्वैतपादाब्ज एको
 हरिरिह करुणाब्धिर्भाति नान्यत्प्रतीहि ॥ १६ ॥
 अतः पवित्र एवास्मि नापवित्रः कथञ्चन ।
 जानीहि मातर्नान्यां त्वं शङ्कां कर्तुमिहार्हसि ॥ १७ ॥
 एवमुक्ते सुते सा तं करे संगृह्य सत्त्वरा ।
 आनीय स्नापायामास स्वर्नदीस्वच्छवारिभिः ॥ १८ ॥
 अथ कतिपये काले मुक्तमृद्भाण्डसंहतौ ।
 उपविष्टं सुतं वीक्ष्य शची वाग्भिरताडयत ॥ १९ ॥
 अपवित्रे निषिद्धेऽपि स्थाने त्वं मन्दधीः कथम् ।
 तिष्ठसीति वचः श्रुत्वा मातुः क्रोधसमन्वितः ॥ २० ॥

One day, spotting his mother trying to catch him, he became angry and broke some of her storage pots. (11)

The same being whom Yaśodā tied up with cattle ropes previously when he broke her pots was made to tremble with fear when Śacī looked him in the face. (12)

[But] he sat down in a filthy place where used clay pots were piled up on top of each other and laughed in front of his mother. (13)

Seeing him there, Śacī said: “Leave that horrid place, dear, and after bathing and becoming clean again come climb on my lap.” (14)

After she said that, the Lord who knows all truths, became filled with the condition of Dattātreya, fulfiller of knowers of all, and said to her: (15)

“Hear this: clean or unclean, this is just an invention. The universe is just earth, water, air, fire, and space. Hari alone, whose lotus-like feet are not different from this vast existence, appears here, a veritable ocean of mercy. Perceive none but him. (16)

“Therefore, I am clean, not impure in any way. Understand this, mother and you should have no other doubt about this.” (17)

When her son said this, she quickly took him by the hand, brought him to the river of heaven (the Ganges) and bathed him in its clear waters. (18)

Then some time later she again saw her son sitting in the place where the used clay pots were piled, and Śacī chastized him with these words: (19)

“You fool, why are you sitting in an unclean and forbidden place?” Hearing his mother’s words he was filled with anger. (20)

श्रीमद्विश्वम्भरः प्राह मूढे नास्त्यशुचिः क्वचित् ।
 उक्तं मयैतत्पूर्वं ते तर्त्तिकं मां त्वं विगर्हसि ॥ २१ ॥
 इत्युक्त्वा वदने तस्या इष्टकं प्राहिणोत् रुषा ।
 तदाघातेन व्यथिता मूर्च्छिता निपपात सा ॥ २२ ॥
 तदा सर्वाः समागत्य स्त्रियस्तां शीतलैर्जलैः ।
 सिषिचुः स्म तदा तत्र हरिर्मानुषकर्मकृत ॥ २३ ॥
 आगत्य प्ररुरोदाशु मातर्मातरिति स्वयम् ।
 श्रीहस्तं तन्मुखे न्यस्य सर्वदुःखापहारकम् ॥ २४ ॥
 ततः प्रबुद्धा सा सद्यः क्रोडे कृत्वा सुतं शची ।
 मुमोद वत्सलातीवपुत्रस्नेहातिविह्वला ॥ २५ ॥
 ततो जगद्गुरुं प्राह काचिद्धर्षपरायणा ।
 परिहासपरा मात्रे नारिकेलफलद्वयम् ॥ २६ ॥
 समानीय प्रयच्छास्यै तदा सुस्था भविष्यति ।
 न चेन्मरिष्यति तदा किमुपायं करिष्यसि ॥ २७ ॥
 इति कस्या वचः श्रुत्वा मातुरङ्गात्त्वरान्वितः ।
 निर्गत्यानीय स ददौ नारिकेलफलद्वयम् ॥ २८ ॥
 तत्कालपातनादम्बुयुक्तवृन्तयुगं हरिः ।
 तद्वृष्ट्वा विस्मिताः प्रोचुः कुतः प्राप्तं त्वया फलम् ॥ २९ ॥
 ततो हुङ्कृतिभिः सर्वा वारयित्वा महामनाः ।
 वत्सगोत्रध्वजो मात्रे ददौ स्मेरमुखाम्बुजम् ॥ ३० ॥

Śrī Viśvambhara said: “Foolish woman! Nothing is ever unclean. I told you this before. Therefore, why do you scold me?” (21)

After saying that, he angrily threw a brick at her face. Then hurt by its impact she fell to the ground and fainted. (22)

Then all the women came running and sprinkled her with cool water and then, too, Hari, who behaves like an ordinary human being, quickly came there himself and wept, saying “Mother, mother!” He placed his hand on her face, the hand that removes all miseries. (23-4)

After that Śacī came to her senses suddenly, and taking her son on her lap, she took delight in him, full of motherly tenderness, overwhelmed with great affection for her son. (25)

Then some lady, feeling happy and ready for a laugh, said to the teacher of the world: “Go bring a couple of coconuts and give them to her. Then she will be well. Otherwise, she will die. Then what will you do?” (26-7)

Hearing her words, he quickly left his mother’s lap, and bringing back two coconuts, Hari gave them to her, both cut and full of coconut water because they had fallen that very moment. Seeing them, the ladies were astounded and asked: “Where did you get those coconuts?” (28-9)

Then, stopping them all [from asking more questions] with loud shouts, the great-minded emblem of childhood turned his smiling, lotus-like face back to his mother. (30)

अथान्यच्छृनु वीर्याणि विचित्राणि महात्मनः ।
 लोकोत्तराणि साधूनि मायिनः परमात्मनः ॥ ३१ ॥
 रात्रौ कदाचित्संसुप्ता शची पुर्णा जनैरिव ।
 पुरमालक्ष्य संविन्ना क्रोडस्थं स्वसुतं शची । ३२ ॥
 शङ्किता प्रेययामास पतिगेहे त्वरान्विता ।
 पूजितं पथि देवैश्च श्रीमद्विश्वम्भरं हरिम ॥ ३३ ॥
 पथि प्रयातस्य सुतस्य पादयोः सुरिक्तयोर्नूपुरनिस्वनं मुहुः ।
 श्रुत्वा सशङ्कः किमिदं कुतः स्वनं वात्स्यः शचीं प्राह शची च वात्स्यम् ॥ ३४ ॥
 गते समीपं तनये ऽतिविस्मितो दृष्ट्वा सुरिक्तं सुतपादपङ्कजम् ।
 कुतः श्रुतं नूपुरमञ्जुलस्वनं सुतं समालिङ्ग्य मुदं ययौ द्विजः ॥ ३५ ॥
 इति श्रीकृष्णचैतन्यचरितामृते महाकाव्ये बाल्यक्रीडायां जन्मादिलीलावर्णनं नाम षष्ठः सर्गः
 ।

Now hear some more of the astounding deeds, out of this world and holy, of the great-self, the possessor of *māyā*, the supreme self. (31)

One night as Śacī slept she noticed her bedroom seemed filled with people and she became troubled. Frightened, Śacī quickly sent her son, who was in her lap, to her husband's room and on the way Śrīmad Viśvambhara who was Hari was honored by the gods. (32-3)

After hearing repeatedly the sounds of ankle bells on the bare feet of his son as he moved along the path, the boy's father, puzzled, asked Śacī: "What is this? Where is that sound coming from?" And Śacī, too, asked the boy's father. (34)

When the boy came near, he [his father] saw with great surprise that the boy's lotus-like feet were bare. Embracing his son, the lovely sounds of whose ankle bells had been heard from somewhere, the twice-born one [Jagannātha] went off in joy. (35)

Thus ends the Sixth Chapter named "Description of the Birth and Other Sports," in the childhood sports in the First Movement of the great poem called *The Immortal Acts of Śrī Caitanya*. (6)

Childhood Play (सप्तमसर्गः)

इति श्रुत्वा हरेः पादपङ्कजध्याननिर्वृतः ।

दामोदरः पर्यपृच्छद्वरेज्येष्ठस्य सत्कथाम् ॥ १ ॥

कथयस्व महत्ख्यातं विश्वरूपस्य तत्त्वतः ।

तच्छ्रुत्वा प्राह भो ब्रह्मन् श्रूयतां कथयामि ते ॥ २ ॥

इत्युक्त्वा वक्तुमारेभे वैद्यो हृद्यां कथां शुभाम् ।

बलदेवांशकस्यापि विश्वरूपस्य पावनीम् ॥ ३ ॥

श्रीमच्छ्रीविश्वरूपः सकलगुणनिधिः षोडशाब्दो ऽतिशुद्धः

प्रापाचार्यत्वमात्मश्रवणमननतः शक्तधीः प्रेमभक्तः ।

सर्वज्ञः सर्वदा ऽसौ नरहरिचरणासक्तचित्तो ऽतिहृष्टः

शान्तः सन्तोषयुक्तो जगति न रतिमान् वेदवेत्ता रसज्ञः ॥ ४ ॥

जनको विजने विचिन्त्य तत्

तनयस्योद्वहनोचितां वधूम् ।

मनसा परिचिन्तयन् स्वयं

बुबुधे तत्सकलं द्विजात्मजः ॥ ५ ॥

स विश्वरूपः पितुरित्थमन्तश-

चेष्टां विदित्वा सकलं तितिष्ठुः ।

त्यक्त्वा गृहं स्वर्गनदीं प्रतीर्य

जग्राह सन्न्यासमशक्यम् अन्यैः ॥ ६ ॥

ततः पिता परिश्रुत्य विह्वलो

माता च साध्वी विललाप दुःखिता ।

तावाहतुः पुत्रहितौ सुतो मे

सन्न्यासधर्मनिरतो भवत्विति ॥ ७ ॥

इत्याशिषन्तौ तनयाय दत्त्वा

मुनिव्रतौ धैर्यमुवाहतुः स्म ।

विषादमुत्सृज्य सुतं जगत्पतिं

क्रोडे निधायाशु मुदं तदापतुः ॥ ८ ॥

ततो हरिः प्राह पितर्गतो मे

भ्राता भवन्तं परिहाय दूरम् ।

मयैव कार्या भवतश्च सेवा

मातुश्च नित्यं सुखमाप्नुहि त्वम् ॥ ९ ॥

After hearing that Dāmodara, thrilled by meditation on the lotus-like feet of Hari, asked about the true story of the elder brother of Hari. (1)

“Tell me in truth the great tale of Viśvarūpa.” Hearing this, he [Murāri] said: “O brāhmaṇa! Let it be heard. I will tell it to you.” (2)

Saying that, the Vaidya [Murāri] began to tell the heart-warming, auspicious story of Viśvarūpa, who was indeed a part of Baladeva, which story is purifying. (3)

Śrīmān Śrī Viśvarūpa an ocean of all virtues, at sixteen years of age, extremely pure, had achieved the status of *ācārya*⁴³ from hearing and thinking about the Self, possessed a powerful intellect and was a *bhakta* on the level of divine love. He was all-knowing, his mind ever attached to the feet of Narahari, extremely joyful, peaceful, satisfied, not attracted to the world, a knower of Veda, an appreciator of *rasa*. (4)

While his father was thinking in private about a wife suitable for marriage to his son, his son, a child of the twice born, was thinking to himself in his mind and was aware of all that. (5)

That Viśvarūpa, knowing the inner workings of his father in this way, was patient towards it all. After renouncing his home and crossing the Heaven’s River [*Svarga-nadī*, the Ganges] accepted a renunciation [*sannyāsa*] beyond the powers of others to do. (6)

When his father heard about it, he was disturbed and his mother, a chaste lady, lamented in sadness. Those two wished nevertheless for the well-being of their son and said: “let our son be engaged in the practice of renunciation.” (7)

Wishing him well thus, those two, after giving [their blessings] to their son, in vows of silence regained their composure. Giving up their sadness they placed their son, the master of the universe, on their laps and then easily became joyful. (8)

Then Hari said: “O Father, my brother has gone leaving you far behind. I myself will serve you and my mother. May you always be happy.” (9)

⁴³i.e., he was an exemplary teacher.

इत्थं निशम्य स्वसुतस्य वाक्यम्
 अनल्पगम्भीरमनोज्ञमर्थवत ।
 आलिङ्ग्य तं हर्षजनेत्रवारिभि-
 रवाप मोदं जननी पिता च ॥ १० ॥

तदङ्गसंस्पर्शरसाभितृप्त-
 गात्राणि नार्द्रा विदुरञ्जसापरम ।
 गताः स्वयोगेन यथा सुयोगिनः
 पश्यन्ति नेमं न परं च लोकम ॥ ११ ॥

पठन् पितुः सेवनयुक्तचेताह्
 क्रीडापरो बालकसङ्गमध्ये ।
 क्रीडन् वयस्यैः किल धूलिधूसरो
 न वेद किञ्चित्क्षुदितो ऽपि भोजनम ॥ १२ ॥

कदाचिदालोक्य पिता स्वतन्त्रं
 सम्भर्त्सयामास सुतं हितार्थी ।
 पाठादिकं चैव विहाय सर्वं
 क्षुदार्दितः क्रीडसि बालकैर्वृतः ॥ १३ ॥

ततो राजन्यां शयनावसाने
 स्वप्ने ऽवदत्तं द्विजवर्यमुख्यः ।
 न किं सुतं त्वं बहुमन्यसे हि
 किं वा पशुः स्पर्शमणिं न वेत्ति ॥ १४ ॥

रत्नांशुकालङ्कृतदेहयष्टिः
 किं वा न चाश्नाति तदंशुकानि ।
 तमाह मिश्रो ह्यकुतो भयः स्वयं
 नारायणश्चेद्भवतीह पुत्रः ॥ १५ ॥

तथापि तत्ताडनमेव धर्मं
 इत्युक्तो विप्रो ऽपि तमाह साधु ।
 इत्येवमुक्त्वा प्रययौ द्विजाग्र्यो
 वात्स्यः प्रबुद्धः पुनराशशंस ॥ १६ ॥

स्वप्नं निशम्याशु जनाः प्रहृष्टा
 विश्वम्भरं पुरुषवर्यसत्तमम् ।
 तं मेनिरे पूर्णमनोरथं मुदा
 मेने पिता स्वं जननी च तुष्टा ॥ १७ ॥

Having thus heard the words of their son, which were meaningful and revealed a deep understanding of their hearts, his mother and father embraced him with tears of joy in their eyes and felt happy. (10)

Affectionate people, their limbs pleased by the touch of his body, quickly came to know no other, like true *yogīs* who, transported by their yogic discipline, see neither this world nor the next. (11)

While studying out of a sense of service to his father, he wanted to play among the other boys. Indeed, while playing with his age-mates, covered with dust, he thought nothing of food even though he was hungry. (12)

Sometimes his father noticed and chastised his independent child with his well-being in mind. “You have given up all your studies and, though hungry, play with the boys.” (13)

Then that night towards the end of his sleep a man prominent among the finest of the twice-born spoke to him [Jagannātha] in a dream: “Do you really not think much of your son? Does an animal recognize a touch-gem? (14)

“Or, does an animal decorated with cloth that is covered with gems not try to eat that cloth?” To him replied Miśra, who was afraid of nothing, “Even if Nārāyaṇa became my son here, scolding him is still my duty.” After that, the *vīpra* said to him “Well said!” and saying that, the foremost of the twice-born departed. The father after woke told his dream again and again. (15-16)

Hearing about his dream the people were well pleased. They accepted Viśvambhara as the best of the best of men. His father accepted him as his own, the fulfillment of all his desires, and his mother was pleased as well. (17)

ततः कदाचिन्निवसन् स्वमन्दिरे
समुद्यदादित्यकरातिलोहितः ।
स्वतेजसापूरितदेह आबभौ
उवाच मातर्वचनं कुरुष्व मे ॥ १८ ॥

तथा ज्वलन्तं स्वसुतं स्वतेजसा
विलोक्य भीता तमुवाच विस्मिता ।
यदुच्यते तात करोमि तत्त्वया
वदस्व यत्ते मनसि स्थितं स्वयम् ॥ १९ ॥

तदित्थमाकर्ण्य वचो ऽमृतं पुनस्
तां प्राह मातर्न हरेस्तिथौ त्वया ।
भोक्तव्यमाकर्ण्य वचः सुतस्य सा
तथेति कृत्वा जगृहे प्रहृष्टवत् ॥ २० ॥

निवेदितं पूगफलादिकं यत्
द्विजेन भुक्त्वा पुनरब्रवीत्ताम ।
ब्रजामि देहं परिपालयस्व
सुतस्य निश्चेष्टगतं क्षणार्धम् ॥ २१ ॥

इत्युत्त्वा सहसोत्थाय दण्डवच्चापतद्भुवि ।
विश्वम्भरं गतं दृष्ट्वा माता दुःखसमन्विता ॥ २२ ॥

स्नापयामास गाङ्गेयैस्तोयैरमृतकल्पकैः ।
ततः प्रबुद्धः सुस्थो ऽसौ भूत्वा स न्यवसत्सुखी ॥ २३ ॥

तेजसा सहजेनैव तच्छ्रुत्वा विस्मितो ऽभवत् ।
जगन्नाथो ऽब्रवीच्चैनां देवीं मायां न विद्महे ॥ २४ ॥

इति श्रुत्वा कथां दिव्यां प्राह दामोदरद्विजः ।
किम् इदं कथितं भद्र स्वयं कृष्णो जगद्गुरुः ॥ २५ ॥

जातः कथं ब्रजामीति पालयस्व सुतं शुभे ।
इति मात्रे कथं प्राह ह्येतन्मे संशयो महान् ॥ २६ ॥

किं माया जगदीशस्य तद्वक्तुं त्वमिहार्हसि ।
हरेश्वरित्रमेवात्र हिताय जगतां भवेत् ॥ २७ ॥

इति श्रीकृष्णचैतन्यचरितामृते महाकाव्ये बाल्यक्रीडा नाम सप्तमः सर्गः ॥ ७ ॥

Then once when he was staying at home his body, deeply reddened by the rays of the rising sun and filled with his own radiance, shone brightly. He said: “Mother! Do as I ask you.” (18)

Seeing her son shining like that with his own effulgence she became afraid and said to him in amazement: “Whatever you say, dear, I will do. Tell me what is on your mind.” (19)

Hearing her sweet words he again said to her: “Mother, on Hari’s day (Ekādaśī) you should not eat anything.” Hearing the words of her son she said “so be it” and accepted them in joy. (20)

After eating the betel, fruit, and other things offered by a *brāhmaṇa* he again said to her: “I am leaving. Protect the unconscious body of your son for half a moment.” (21)

After saying this he suddenly rose up and fell like a stick on the ground. Seeing that Viśvambhara had left, his mother became filled with grief. (22)

She bathed [sprinkled] him with water from the Gaṅgā, which is just like nectar. Then he awoke and becoming well again he remained happy with his natural radiance. Hearing about this, Jagannātha was amazed and said: “We do not understand this divine power (*māyā*).” (23-24)

Hearing this divine story, the *brāhmaṇa* Dāmodara said: “What is this that you have said, my good man? How can Kṛṣṇa himself, the teacher of the world, be born? Why did he say ‘I’m leaving,’ ‘protect your son, good lady’ to his mother? This is my biggest doubt. What is the power (*māyā*) of the lord of the universe? You should explain this to me. The deeds of Hari here may be for the benefit of the world.” (25-27)

Thus ends the Seventh Chapter called “Childhood Play” in the First Movement of the great poem called The Immortal Acts of Śrī Kṛṣṇacaitanya. (7)

The Passing of Jagannātha

Miśra (अष्टमसर्गः)

इति श्रुत्वा वचस्तस्य चिन्तयित्वा विचार्य च ।
 नत्वा हरिं पुनः प्राह शृणुष्व सुसमाहितः ॥ १ ॥
 जनस्य भगवद्धानात्कीर्तनात्श्रवणादपि ।
 हरेः प्रवेशो हृदये जायते सुमहात्मनः ॥ २ ॥
 तस्यानुकारं चक्रे स तत्तेजस्तत्पराक्रमम् ।
 दधाति पुरुषो नित्यमात्मदेहादिविस्मृतः ॥ ३ ॥
 भवेदेवं ततः काले पुनर्बाह्यो भवेत्ततः ।
 करोति सहजं कर्म प्रह्लादस्य यथा पुरा ॥ ४ ॥
 तादात्म्योऽभूत्तोयनिधौ पुनर्देहस्मृतिस्तटे ।
 एवं हि गोपसाध्वीनां तादात्म्यं सम्भवेत्कचित् ॥ ५ ॥
 ईश्वरस्तस्य संशिक्षां दर्शयंस्तच्चकार ह ।
 लोकस्य कृष्णभक्तस्य भवेदेतत्स्वरूपता ॥ ६ ॥
 यथात्र न विमुह्यन्ति जना इत्यभ्यशिक्षयन् ।
 भक्तदेहो भगवतो ह्यात्मा चैव न संशयः ॥ ७ ॥
 कृष्णः केशिवधं कृत्वा नारदायात्मनो यशः ।
 तेजश्च दर्शयामास ततो मुनिवरो भुवि ॥ ८ ॥
 पपात दण्डवत्तस्मिन् स्थाने शतगुणाधिकम् ।
 फलमाप्नोति गत्वा तु वैष्णवो मथुरां पुरीम् ॥ ९ ॥
 एवं रामो जगद्योनिर्विश्वरूपमदर्शयत् ।
 शिवाय पुनरेवासौ मानुषीमकरोत्क्रियाम् ॥ १० ॥

Having heard his (Dāmodara's) question, and after pondering and considering it, he (Murārigupta) bowed to Hari and said: "Listen very attentively. (1)

"From a person's meditation on Bhagavān, from praise (*kīrtana*) of him, and also from hearing of him, Hari enters into the heart of a great soul. (2)

"He imitated that; a person takes on his [Hari's] splendor and strength, becoming ever more forgetful of his own body and such. (3)

"It may remain thus so for a while and then in time he again returns to the external world. And then he can easily perform actions like it was with Prahlāda in the past. (4)

"He became unified (*tādātmya*) with him in the reservoir of water and then remembered his body again on the bank. So, too, that unification may have occurred for the wives of the cowherds from time to time. (5)

"The Lord demonstrating the teaching of that has enacted it. This should be the true nature of a person who is a *bhakta* of Kṛṣṇa. (6)

"So that people here are not confused he has taught it. The body of the *bhakta* is indeed the self of Bhagavān; there is no doubt. (7)

"Kṛṣṇa after killing Keśi revealed his fame and splendor to Nārada. Then, the best of sages fell to the ground like a stick. A Vaiṣṇava going to that town of Mathurā receives a hundred times greater the reward in that place. (8-9)

So too Rāma, the source of the world, showed his universal form to Śiva and then he again performed human action. (10)

पुनः शृणुष्व भो ब्रह्मन् चैतन्यस्य कथां शुभाम ।
तच्छ्रुत्वा श्रद्धया मर्त्यो मुच्यते भवबन्धनात् ॥ ११ ॥

गुरोर्गेहि वसन् जिष्णुर्वेदान् सर्वानधीतवान् ।
पाठयामास शिष्यान् स सरस्वतीपतिः स्वयम् ॥ १२ ॥

तत्पितापि महाभागो वेदान्तादीन् पठन् सुखी ।
ततश्च पुनरायातो जगन्नाथो द्विजर्षभः ॥ १३ ॥

दैवयोगेन तस्याभूज्वरः प्राणापहारकः ।
अतस्तं तादृशं दृष्ट्वा सह मात्रा स्वयं हरिः ॥ १४ ॥

जगाम जाह्नवीतीरे निजभक्तैः समावृतः ।
श्रीमान् विश्वम्भरो देवो हरिकीर्तनतत्परैः ॥ १५ ॥

अथ तस्य पदद्वयं हरिः
पितुरालिङ्ग्य सगद्गदस्वरम् ।
अवदत्पितराशु मां प्रभो
परिहाय क्वा भवान् गमिष्यसि ॥ १६ ॥

इति वागमृतं सुतस्य सः
श्रवणाभ्यां परिपीय सादरम् ।
अवदद्रघुनाथपादयोस्
तव सम्यक्सुसमर्पणं कृतम् ॥ १७ ॥

गगने सुरवर्यसंहतौ
समहेन्द्रे समुपस्थिते दिवा ।
हरिसङ्कीर्तनतत्परे जने
द्युनदीतोयगतो द्विजोत्तमः ॥ १८ ॥

परिहाय तनुं दिवौकसां
रथमास्थाय ययौ हरेः पुरीम् ।
नित्यसिद्धशरीरो ऽपि महात्मा
लोकहिताचरणाय यथासुखम् ॥ १९ ॥

अथ सिद्धिगतं पतिं
शची परिदीना विललाप दुःखिता ।
चरणे विनिपत्य सा प्रभोः
कुररीव प्रमदागणावृता ॥ २० ॥

Listen again, o *brāhmaṇa*, to the splendid story of Caitanya. Hearing that with faith a mortal is liberated from the bondage of becoming. (11)

Residing at the house of his teacher (*guru*) the victorious one studied all the Vedas. And he the husband of Sarasvati himself taught students. (12)

His father, too, also greatly fortunate, was happy studying Vedānta and other subjects. Then he returned again, Jagannātha the best of the twiceborn. (13)

On account of fate, he developed a fever that steals away one's life force. Then, Hari himself along with his mother having seen him in that state went [with him] to the bank of the Jāhnavī, Śrīmān Viśvambhara, the god, surrounded by his *bhaktas*, who were intent on praising Hari. (14-15)

Then Hari, embracing the two legs of his father, said with a stuttering voice: "Father! Master! Giving me up so easily, where will you go?" (16)

He, drinking in with his ears the word-nectar of his son, said with affection: "I offer you completely to the feet of Raghanātha." (17)

During the day, while Mahendra accompanied by the best of the gods was present in the sky and people were engaged in praising Hari, the foremost of the twice-born entered the waters of the heavenly river. (18)

Giving up his body, he mounted a chariot of the sky-dwellers [gods] and went to the city of Hari. Though his body is eternally existent, the great soul [came down] to act for the benefit of the common people as it so pleased him. (19)

Thus, with her husband gone to perfection, Śacī, much afflicted and saddened, lamented. She fell at the feet of the Lord like a female osprey, surrounded by the other women. (20)

पितरं विलपितो मुहुर्दृशोर्
 अपतद्वारिझरो दयानिधेः ।
 गजमौक्तिकहारविभ्रमं
 विदधद्वक्षसि लक्षणं बभौ ॥ २१ ॥

अथ बन्धुजनैः प्रशान्तितः
 परिणामोचितसत्क्रियां प्रभुः ।
 अकरोत्परिवेदनान्वितो
 विधिदृष्ट्या सकला सह द्विजैः ॥ २२ ॥

विमना इव सञ्चितैर्धनैः
 पितृयज्ञं पितृवत्सलो ऽकरोत् ।
 द्विजपूजनसत्क्रियां क्रमाद्
 विदधे तां स धरादिभाजनैः ॥ २३ ॥

इति यो वदति प्रभोः पितुर्
 दिवसंस्थानमतन्द्रितो नरः ।
 लभते द्युनदीं हरेः पुरीम्
 परिहायाशु मलं स गच्छति ॥ २४ ॥

इति श्रीकृष्णचैतन्यचरितामृते महाकाव्ये प्रथमप्रक्रमे जगन्नाथमिश्रसंसिद्धिर्नाम अष्टमः सर्गः ॥ ८ ॥

He lamented for his father repeatedly and from the eyes of the ocean of compassion fell streams of water. It appeared as if he was wearing a necklace of elephant pearls on his chest. (21)

Then, pacified by his relatives, the Master performed all the rites proper for passing on, filled with pain, according to injunction through some *brāhmaṇas*. (22)

As if absent-minded he, affectionate towards his father, performed the sacrifice for the forefathers with his accumulated wealth. Then, in proper order, he performed the rites and worship of the *brāhmaṇas* with pots and vessels made of clay and such. (23)

A person who thus describes the divine departure of the Master's father without tiring gains the heavenly river and leaving behind impurity with ease goes to the city of Hari. (24)

Thus ends the Eighth Chapter called "The Passing of Jagannātha Miśra" in the First Movement of the great poem called The Immortal Acts of Śrī Kṛṣṇacaitanya. (8)

Marriage to Śrī Lakṣmī (नवमसर्गः)

ततः पपाठ स पुनः श्रीमान् श्रीविष्णुपण्डितात् ।
सुदर्शनात्पण्डिताच्च श्रीगङ्गादासपण्डितात् ॥ १ ॥

ब्राह्मणेभ्यो ददौ विद्याम् ये पण्डिता महत्तमाः ।
तेषां महोपकाराय तेभ्यो विद्यां गृहीतवान् ॥ २ ॥

लोकशिक्षामनुचरन् मायामनुजविग्रहः ।
ततः पठन् पण्डितेषु श्रीमत्सुदर्शनेषु च ॥ ३ ॥

सतीर्थैः प्रहसन् विप्रैः हसद्भिः परिहासकम् ।
उवाच बङ्गजैर्वाक्यै रसज्ञः सस्मिताननः ॥ ४ ॥

ततः कालेन कियताचार्यस्य वनमालिनः ।
जगाम पुर्यां तं द्रष्टुम् कौतुकात्प्रणतस्य सः ॥ ५ ॥

आभाष्य गच्छताचार्यं हरिणा ददृशे पथि ।
वल्लभाचार्यदुहिता सखीजनसमावृता ॥ ६ ॥

स्नानार्थं जाह्नवीतोये गच्छन्ती रुचिरानना ।
दृष्ट्वा तां तादृशीं ज्ञात्वा मनसा जन्मकारणम् ॥ ७ ॥

तस्या जगाम निलयं स्वमेव स्वजनैः सह ।
श्रीमान् विश्वम्भरो देवो विद्यारसकुतूहली ॥ ८ ॥

अपरेद्युः पुनस्तत्र वनमाली द्विजोत्तमः ।
आचार्यः श्रिहरेर् गेहमागत्य प्रणमन् शचीम् ।
उवाच मधुरां वाणीं श्रीमद्विश्वम्भरस्य ते ॥ ९ ॥

सुतस्योद्वहनार्थाय कन्यां सुरसुतोपमाम् ।
वल्लभाचार्यवर्यस्य वरयस्व यदीच्छसि ॥ १० ॥

Thereafter he again studied from Śrīmān Viṣṇu Paṇḍita, from Sudarśana Paṇḍita, and Śrī Gaṅgādāsa Paṇḍita. (1)

In order to greatly favor the best scholars who educated the *brāhmaṇas* he received knowledge from them. (2)

While pursuing the education of the people, this illusory figure of a human, then studying with scholars such as Śrīmān Sudarśana and joking with fellow students, who were laughing *brāhmaṇas*, told jokes in the language of Bengal, this comedian with a smile on his face. (3-4)

Then after a while he went to the house of Ācārya Vanamālī to see him who out of jest bowed to him. (5)

After conversing with the Ācārya, he saw, as he was going along on the path, the daughter of Vallabhācārya surrounded by her girlfriends. (6)

With a radiant face she was on her way to the waters of the Jāhnavī to take her bath. After seeing her in this way he knew in his heart the reason for her birth. To his own home went with his friends Śrīmān Viśvambhara, the lord, who was eager for the *rasa* of knowledge along with his friends. (7-8)

On the following day, Ācārya Vanamālī, best of twice-born, went there to the house of Hari and bowing to Śacī spoke these sweet words: “For the marriage of your son, Śrīmad Viśvambhara, get him to choose the eminent Vallabhācārya’s daughter, who is like a daughter of a god, if you so desire.” (9-10)

एतच्छ्रुत्वा शची प्राह बालो ऽसौ मम पुत्रकः ।
 पित्रा विहीनः पठतु तत्रोद्योगो विधीयताम् ॥ ११ ॥
 इति श्रुत्वा वचस्तस्या नातिहृष्टमना ययौ ।
 आचार्यो दृष्ट्वास्तत्र पथि कृष्णं मुदान्वितम् ॥ १२ ॥
 भगवांस्तं प्रणम्याशु समालिङ्ग्य सुनिर्भरम् ।
 क्व भवान् अद्य गन्तासि पप्रच्छ मधुरं वचः ॥ १५ ॥
 स आह मतुश्चरणं तव दृष्ट्वा समागतः ।
 निवेदितं मया तस्यै तवोद्वाहाय तत्र सा ॥ १४ ॥
 श्रद्धां न विधत्ते तेन विमनाः संव्रजाम्यहम् ।
 इत्युक्ते नोत्तरं दत्त्वा प्रहस्य प्रययौ हरिः ॥ १५ ॥
 आगत्य स्वाश्रमं प्राह मातरं किं त्वयोदितम् ।
 आचार्याय वचः सो ऽपि विमनाः पथि गच्छति ॥ १६ ॥
 कथं न तस्य सम्प्रीतः कृता मातः प्रियोक्तिभिः ।
 एतज्ज्ञात्वा सुतस्याशु मतम् आप्तजनं पुनः ॥ १७ ॥
 आचार्यं त्वरया नेतुं प्रेषयामास सा शुभा ।
 आचार्यः सहसागत्य नमस्कृत्वाब्रवीदिदम् ॥ १८ ॥
 कथमीश्वरि मामाज्ञामकरोत् तद्वीतु मे ।
 सम्प्रहृष्टो वचः श्रुत्वा भवत्याः सन्निधावहम् ॥ १९ ॥
 एवम् उक्ते ततः प्राह तं शची यत्त्वया वचः ।
 उद्वाहार्थं तु कथितं तत्कर्तुं त्वमिहार्हसि ॥ २० ॥

Hearing this Śacī replied: “He is still young that son of mine and bereft of a father. Let him study. Let his exertion be towards that.” (11)

Hearing her statement, he departed in a not very happy state of mind. The Ācārya saw there on the road Kṛṣṇa [i.e. Caitanya] filled with joy. (12)

Bhagavān quickly bowed to him and embraced him warmly. “Where have you been just now?” he asked with a sweet voice. (13)

He said: “I have just come from a visit to your mother. I presented her with a suggestion for your marriage. She did not bestow on it much consideration. Therefore, disheartened I left.” When he said that Hari without replying departed with a smile. (14-15)

Arriving at his home he asked his mother: “What did you say to Ācārya? He was going down the road so dispirited. Why did you not please him with kind words, mother?” Realizing quickly that this was her son’s agreement, the good lady sent a trusted person to bring Ācārya back to her. Ācārya came to her quickly and bowing to her said this: (16-18)

“Why, good lady, have you ordered me [to come]? Let it be told to me. I am excited to hear your words directly from you.” (19)

When he had spoken thus, Śacī said to him: “What you said about the marriage you are now permitted to arrange. (20)

त्वं सुहृद्वत्सलो ऽतीव सुतस्य स्वयमेव तत ।
 पुरा प्रोक्तं स्नेहवशात्तत्र त्वां किं वदाम्यहम् ॥ २१ ॥
 एतच्छ्रुत्वा वचस्तस्याः प्राहाचार्यो नमन् वचः ।
 ईश्वरि त्वद्वचो नित्यं करोमि शिरसा वहन ॥ २२ ॥
 इत्युत्त्वा प्रययौ तत्र वल्लभो मिश्रसत्तमः ।
 यत्र तिष्ठति तत्रैव सो ऽप्युद्यम्य त्वरान्वितः ॥ २३ ॥
 दिदेशासनमानीय स्वयमेव यथाविधि ।
 मिश्रः पप्रच्छ विनयादाचार्यवनमालिनम् ॥ २४ ॥
 ममानुग्रह एवात्र तवागमनकारणम् ।
 अन्यद्वास्ति कियत्कार्यं तदाज्ञां कर्तुमर्हसि ॥ २५ ॥
 एवमुक्ते ततः प्राहाचार्यं शृणु वचो मम ।
 मिश्रपुरन्दरसुतः श्रीविश्वम्भरपण्डितः ॥ २६ ॥
 स एव तव कन्याया योग्यः सद्गुणसंश्रयः ।
 पतिस्तेन वदाम्यद्य देहि तस्मै सुतां शुभाम् ॥ २७ ॥
 तच्छ्रुत्वा वचनं तस्य मिश्रः कार्यं विचार्य च ।
 उवाच श्रूयतां भाग्यवशादेतद्भविष्यति ॥ २८ ॥
 मया धनविहीनेन किञ्चिद्दातुं न शक्यते ।
 कन्यकैव प्रदातव्या तत्राज्ञां कर्तुमर्हसि ॥ २९ ॥
 यदि वा मे हरिः प्रीतो भगवान् दुहितुर्भवेत् ।
 तदैव मे सम्भवति जामाता पण्डितोत्तमः ॥ ३० ॥

“You are extremely kind to your friends. What you said before about my son was out of affection. What more can I say to you about it?” (21)

Hearing this statement of hers, Ācārya replied to her with a bow: “Good lady, your orders I will always carry on my head.” (22)

After saying that, he went to where Vallabha, the most venerable of the Miśras, was staying and there indeed he (Miśra), too, rose quickly and himself brought a seat and offered it to him, in accordance with good etiquette. Miśra inquired humbly of Ācārya Vanamāli: (23-24)

“Is the cause of your coming here just to show me a kindness? Or, is there some other small purpose? If so, then you may make your request.” (25)

When he had spoken thus, Ācārya said: “Please hear my words. The son of Miśrapurandara, Śrī Viśvambhara Paṇḍita, is a suitable husband for your daughter, being refuge of good qualities. Therefore, I recommend now you give your fair daughter to him.” (26-27)

Hearing his statement, Miśra thought about the matter and replied: “Please hear me. With good fortune this will be so. I being without wealth am unable to give anything. I can only give my daughter. You may guide me in this. If perchance Hari is pleased with me and my daughter, then the best of *paṇḍitas* can become my son-in-law. (28-30)

रत्नेन मुक्तासंयोगो गुणेनैव यथा भवेत् ।
 यथा भवद्गुणेनैवानयोर्योगो भविष्यति ॥ ३१ ॥
 इत्युक्ते परमप्रीत आचार्यः प्राह सादरम् ।
 भवद्विनयवात्सल्यात्सर्वं सम्पाद्यते शुभम् ॥ ३२ ॥
 इत्युक्त्वा पुनरागम्य सर्वं शच्यै न्यवेदयत् ।
 आचार्यो गौरचन्द्रस्य विवाहानन्दनिर्वृतः ॥ ३३ ॥
 एतत्सर्वं संविदित्वा सुतं प्रोवाच सा शची ।
 समयो ऽयं कुरुष्वत्र तात वैवाहिकं विधिम् ॥ ३४ ॥
 तच्छ्रुत्वा वचनं मातुर्विमृश्य मनसा हरिः ।
 आज्ञां तस्याहं पुरस्कृत्य द्रव्याण्याशु समाहरत् ॥ ३५ ॥
 ततो वैवाहिके काले मङ्गले सद्गुणाश्रये ।
 सर्वेषाम् एव शुभदे मृदङ्गपणवाहते ॥ ३६ ॥
 भूदेवगणसङ्गस्य वेदध्वनिनिनादिते ।
 दीपमालापताकाद्यैरलङ्कृतदिगन्तरे ॥ ३७ ॥
 देवदार्वगुरुशीरचन्दनादिप्रधूपिते ।
 अधिवासं हरेश्चक्रे विवाहं द्विजसत्तमाः ॥ ३८ ॥

इति श्रीकृष्णचैतन्यचरितामृते महाकाव्ये प्रथमप्रक्रमे श्रीलक्ष्म्युद्धाहः नवमः सर्गः ॥ ९ ॥

“Just as a pearl can be joined with a jewel by means of a thread, so will you be the thread of their union.” (31)

When he said that Ācārya was extremely pleased and replied with respect: “Because of your humility and affection, everything good will be accomplished.” (32)

After saying that, he returned and reported everything to Śacī. Ācārya was overjoyed at the prospect of the marriage of Gauracandra. (33)

After learning of all this, Śacī said to her son: “This is [the right] time. Now make the preparations for the wedding, dear.” (34)

Hearing his mother’s statement and considering it in his mind, Hari placed her order before everything and quickly gathered together the materials. (35)

Then at an auspicious time for the wedding, filled with good qualities, bestowing good fortune on all, with *mṛdaṅgas* and *pañavas* playing, resounding with the sounds of the Veda [intoned by] groups of the gods of the earth (*brāhmaṇas*), every direction decorated with lamps, garlands, and flags, made fragrant by incense of cedar, fragrant aloe, *uśīra*,⁴⁴ and sandalwood, the best of the twice-born performed the preliminary rites (*adhivāsa*)⁴⁵ for Hari’s wedding. (36-38)

So ends the Ninth Chapter called “Marriage to Śrī Lakṣmī” in the First Movement of the great poem called *The Immortal Acts of Śrī Kṛṣṇacaitanya*.

⁴⁴The fragrant root of the plant *Andropogon Muricatus*.

⁴⁵The *adhivāsa*, which literally means fumigation or perfuming, is the ceremonial purification of a person on the day before a solemn function or ritual.

The Marriage of Gaura **(दशमसर्गः)**

ततो द्विजेभ्यः प्रददौ मुहु मुहुः
 पूगानि माल्यानि च गन्धवन्ति ।
 सचन्दनं गन्धम् अनन्यसौरभं
 जनाश्च सर्वे जहृषुर्जगुर्मुदा ॥ १ ॥

स वल्लभो ऽभ्येत्य सुमङ्गलैर्द्विजैर्
 नरैश्च भूदेवपतिव्रतादिभिः ।
 जामातरं गन्धसुगन्धिमाल्यैः
 शुभाधिवासं विदधे समर्च्य तम ॥ २ ॥

अथ प्रभाते विमले ऽरुणे ऽर्के
 स्वयं कृतस्नानविधिर्यथावत ।
 हरिः समभ्यर्च्य पितृन् सुरादीन्
 नान्दीमुखश्चाद्धम् अथाकरोद्विजैः ॥ ३ ॥

ततो द्विजानां यजुषां सुनिस्वनैर्
 मृदङ्गभेरीपटहादिनादितैः ।
 वराङ्गनावकृसरोजमङ्गलो-
 ज्ज्वलस्वनैराववृधे महोत्सवः ॥ ४ ॥

शची सुसम्पूज्य कुलस्त्रियं मुदा
 तत्रागतान् बन्दुजनांश्च सर्वशः ।
 उवाच किं भर्तृविहीनया मया
 कर्तव्यमेवात्र भवद्विधैः स्वयम् ॥ ५ ॥

Then betal and fragrant garlands were given repeatedly to the twice-born as well as fragrances including sandalwood of unmixed aroma. All the people were thrilled and they sang with joy. (1)

Vallabha arrived with most the auspicious of the twice-born and with men who were earth-gods and women devoted to their husbands, and he, after honoring his son-in-law with fragrances and aromatic garlands, performed the preliminary rites (*adhivāsa*). (2)

Then in the morning when the sun was pure orange, Hari himself performed his bathing rites as appropriate and then he, after honoring his forefathers and the gods, performed the Nāndīmukha *śaddhā* with the *brāhmaṇas*. (3)

Then the great celebration increased with the sweet sounds of the Yajur *brāhmaṇas*, with the sounds of *mṛdaṅgas*, *bherīs*, kettledrums and such, and with the auspicious, luminous sounds from the lotus faces of lovely women. (4)

Śacī honored the married women joyfully and all the friends and family members who were there. She said: “What can I, who am deprived of my husband, to do here? You should perform it yourselves.” (5)

स्वमातुरित्थं करुणान्वितं वचो
निशम्य तातं परितप्तचित्तः ।
मुक्ताफलस्थूलतराश्रुविन्दून्
उवाह वक्षः स्थलहारविभ्रमान् ॥ ६ ॥

निरीक्ष्य पुत्रं करुणान्वितं शची
सुविस्मिता प्राह पतिव्रतादिभिः ।
पितः कथं मङ्गलकर्मणि स्वयम्
अमङ्गलं वारि विमुञ्चसे दृशोः ॥ ७ ॥

स मातुरित्थं वचनं निपीय
पितृस्मृतिश्वासमलीमसाननः ।
स मातुर्समीपं प्रतिवाचमाददे
नवीनगम्भीरघनस्वनं यथा ॥ ८ ॥

धनानि वा मे मनुजाश्च मातर्
न सन्ति किं येन वचः समीरितम् ।
त्वयाद्य दीनेव पराश्रयं यतः
पिता ममादर्शनताम् अगादिति ॥ ९ ॥

त्वयैव दृष्टं द्विजसज्जनेभ्यः
सुपूगपूर्णानि च भाजनानि ।
वारत्रयं दातुमनन्यसारं
सर्वाङ्गसंलेपनयोग्यगन्धम् ॥ १० ॥

Hearing these words of his mother filled with lamentation, he (Caitanya), his mind scorched, drenched his chest with tears larger than pearls such that they looked like a solid necklace. (6)

Śacī, seeing her son overwhelmed with compassion, was most astonished along with the other chaste ladies there and said to him: “How can you, while engaged in auspicious rites for your father, be yourself shedding from your eyes inauspicious tears?” (7)

He, drinking in his mother’s words, his face darkened with sighs from the recollection of his father, gave his reply near his mother with a voice newly grave and dense: (8)

“Mother! Is it because I have no wealth or people that you have spoken like this just now? Because my father has disappeared you are dependent on others like a lady in distress? (9)

“You yourself have seen the full portions of betal nut and the vessels to be given to the twice-born and other good folk as well as the undiluted fragrances suitable to be rubbed on every limb. (10)

अन्येषु योग्येषु च सुव्ययो यत्
तत्त्वं विजानासि यथा यथेष्टम् ।
अमर्त्यकार्येषु ममास्ति शक्तिस्
तथापि लोकाचरितं करोमि ॥ ११ ॥

पित्रा विहीनो ऽहमगाधशक्तिस्
तथापि मातुर्वचसा दुनोमि ।
इतीरितं तस्य निशम्य माता
तं शान्तयित्वा मधुरैर्वचोभिः ॥ १२ ॥

प्रसाधनैरंशुकरलघुगमैर्
विभूषयामासुरनर्घ्यमाल्यैर् ।
श्रीगौरचन्द्रं जगदेकबन्धुं
स्त्रीणां मनोज्ञं रुचितं स्मयेन ॥ १३ ॥

सचन्दनैरागुरुसारगन्धैः
समालिपन् पुत्रमदीनश्रद्धाः ।
तदा कुमाराः पृथिवीसुराणाम्
समागताः पुरुषर्षभं शुभे ॥ १४ ॥

तस्मिन् क्षणे वल्लभमिश्रवर्यः
कार्यं पितृणामथ देवतानाम् ।
समाप्य कन्यां वरहेमगौरीं
विभूषितामाभरणैः स चक्रे ॥ १५ ॥

“And concerning good expenditure for other worthy causes you know the truth as it is and as agreeable. I have power in immortal matters and yet still I behave as an ordinary person. (11)

“Though I am without my father, I have immense power and yet I am burned by the words of my mother.” Hearing his statement his mother pacified him with sweet words. (12)

With soothing clothes and gems they dressed him and with priceless garlands, Śrī Gauracandra, the one friend of the world, pleasing to women and brightened with a smile. With the fragrances sandal paste and essence of *aguru* did they rub the son, bull among men, those boys of the gods of the earth (the *brāhmaṇas*) who arrived then. (13-14)

At that moment, the honorable Vallabha Miśra completed his worship of the forefathers and the gods and decorated his daughter, whose complexion was of the finest gold, with jewelry. (15)

ततो द्विजानानयने वरेण्यान्
 वरस्य सम्प्रेषितवान् समेत्य ।
 ऊचुश्च ते मङ्गलपूर्वमाशु
 शुभाय यात्रा कुरु सामघोषैः ॥ १६ ॥

स्वयं हरिर्विप्रवरस्य सज्जनैर्
 मनुष्ययाने जयनिस्वनैर्ययौ ।
 प्रदीप्तदीपावलिभिर्निकेतनं
 मिश्रस्य हैमं शिखरं शिवो यथा ॥ १७ ॥

ततो ऽभिगम्याश्रमम् आत्मनो
 नयन् मिश्रः स्वयं तं वरयाम्बभूव ।
 पाद्यादिना गन्धवरांशुमाल्यैर्
 धूपैस्तथैवागुरुसारयुक्तैः ॥ १८ ॥

बभौ वरः पूर्णनिशाकरप्रभा
 जितस्मरस्मेरमुखेन रोचिषा ।
 प्रतप्तचामीकररोचिषा लसत-
 सुमेरुशुद्धोज्ज्वलदेह्यष्टिः ॥ १९ ॥

करद्वयेनाङ्गदकङ्कनाङ्गुली-
 विराजितेनाञ्जतलाभिशोभिना ।
 अनल्पकल्पद्रुममाशु व्याकरोत्
 समाश्रितानामभिलाषदो हरिः ॥ २० ॥

Then gathering together excellent *brāhmaṇas* he sent them to bring the groom. And they said [when they arrived at the groom's house]: "Come quickly, after performing an auspicious rite, accompanied by the sounds of the Sāmans for good luck." (16)

Hari himself went in a palanquin carried by men, surrounded by good folk and the sounds of jubilation, to the house of the respected *brāhmaṇa*, Miśra, which was lit up with rows of lanterns. He looked like Śiva going to the mountain peak of gold. (17)

Then coming out of his house, Miśra, guiding him in, accepted him as groom by washing his feet, and so forth, and with [offerings of] fine fragrances and cloth and incense along with the essence of *aguru*. (18)

The groom shone with the light of the full moon, the staff of his body glowing purely like Sumeru shining with the brightness of his cupid defeating smile and his luster of molten gold. (19)

With his two arms illumined by bracelets, armbands, and rings and beautified by their lotus-like palms he easily out shown numerous desire trees, Hari who grants the desires of those surrendered to him. (20)

सुतां समानीय निशाकरप्रभां
 प्रभाविनिध्वन्ततमःसमग्राम ।
 स्वलङ्कृतां साधु ददौ जगद्गुरोः
 पादे ऽभिरेजे ऽथ तयोरभिख्या ॥ २१ ॥

तयोर्मुखेन्दुः समरोज्ज्वलश्रिया
 सरोहिणीचन्द्रसमः सुशोभाम ।
 पुपोषतुः पुष्पचयैरसिञ्चतां
 परस्परं तौ हरपार्वतीव ॥ २२ ॥

अथोपविष्टे कमलाधिनाथे
 लक्ष्मीश्च तत्रोपविवेश ह्रीयुता ।
 पुरस्ततो ऽभ्येत्य शुचिः समाविशद्
 दातुं स कन्यां विधिना विधानवित ॥ २३ ॥

यस्याङ्घ्रिपद्मे विनिवेद्य पाद्यं
 प्रजापतिः प्राप जगत्सिसृक्षाम ।
 तत्रैव पाद्यं विदधे स वल्लभो
 नखद्युतिध्वन्ततमःसमूहे ॥ २४ ॥

यस्मै महेन्द्रो ऽधि नृपासनं ददौ
 सरत्नसिंहासनकम्बलावृतम ।
 तस्मै स कौशेयसुविष्टरासनं
 ददौ निपीतं वरपीतवाससे ॥ २५ ॥

Bringing his daughter who glowed like the moon, whose radiance destroyed all gloom, and who was well ornamented, he graciously gave her to the teacher of the world (Gaurāṅga) and then the beauty of the two reigned supreme. (21)

Their moonlike faces with their combined radiance, so beautiful, like the moon and Rohiṇī,⁴⁶ blossomed forth; those two, like Hara (Śiva) and Pāvartī, sprinkled one another with flowers. (22)

And then when the Lord of Kamalā was seated, shy Lakṣmī was seated there next to him. Then the virtuous one (Vallabhācārya), knower of the process, came before them and sat in order to give his daughter according to rule. (23)

The one at whose feet Prajāpati offered footwash and attained the desire to create the world is the same one at whose feet, the light of whose nails destroys all darkness, Vallabha offered footwash. (24)

The one to whom Great Indra gave the seat of kingship, a bejeweled lion's throne covered with blanket, is the same one, now clothed in the finest yellow, to whom he (Vallabha) give a broad silk seat. (25)

⁴⁶Rohiṇī is the ninth lunar asterism which consists of five stars including, the "red star," Aldebaran. Mythologically, Rohiṇī is considered the favorite wife of Candra, the moon.

क्रमेण सो ऽर्घ्यादिकमेव कर्म-
विधानतो हर्षतनूरुहोद्गमैः ।
कृत्वा कृतज्ञः प्रददौ हरेः करे
कन्यां समुत्सृज्य सरोजलोचनाम् ॥ २६ ॥

ततो निवृत्ते ऽतिमहोत्सवे शुभे
लक्ष्मीं समादाय निजां पुरीं ययौ ।
विश्वम्भरो विश्वभरार्तिहा विभुः
मनुष्ययानैरनुजाभिनन्दितः ॥ २७ ॥

इति श्रीकृष्णचैतन्यचरितामृते महाकाव्ये प्रथमप्रक्रमे वैवाहिको नाम दशमः सर्गः ॥ १० ॥

Having performed, in order, the water offering and the rest according to the ritual process, with goose bumps rising on his body in joy, the grateful one released his daughter, whose eyes were like lotus flowers, and gave her into the hands of Hari. (26)

Then when the auspicious and great celebration was over, Viśvambhara, the Lord, the destroyer of the pains of the burden of the world, took Lakṣmī and went to his own home in palanquins, being applauded by his followers. (27)

Thus ends the Tenth Chapter, called “The Marriage of Gaura,” in the first part of the great poem, the Immortal Acts of Śrī Kṛṣṇacaitanya.

Gaura Wins Wealth and the Observance of Lakṣmī's Departure (एकादशसर्गः)

ततः शची द्विजस्त्रीभिः कृत्वा सुमहदुत्सवम् ।
 स्नुषां प्रवेशयामास निजगेहे सभर्त्काम ॥ १ ॥
 ब्राह्मणेभ्यो ददावन्नं गन्धं माल्यं सभक्तितः ।
 अन्येभ्यः शिल्पमुख्येभ्यो नटेभ्यः प्रददौ धनम् ॥ २ ॥
 ततो वसन् शुभे गेहे सकुटुम्बैः सुखी प्रभुः ।
 रराज नभसि स्वच्छे नक्षत्रैरिव चन्द्रमाः ॥ ३ ॥
 लक्ष्मीनारायणदृष्टिमात्रे सर्वशुभानि हि ।
 आजग्मुः श्रीशचीगेहे स्वभाग्यख्यापनाय च ॥ ४ ॥
 ततो गृहाश्रमे स्थित्वा धनार्थं प्रययौ दिशि ।
 पूर्वस्यां स्वजनैः सार्धं देशान् कुर्वन् सुनिर्मलान् ॥ ५ ॥
 यं यं देशं ययौ जिष्णू राकापतिनिभाननः ।
 तत्र तत्रैव तत्रस्था जना दृष्ट्वा मुदान्विताः ॥ ६ ॥
 पश्यन्तो वदनं तस्य तृप्तिवारिधिपारगाः ।
 न बभूवुः स्त्रियश्चोचुः कस्यायं शुद्धदर्शनः ॥ ७ ॥
 मात्रास्य केन पुण्येन धृतो गर्भे नरोत्तमः ।
 असौ विजितकन्दर्पो दृष्टपूर्वो न हि क्वचित् ॥ ८ ॥

Then Śacī with the twice-born ladies after arranging a great festival brought her daughter-in-law into her own home along with her husband. (1)

To the *brāhmaṇas* she gave food, fragrances, and garlands with devotion and to the others, the chief artists and dancers she gave gifts. (2)

After that, residing in that auspicious home with his family, the Master was happy. He reigned like the moon in the clear sky along with the lunar asterisms. (3)

And, at the mere sight of Lakṣmī and Nārāyaṇa all auspicious things came to the house of Śrī Śacī to make known their good fortune. (4)

Then, being situated in the householder stage of life, he went to the East along with friends in order to earn money, all the while purifying those lands. (5)

Wherever that victorious one went, with his like the full moon, there the people of those places looked upon him with joy. (6)

Seeing his face they were not able to cross over the ocean of satisfaction⁴⁷ and the women asked "Whose is this pure-looking one? (7)

"Through what merit did his mother carry this best of men in her womb, this victor over the god of love, never before this seen any time? (8)

⁴⁷I.e., they were never satisfied.

पत्नीत्वमस्य प्राप्ता का चिराराधितशङ्करा ।
 असौ नारायणः सैव लक्ष्मीरेव न संशयः ॥ ९ ॥
 एवं बहुविधा वाचं श्रुत्वा तत्र जनेरिताम ।
 आकर्ण्यार्द्रदृशां तेषां प्रीतिं तन्वन् ययौ हरिः ॥ १० ॥
 पद्मावतीनदीतीरे गत्वा स्नात्वा यथाविधि ।
 तत्रावसत्साधुजनैः पूजितः श्रद्धयान्वितैः ॥ ११ ॥
 गङ्गातुल्या पावनी सा बभूव सुमहानदी ।
 पद्मावती महावेगा महापुलिनसम्युता ॥ १२ ॥
 कुम्भीरैर्मकरैर्मनैर्विद्युद्भिरिव चञ्चलैः ।
 शोभिता सज्जनावासविराजितमहत्तटा ॥ १३ ॥
 विश्वम्भरस्नानधौतजलौघाघहरा शुभा ।
 महत्तीर्थतमा साभूत्तत्तीरे निवसन् हरिः ॥ १४ ॥
 महात्मनां सुपुण्यानां कुर्वन्नयनयोः सुखम् ।
 मुमोद मधुहातीव साधुदर्शनलालसः ॥ १५ ॥
 दयालुरनयत्स्वामी मासान् कतिपयान् विभुः ।
 पाठयन् ब्राह्मणान्सर्वान् विद्यारसकुतूहली ॥ १६ ॥

“Who has become his wife? She must have long worshipped Śiva. He is Nārāyaṇa. So she must indeed be Lakṣmī. There is no doubt.” (9)

Overhearing many statements such as that spoken by the people there, Hari went along increasing the affection of those whose eyes were moist. (10)

After going to the bank of the Padmāvatī river and bathing according to rule, he dwelled there honored by good people endowed with faith. (11)

She became purifying, equal to the Gaṅgā, a great river, the Padmāvatī with strong current and broad banks. (12)

She's beautified by crocodiles, dolphins, and fish that are as quick as lightning and has broad banks adorned with the dwellings of good folk. (13)

She became auspicious by caring away sins in her flood of water purified by the bath of Viśvambhara, the foremost of holy bathing places, with Hari living on her bank. (14)

Giving pleasure to the eyes of the great-souled and pious ones, he enjoyed himself like Madhuhātī (Madhusūdana) wishing to see holy people. (15)

The compassionate, mighty master passed several months teaching all the *brāhmaṇas*, in excitement over the flavors of knowledge. (16)

अथ लक्ष्मी महाभागा पतिप्राणा धृतव्रता ।
 शच्याः शुश्रूषणं चक्रे पादसंवाहनादिभिः ॥ १७ ॥
 देवतानां गृहे लेपमार्जनस्वस्तिकादिकम् ।
 धूपदीपादिनैवेद्यं माल्यं प्रादात्सुसंस्कृतम् ॥ १८ ॥
 तस्याः सा सेवया वाण्या सौशील्येन च कर्मणा ।
 अतीव सुचिरं प्रीता शची पूर्तिममन्यत ॥ १९ ॥
 वधूं सुतस्यान्यतमां स्नेहोद्गततनूरुहा ।
 कन्यामिव स्नेहवशाल्लालयन्ती स्वपुत्रवत ॥ २० ॥
 एवं स्थिता गृहे काले दैवादागत्य कुण्डली ।
 अदशत्पादमूले तां लक्ष्मीमालक्ष्य स्म शची ॥ २१ ॥
 व्यजिज्ञपत् महाभीतियुक्ता जाङ्गलिकान् स्तुषाम् ।
 समानीयाकरोद्यत्नं तद्विषस्य प्रमार्जने ॥ २२ ॥
 शची मन्त्रैर्बहुविधैर्नाभूत्तद्विषमार्जनम् ।
 ततः कालकृतं मत्वा समानीय प्रयत्नतः ॥ २३ ॥
 जह्नुकन्यापयोमध्ये तुलसीदामभूषिताम् ।
 कृत्वा वधूं सह स्त्रीभिश्चकार हरिकीर्तनम् ॥ २४ ॥

Then Lakṣmī, who was most fortunate, whose very life was her husband and who observed vows [for his welfare], served Śacī with foot rubs and other services. (17)

In the room of the gods, she smeared [cow dung], cleaned, created *svastikas*, offered incense, lamps, food, and garlands most perfectly. (18)

Śacī was always extremely pleased with her service, her speech, her good character and her work and considered herself fulfilled. (19)

She affectionately pampered the wife of her son like another daughter with goosebumps rising on her body produced by affection for her. (20)

Established in the house in this way in time by fate a snake came and bit her on the sole of her foot. Noticing her Śacī informed the snake-charmers and bringing her daughter-in-law Śacī tried to cleanse the poison from her. (21-22)

With many kinds of *mantras* the poison was not dispelled. Then thinking the time had arrived, she brought her with great care and placed her, adorned with a garland of tulasī leaves, in the waters of the Daughter of Jahnu (Gaṅgā) and then she performed *saṅkīrtana* of Hari along with the other wives. (23-24)

आयाते विमले व्योम्नि गन्धर्वरथसङ्कुले ।
 ब्रह्मादिभिर्योगसिद्धैर्गीयमाने सुमङ्गले ॥ २५ ॥
 महालक्ष्मीर्जगन्माता गन्तुं स्वप्रभुसन्निधौ ।
 स्मृत्वा कृष्णपदाम्भोजं स्वर्नद्यां देहमत्यजत ॥ २६ ॥
 ततो जगाम निलयम् आत्मनश्च सुशोभनम् ।
 इन्द्रादिभिरगम्यं च सर्वमङ्गलरूपकम् ॥ २७ ॥
 लक्ष्म्या परमया युक्ता लक्ष्मी लोकनमस्कृतम् ॥ २८ ॥

इति श्रीकृष्णचैतन्यचरितामृते महाकाव्ये प्रथमप्रक्रमे श्रीगौराङ्गधनञ्जयश् च श्रीलक्ष्मीविजयोत्सवो नाम
 एकादशः सर्गः ॥ ११ ॥

When the sky was pure and crowded with the chariots of the Gandharvas and made auspicious by the singing of Brahmā and the other gods, and of those accomplished in yoga, Mahālakṣmī, the mother of the world, in order to go to the presence of her own lord remembered the lotus-like feet of Kṛṣṇa and gave up her body in the river of the heaven. (26)

Then she went to her own abode, so splendid, which is unapproachable by Indra and the other gods and which is the very form of all auspiciousness. (27)

Lakṣmī joined with the supreme Lakṣmī was bowed to by the worlds. (28)

Thus ends the eleventh chapter, called "Celebration of the Victory of Śrī Lakṣmī," in the first part of the great poem the Immortal Acts of Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya

Removal of Śacī's Sadness (द्वादशसर्गः)

अथ तां विललाप दुःखिता
स्ववधूं धर्मपरायणां शची ।
विगलन्नयनाम्बुधारया
स्तनयोः क्षालनम् एव साकरोत ॥ १ ॥

अवदद्भुजगाधम त्वया
किमिदं कर्म दुरात्मना कृतम् ।
विकटैर्दशनैः कथं न माम्
अदशस्त्वं हि विहाय मे स्तुषाम ॥ २ ॥

विनियुज्य वधूं निषेवणे
मम पुत्रो गतवान् सुधर्मिकः ।
धनधान्यसमर्जनाय मे
ह्यन्तेवासिजनैः सुसंवृतः ॥ ३ ॥

तदिदं वदनं कथं स्तुषा
परिहीना तनयस्य पश्यतु ।
इति विलप्य भृशं शुचाकुला
कुलवतीमपहाय समादिशत ॥ ४ ॥

कुरु निजकुलयोग्यसत्क्रियाम्
अकरोत्स्वस्वजनस्त्वनन्तरम् ।
निजगृहं समगात्परिदेवलोल-
नयनयोः परिमुच्य जलम् ॥ ५ ॥

स्वजनबन्धुभिराशु विबोधिता
स्थिरवती सुखितेव चिरं शची ।
स्वस्य पुत्रवदनं स्मरती सा
कृष्णानामपरिपूर्णमुखासीत् ॥ ६ ॥

अथ कियद्दिवसात्परिहर्षितः
परमसाधुभिरेव निवेदनम् ।
रजतकाञ्चनचेलसमन्वितम्
समनयत्स्वगृहं परमेश्वरः ॥ ७ ॥

अथ निरीक्ष्य शची सुतमागतं
सपदि पूर्णनिशाकरसमप्रभम् ।
न मनसातितुतोष बहुव्यथां
हृदि वहन्त्यगमत्स्तुषयार्पिताम् ॥ ८ ॥

Then greatly saddened Śacī mourned her daughter-in-law who was devoted to *dharma*. She soaked her breasts with the streams of tears flowing from her eyes. (1)

She said: “You miserable snake! What is this thing you have done, you wicked soul? Why have you not bitten me with your dreadful teeth and left my daughter-in-law alone? (2)

Engaging his wife in my service, my pious son went away, surrounded by his neighbors, to accumulate wealth and food for me. Now how can I look upon my son's face without my daughter-in-law?” Mourning bitterly like this, she, overwhelmed by sadness, parted from her daughter-in-law and gave the instruction, “perform the rites suitable to her own family.” Her own people performed them immediately and Śacī returned to her own home, shedding tears from eyes agitated with lamentation. (3-5)

Being immediately consoled by family and friends, Śacī after a while became stable and seemingly happy. Remembering the face of her son, she filled her mouth with the names of Kṛṣṇa. (6)

Then, after some time, the supreme Lord, quite pleased, brought offerings made by extraordinarily good folk consisting of silver, gold and clothing to his house. (7)

And seeing immediately that her son, as radiant as the full moon, had arrived, Śacī was not too pleased in her mind. She came forward carrying in her heart much pain because of her daughter-in-law. (8)

अथ निरीक्ष्य शचीं कमलेक्षणः
परिनिपत्य पदोः पदरेणुकम् ।
शिरसि संविदधे जननीमुखं
विमलिनं स निरीक्ष्य सुविस्मितः ॥ ९ ॥

स्मितसुधोक्षितया च गिरानघो
यदधिलब्धधनं सुसमर्पयन् ।
समवदद्वद मातरलं मुखं
विरसमेव तवाद्य कथं स्तुषा ॥ १० ॥

इति सुधावचसा मुदिता शची
वरवधूस्मृतिसन्नगिरावदत् ।
सकलमेव वधूकथनं हृदा
परिगलन्नयनाम्बुजबिन्दुभिः ॥ ११ ॥

आशु चार्द्रदृशापि चाम्बिकायाः
शोकहर्षपरिपूरितदेहः ।
इति निशम्य वचो मधुसूदनः
समवदत्करुणार्द्रदृशाम्बिकाम् ॥ १२ ॥

आत्मगोपनबलैर्वचनैस्
तद्गोपयन् हि सकलं जगदीशः ।
शृणु यथेयमवातरदप्सरा
सुरवधूः पृथिवीमनु साम्प्रतम् ॥ १३ ॥

मघवतः सदसीन्दुनिभानना
स्खलितनृत्यपदा विधिना क्षणम् ।
समवलोक्य शशाप सुरेश्वरो
भव नरस्य सुतेत्यवधार्य तत् ॥ १४ ॥

समपतत्पदयोरिति ता पुनः
सकलनाथवधू भव शोभने ।
पुनरिहाभिसुखं सुरदुर्लभं
समनुभूय हरः पदमुज्ज्वलम् ॥ १५ ॥

वत गमिष्यसि गच्छ सुशोभने
सुरपतेर्वचसातिमुमोद सा ।
सुरनदीसलिले परिमुच्य तम्
त्रिदशशापजपापमथागमत ॥ १६ ॥

And then the lotus-eyed one seeing Śacī fell at her feet and placed the dust of her feet on his head. Noticing his mother's face which was darkened with sadness he was surprised. (9)

The sinless one, while offering her the wealth he had obtained, said with words sprinkled with the nectar of a smile: "Tell me mother why do you have such a sad face now? Daughter-in-law?" (10)

Cheered up by his sweet words, Śacī with a voice saddened by the memory of that fine woman told him the whole story of his wife, sprinkling her chest with tear drops from her eyes. (11)

By the tearful gaze of his mother his body quickly became filled with sadness and joy. After hearing her words, Madhusūdāna said to his mother with a tender gaze of compassion: (12)

Concealing everything with statements powerful at self-concealment, the Lord of the Universe said: "Listen to how this nymph wife of a god descended to the earth at this time. (13)

'In the assembly of Indra Indunibhānā's dancing feet were tripped up by fate for an instant, seeing which the lord of the gods [Indra] cursed her, 'Become the daughter of a human!' Understanding that, she fell at his feet. He spoke again to her saying, 'Become the wife of the lord of everything, beautiful woman. You will again return here after experiencing the most rare happiness of the luminous feet of Hari. Now go, beautiful lady!' Hearing the words of the lord of the gods she became very pleased. Now, cleansing away the sin produced by that curse of the thirty [gods] in the waters of the Ganges she has gone. (14-16)

किं वा लक्ष्मीरूपा जगदीश्वरी
 निजप्रभुचरणाब्जमगात् स्वयम् ।
 तदलम् एव शुचा भवितव्यता
 भवति कालकृत सकलं जगत ॥ १७ ॥

इति निशम्य शची सुतस्य तद-
 वचनमिन्दुमुखस्य शुचं जहौ ।
 प्रकटवैभवगोपनकारणं
 मनुजभावधरस्य हरेस्ततम ॥ १८ ॥

न खलु चित्रमिदं भगवान् स्वयं
 सुरकथावचनं कृतवान् हि यत ।
 यदनुभावरसेन पितामहः
 सृजति हन्ति जगत्त्रयं ईश्वरः ॥ १९ ॥

इति श्रीकृष्णचैतन्यचरितामृते महाकाव्ये प्रथमप्रक्रमे शचीशोकापनोदनं नाम द्वादशः सर्गः ॥ १२ ॥

‘Or, the goddess of the universe in the form of Lakṣmī went back to the lotus feet of her own lord. Enough with lamentation. What is destined to be must be. The whole universe is ruled by time.’ (17)

Hearing the words of her moon-faced son Śacī gave up her sadness. The reason for concealing the manifest might of Hari who has assumed the condition of a human is thus expanded on. (18)

Nor indeed is it surprizing that the Lord himself has told a story of the gods, since by the gestural indications and aesthetic pleasure of such [stories], grandfather [Brahmā] creates the three worlds and the Controller [Śiva] destroys them. (19)

Thus ends the twelfth chapter of first section of the great poem called the *Immortal Acts of Śrī Kṛṣṇacaitanya*, entitled the “Removal of Śacī's Sadness.”

The Bewildering of Sanātana (त्रयोदशसर्गः)

अथावसन् गृहे रम्ये मात्रा सज्जनबन्धुभिः ।
 मुमोद च सुरैः सार्धं यथादित्या पुरन्दरः ॥ १ ॥
 ततः शची चिन्तयित्वा विवाहार्थं सुतस्य सा ।
 काशीनाथं द्विजश्रेष्ठं प्राह गच्छस्व साम्प्रतम् ॥ २ ॥
 श्रीमत्सनातनं विप्रं पण्डितं धर्मिणां वरम् ।
 वदस्व मम पुत्राय सुतां दातुं यथाविधि ॥ ३ ॥
 तच्छ्रुत्वा वचनं तस्याः काशीनाथद्विजोत्तमः ।
 न्यवेदयत्तत् सकलं पण्डिताय महात्मने ॥ ४ ॥
 गच्छ त्वं द्विजशार्दूल कर्तव्यं यत्प्रयोजनम् ।
 समयं निर्णयं कृत्वा प्राहेष्यमो द्विजोत्तमम् ॥ ५ ॥
 तच्छ्रुत्वा सकलं पत्न्या विमृष्य बन्धुभिः सह ।
 कर्तव्यमेतन्निश्चित्य काशीनाथमथाब्रवीत् ॥ ६ ॥
 श्रुत्वेत्थं वचनं तस्य समागम्य यथोदितम् ।
 शच्यै न्यवेदयत्सर्वं ततः सा हर्षिताभवत् ॥ ७ ॥
 ततः कालेन कियता पण्डितः श्रीसनातनः ।
 शुद्धः स्वाचारनिरतो वैष्णवो लोकपालकः ॥ ८ ॥
 दयालुरातिथेयश्च सुशीलः प्रियवाक् शुचिः ।
 प्राहिणोद्वाह्मणं किञ्चित्समागत्यानमत् शचीम् ॥ ९ ॥
 प्राह तां तव पुत्राय पण्डिताय महात्मने ।
 सुतां सर्वगुणैर्युक्तां रूपौदार्यसमान्विताम् ॥ १० ॥
 दातुं प्रार्थयते साध्वि पण्डितः श्रीसनातनः ।
 ततः प्रमुदिता साध्वी शची वाक्यमथाददे ॥ ११ ॥

Thus, living in the lovely house with his mother and his good friends he was happy like Indra with Aditi and the gods. (1)

Then Śacī, worrying about the marriage of her son, said to the best of the twice-born, Kāśīnātha, “Please go immediately to the *brāhmaṇa* and scholar, Śrīmat Sanātana, who is the foremost of those who follow *dharma*. Ask him to give his daughter to my son according to regulation.” (2-3)

Hearing her request, the best of the twice-born, Kāśīnātha, presented all of her proposal to the great-souled scholar. (4)

[He replied:] “Go, lion of the twice-born. Let what is necessary be done. Determining the best time, we will send a top *brāhmaṇa*.” (5)

Hearing his request, he [Sanātana] considered everything with his wife and family members and after determining that this was to be done, he gave Kāśīnātha his answer. (6)

Hearing his words he returned and informed Śacī of everything. She was thrilled. (7)

Then after a short while Śrī Sanātana who was a scholar, pure, engaged in his own practice, a Vaiṣṇava, a protector of people, kind, hospitable, of fine character, sweet spoken, and clean sent a *brāhmaṇa* who came a bowed to Śacī. (8-9)

He said to her: “Good lady! To your son who is a scholar and of noble nature, the scholar Śrī Sanātana wishes to give his daughter, who has all good traits and possesses beauty and generosity.” At that the good Śacī was pleased and spoke these words: (10-11)

ममैव सम्मतो नित्यं सम्बन्धः सद्गुणाश्रयः ।
 कर्तव्यमेतन्नियतं शुभकालम् अथाह तम ॥ १२ ॥
 ततो हृष्टो द्विजश्रेष्ठो वदन्मधुरया गिरा ।
 विष्णुप्रिया पतिं प्राप्य तव पुत्रं श्रियान्वितम् ॥ १३ ॥
 यथार्थनाम्नि भवतु श्रीमद्विश्वम्भरः प्रभुः ।
 तामुवाह्य यथा कृष्णो रुक्मिणीं प्राप्य निर्वृतः ॥ १४ ॥
 तथा निर्वृतिमाप्नोतु सत्यमेतद्वदामि ते ।
 इति द्विजेन्द्रवचनं श्रुत्वा हर्षान्विता शची ॥ १५ ॥
 द्विजश्च गत्वा तत्सर्वम् पण्डिताय न्यवेदयत ।
 ततो हर्षान्वितो भूत्वा पण्डितः श्रीसनातनः ॥ १६ ॥
 सर्वद्रव्याद्यलङ्कारमाहरत् सत्वरं कृती ।
 ततः स समयं ज्ञात्वा धिवासं कर्तुमुद्यतः ॥ १७ ॥
 ततो गणक आगत्य प्रोवाच विनयान्वितः ।
 मयाभ्येत्य पथि मुदा श्रीमद्विश्वम्भरः प्रभुः ॥ १८ ॥
 दृष्टः पृष्टश्च भगवन्नधिवासस् तवानघ ।
 विवाहस्याद्य किं तत्र विलम्बस्तात दृश्यते ॥ १९ ॥
 तच्छ्रुत्वा प्राह मां देवो राजत्स्मेरमुखाम्बुजः ।
 कुतः कस्य विवाहस्ते विदितस् तद्वदस्व मे ॥ २० ॥
 इति श्रुत्वा मया तस्य वचनं तव सन्निधौ ।
 समागतं निशम्यैतद्यद्युक्तं तत्समाचर ॥ २१ ॥
 इति श्रुत्वा वचस्तस्य गणकस्य सुदुःखितः ।
 श्रीमत्सनातनो धैर्यमवलम्ब्याब्रवीद्वचः ॥ २२ ॥

“This relationship which possesses all good qualities is ever agreeable to me. Let this be done according to regulation at an auspicious time.” So she said to him. (12)

Then, very pleased, the best of the twice born said with a sweet voice: “Viṣṇupriyā gaining your son as her husband will make him most fortunate. May his name become true, Master Viśvambhara (Supporter of the World), having married her. Just as Kṛṣṇa after marrying Rukmiṇī became happy, may he too become happy like that. This I tell you truly.” Hearing these words of the king of twice-born, Śacī became filled with joy. (13-15)

The twice-born man went and reported all that to the scholar (Sanātana). Scholar Śrī Sanātana became delighted at that and quickly collected together all the materials and ornaments for the ceremony. Then he, after determining the proper time for the ceremony, was ready to perform the *adhivāsa* preparatory rites. (16-17)

Then the astrologer arrived and reported with humility “While I was happily on the way here I met Master Viśvambhara and asked him, ‘Lord, the *adhivāsa* of your wedding, o sinless, is now. How is it that you are found to be delayed for that?’ Hearing that he said to me, with shining smile on his lotus-like face, ‘Where? Whose marriage are you talking about? Tell me about it.’ (18-20)

Hearing his words I came straight to you. Hearing this, consider what it is fitting to do. (21)

Hearing the words of that astrologer, Śrīmat Sanātana became quite saddened. Regaining his composure he spoke these words: (22)

कृतं मयैतत्सकलं द्रव्यालङ्करणानि च ।
 तथापि तस्य न तत्रादरो भूद्वैवदोषतः ॥ २३ ॥
 ममात्र किं मया कार्यं नापराध्यामि कुत्रचित् ।
 ततः सन्त्रस्तहृदया पत्नी तस्य शुचीव्रता ॥ २४ ॥
 कुलजा विष्णुभक्ता च पतिसेवापरायणा ।
 अब्रवीद्दुःखिता दुःखयुक्तं पण्डितसत्तमम् ॥ २५ ॥
 पतिं पतिव्रता वाक्यं न करोति यदा स्वयम् ।
 श्रीमद्विश्वम्भरो नात्रापराधो मे कथं भवान् ॥ २६ ॥
 दुःखितः किन्तु नास्माभिर्वक्तव्यं किञ्चिदण्व् अपि ।
 कार्यमेतन्न कर्तव्यं त्यज दुःखं सुखी भव ॥ २७ ॥
 इति तस्या वचः श्रुत्वा प्रियायाः प्रीतिमावहन ।
 उवाच बन्धुभिः सार्धमेतदेव सुनिश्चितम् ॥ २८ ॥
 नाकरोद्यदि विप्रेन्द्रो न करिष्याम एव हि ।
 ततोऽसौ भगवान् ज्ञात्वा दुःखितौ द्विजदम्पती ॥ २९ ॥
 रोषेण लज्जया युक्तौ विष्णुभक्तौ विमत्सरौ ।
 ब्राह्मण्यो भगवान् देवस्तयोर्दुःखम् अवाहरत ॥ ३० ॥

इति श्रीकृष्णचैतन्यचरितामृते महाकाव्ये प्रथमप्रक्रमे सनातनविमोहनलीला नाम त्रयोदशः सर्गः ॥ १३ ॥

“I have done all this and [gathered] all the materials and ornaments and still his regard for this has not arisen because of fault of fate. (23)

“What am I to do here? I have not offended anyone in anyway.” Then his wife with trembling heart, of pure vow, well-born, a *bhakta* of Viṣṇu, intent on serving her husband, sadly addressed her unhappy husband, the finest of scholars: “When Śrīmat Viśvambhara himself made it no, I have no offense in the this. Why should you be sad? But there is nothing at all for us to say. This wedding is not to be carried out. Give up your sadness and be happy.” (24-27)

After hearing the words of his dear wife he felt affection for her and spoke this after consulting with his family members: “If the king of *brāhmaṇas* did not [agree], we will certainly not do it.” Then Bhagavān, the divine lord of *brāhmaṇas*, realizing that the disheartened twice-born couple, who were unselfish *bhaktas* of Viṣṇu, were angry and embarrassed removed their sadness. (28-30)

Thus ends the thirteenth chapter of first section of the great poem called the *Immortal Acts of Śrī Kṛṣṇacaitanya*, entitled the “Sport of Bewildering Sanātana.”

Marriage to Viṣṇupriyā (चतुर्दशसर्गः)

ततश्च भगवान् कृष्णः करुणापरमानसः ।
 तयोर्दुःखमनुस्मृत्य प्रापय्य निजब्राह्मणम् ॥ १ ॥
 वाण्या मधुरया विप्रमुखेन प्राकृतो यथा ।
 अनुनीय तयोः कन्यामुद्वाहार्थं मनो दधे ॥ २ ॥
 ततः शुभे विलम्बेन्दुनक्षत्रशुभसंयुते ।
 अधिवासदिने साधुविप्रसङ्गसमागते ॥ ३ ॥
 ऋङ्गपणवाध्माने वेदध्वनिनिनादिते ।
 धूपदीपपताकाभिरलङ्कृतदिगन्तरे ॥ ४ ॥
 स्वस्तिवाचनपूर्वं हि सम्पूज्य पितृदेवताः ।
 अधिवासक्रियां चक्रे ब्राह्मणैः सह स प्रभुः ॥ ५ ॥
 ततो ददौ द्विजातिभ्यः सज्जनेभ्यश्च चन्दनम् ।
 गन्धताम्बूलमाल्यं च भूरि भूरियशा हरिः ॥ ६ ॥
 तस्मिन् काले पण्डितार्यः श्रीयुतः श्रीसनातनः ।
 अभ्ययाच्छ्रद्धया युक्तः प्रहृष्टेनान्तरात्मना ॥ ७ ॥
 ब्राह्मणान् विप्रसाध्वीश्च प्रेषयित्वा यथाविधि ।
 कारयामास जामातुरधिवासं महात्मनः ॥ ८ ॥
 स्वयं चक्रे स्वदुहितुरधिवासं यथाविधि ।
 महानन्दरसे मग्ने नाविन्दद्भववेदनाम् ॥ ९ ॥
 अथापरदिने प्रातर्भगवान् जाह्नवीजलम् ।
 अवगाह्याह्निकं कृत्वा प्रायात्साधुभिरन्वितः ॥ १० ॥
 नान्दीमुखान् पितृगणान् सम्पूज्य सुसमाहितः ।
 स्थितन्तं सहसाभ्येत्य द्विजपुत्रा महौजसः ॥ ११ ॥
 वस्त्रालङ्कारमालाभिर्गन्धाद्यैः समभूषयन् ।
 श्रीमद्विश्वम्भरं देवं कामकोटिसमप्रभम् ॥ १२ ॥

And then Bhagavān Kṛṣṇa [i.e., Śrī Viśvambhara], his heart filled with compassion remembering their sadness, sent his own *brāhmaṇa* and through the sweet words from that *brāhmaṇa*'s lips, as is natural,⁴⁸ conciliated them and turned their minds towards giving their daughter in marriage. (1-2)

Then on the auspicious day of the preparatory rites (*adhivāsa*), which was free of evil influence and joined with auspicious moon and constellations, occasioning the association of good people and *brāhmaṇas*, resounding with drums and cymbals, reverberating with the sounds of the Vedas, all the directions adorned with incense, lamps, and flags, the Master, after invoking the well-being of all and honoring the ancestors, performed the preparatory rites along with the *brāhmaṇas*. (3-5)

Then Hari, whose reputation was abundant, gave abundantly to the twice-born and to the good people sandalwood, as well as fragrances, betal nut, and garlands (6)

At that time the lord of the scholars, the blessed Sanātana, arrived with faith, his mind thrilled with delight. Sending *brāhmaṇas* and the chaste wives of *brāhmaṇas* he had the preparatory rites of his great-souled son-in-law performed according to the regulations. He himself performed the preparatory rites of his daughter according to rule. When he was submerged in the enjoyment of the great joy, he did not experience the pains of worldly existence. (7-9)

Then the next day in the morning he bathed in the water of the Jāhnavī, performed his daily rites, and returned home surrounded by good people. (10)

With a concentrated mind he worshipped his Nāndimukha forefathers.⁴⁹ Suddenly many resplendent sons of the twice-born arrived and dressed him with new clothes, ornaments, garlands, sweet fragrances, and so forth. The divine Śrīmad Viśvambhara was as beautiful as a billion gods of love. (11-12)

⁴⁸The phrase is *prākṛto yathā*. It could mean "like an ordinary man."

⁴⁹The Nāndimukha forefathers are a group of forefathers to whom offerings are made. According to some they are the three ancestors before one's great-grandfather.

तस्मिन् क्षणे चकाराशु श्रीसनातनः पण्डितः ।
 वस्त्रालङ्कारमालाभिर् गन्धाद्यैर्मलङ्कृताम् ॥ १३ ॥
 कन्यां वैवाहिकं कालं विदित्वा ब्राह्मणोत्तमानः ।
 प्रेषयामास जामातुरादरानयनाय सः ॥ १४ ॥
 ततो गत्वा द्विजश्रेष्ठाः प्रोचुश्च विनयान्विताः ।
 उद्वाहार्थं तव शुभः कालो'यं समुपस्थितः ॥ १५ ॥
 विजयस्व शुभाय त्वं गमनाय मर्ति कुरु ।
 पण्डितस्य गृहे तस्य भाग्यं को वक्तुमर्हति ॥ १६ ॥
 तच्छ्रुत्वा ब्राह्मणवचो भगवान् सादराननः ।
 जयघोषैर्ब्रह्मघोषैर्मृदङ्गपटहस्वनैः ॥ १७ ॥
 वीणापणवकांस्यादिनिस्वनैर्मुदितो ययौ ।
 मातरं सम्प्रणम्याशु दोलारोहणपूर्वकम् ॥ १८ ॥
 दीपावलिभिरन्यैश्च नक्षत्रैरिव चन्द्रमाः ।
 शरच्चन्द्रांशुशुभ्रायां शिबिकायां रराज सः ॥ १९ ॥
 सुवर्णगौरक्षीराब्धौ मेरुशृङ्ग इवापरः ।
 जगन्मोहनलावण्य व्यक्तीकृत्य स्वयं हरिः ॥ २० ॥
 प्राप्तं जामातरं वीक्ष्य हर्षोत्फुल्लतनूरुहः ।
 उद्यम्यानीय विधिना पाद्यमासनमादरात् ॥ २१ ॥
 दत्त्वा तं वरयामास वस्त्रस्त्रगनुलेपनैः ।
 द्रुतकाञ्चनगौराङ्गं मालतीमाल्यवक्षसम् ॥ २२ ॥
 मेरुशृङ्गं यथा गङ्गा द्विधाधारासमन्वितम् ।
 उद्यत्पूर्णनिशानाथवदनं पङ्कजेक्षणम् ॥ २३ ॥
 दृष्ट्वा जामातरं श्वश्रुर्मोद सुस्मितानना ।
 सा दीपैस्वस्तिकैर्लाजैर्माङ्गल्यैस्तद्विजस्त्रियः ॥ २४ ॥
 चक्रुर्निर्मञ्छनं प्रीता जामातुर्हृद्यकोविदाः ।
 परमानन्दसम्पूर्णाः कौतूहलसमन्विताः ॥ २५ ॥

At that very moment Śrī Sanātana Paṇḍita quickly decorated his daughter with new clothes, jewelry, garlands, and fragrances. Knowing that the time for the wedding was approaching he sent some topnotch *brāhmaṇas* to offer respect to and bring the groom. (13-14)

Then when best of the twice-born arrived there and they humbly said: “The auspicious time for your wedding has arrived. May you be victorious in gaining prosperity! Turn your mind to going to the house of the Paṇḍita. Who can describe his good fortune?” (15-16)

Hearing the words of the *brāhmaṇas*, the Lord with a respectful countenance bowed quickly to his mother and then after climbing onto the palanquin departed, pleased by shouts of “jaya,” Vedic songs, the sounds of *mṛ-daṅgas* and kettledrums, *viṇās*,⁵⁰ cymbals, and bells. (17-18)

He shined brightly on the palanquin, which was as white as the rays of the autumn moon, surrounded by strings of lights like the moon surrounded by stars. (19)

Like another peak of Meru in the ocean of milk golden-whitish in color, Hari himself revealed his world-enchancing beauty. (20)

Seeing that the groom had arrived [Śrī Sanātana’s] pores blossomed into goosebumps in his joy. With great care he brought him in, respectfully washed his feet, and offered him a seat according to proper etiquette. He favored him with clothes, garlands, and ointments. With his golden body like melted gold and his chest bearing garlands of jasmine, he looked like the peak of Mount Mera dividing the Ganges into two streams. Seeing the groom’s face like the rising full moon and his lotus-like eyes, the mother-in-law-to-be with a smile on her face was delighted. She and the other wives of the twice-born waved lamps, fortunate-bearing objects, parched grain, and other auspicious things, before him,⁵¹ with affection for him, well-informed in what was dear to him, filled with the greatest joy, and possessing much curiosity about him. (21-25)

⁵⁰ An ancient Indian stringed instrument.

⁵¹ A manner of greeting an important guest, offering lights, flowers, water, sweets, etc.

समानीय सुतां दिव्यां श्रीसनातनपण्डितः ।
 न्यवेदयत्पादमूले जामातुः सुसमाहितः ॥ २६ ॥
 ततो जयजयैर्नादैर्विप्राणां वेदनिस्वनैः ।
 नानावादित्रनिर्घोषैर्बभूव महदुत्सवः ॥ २७ ॥
 ववर्ष पुष्पैरन्योन्यं विष्णुर्विष्णुप्रिया च सा ।
 साक्षादेव महानन्दो'वततार स्वयं विभुः ॥ २८ ॥
 ततः स आसने शुभ्रे शुद्धास्तरणसंयुते ।
 उपविष्टो महाबाहुर हरिः सा च शुभा वधूः ॥ २९ ॥
 द्वारवत्यां यथा कृष्णो रुक्मिणी रुचिरानना ।
 ववृधे'थानयोः कान्ती रोहिणीशशिनोरिव ॥ ३० ॥
 आगत्य विधिवत्कन्याम् उत्सृज्य करपङ्कजे ।
 दत्त्वा कृतार्थमात्मानं मेने स श्रीसनातनः ॥ ३१ ॥
 ततो विवाहे निर्वृत्ते कृत्वा स सुमहोत्सवम् ।
 आजगाम निजं गेहं सभार्यो जगतां गुरुः ॥ ३२ ॥
 दृष्ट्वा तु तं क्षितिसुरैरभिनन्द्यमानं
 वध्वा समं सपदि गेहमुपागतं सा ।
 गेहप्रवेशनविधिं मुदिता चकार
 साध्वीभिर्बन्धुरमुखी जननी मुरारेः ॥ ३३ ॥

इति श्रीकृष्णचैतन्यचरितामृते महाकाव्ये प्रथमप्रक्रमे श्रीविष्णुप्रियाविवाहो नाम चतुर्दशः सर्गः ॥ १४ ॥

Śrī Sanātana Paṇḍita brought forth his glowing daughter and offered her to his new son-in-law with full composure. (26)

Then arose a great celebration with shouts of “victory, victory,” the sounds of Vedic chants of the *brāhmaṇas*, and the sounds of many kinds of musical instruments. (27)

They sprinkled one another with flower petals, Viṣṇu and Viṣṇupriyā. Great joy itself descended. Then the Infinite himself sat down on a white seat with a pure cushion, mighty-armed Hari and she his auspicious bride. (28-29)

Like Kṛṣṇa and lovely faced Rukmiṇī in Dvāravatī, they increased so each other’s beauty like the constellation Rohiṇī and the moon. (30)

After coming forward, releasing his daughter according rule, and giving her over into the hands of her husband, Śrī Sanātana considered himself to have achieved his goal. (31)

Then when the wedding was completed after great celebration the teacher of the world returned to his own home with his wife. (32)

Seeing him while being praised by the gods of the earth (*brāhmaṇas*) arriving home together with his wife she, the mother of Murāri, performed with her chaste friend the ceremony of entering the house joyful smile on her face. (33)

Thus ends the fourteenth chapter of the first section of the great poem called the *Immortal Acts of Śrī Kṛṣṇacaitanya*, entitled “Marriage to Viṣṇupriyā.”

Meeting With Īśvarapurī (पञ्चदशसर्गः)

ततः पुरस्थैरभिनन्दितो हरि-
 र्वसन् गृहे ब्राह्मणवैद्यसज्जनान् ।
 अपाठयल्लौकिकसत्क्रियाविधिं
 चकार कारुण्यविधानमद्भुतम् ॥ १ ॥

वाचस्पतेर्वाग्मितया जहार
 काव्यस्य काव्येन विधोः श्रियं सः ।
 कान्त्या स्वयं भूमिगते सुरेशे
 न्यस्तां पुनस्तां हृदये ददुः किम् ॥ २ ॥

सो'ध्यापयद्विप्रमहत्तमांस्तान्
 ये पूर्वजन्मार्जितपुण्यराशयः ।
 ब्रूमः कथं भाग्यवतां महद्गुणं
 येषां स्वयं लोकगुरुर्गुरुर्भवेत् ॥ ३ ॥

सौन्दर्यमाधुर्यविलासविभ्रमै
 रराज राजद्वरहेमगौरैः ।
 विष्णुप्रियालालितपादपङ्कजो
 रसेन पूर्णो रसिकेन्द्रमौलिः ॥ ४ ॥

विद्याविलासेन विलोलबाहुर्
 गच्छन् पथि शिष्यसमाकुलो हरिः ।
 आगत्य गेहे निजमातुरन्तिके
 तस्याः सुखं नित्यमधात्रियासमम् ॥ ५ ॥

ततः स लोकानुशिक्षयन्मनश्
 चकार कर्तुं पितृकार्यमच्युतः ।
 श्राद्धं स कृत्वा विधिवद्विधानविद्
 गयां प्रतस्थे क्षितिदेवतान्वितः ॥ ६ ॥

After that Hari was applauded by the residents of the town. Living at home he, by teaching good people such as *brāhmaṇas* and *vaidyas* the methods of the world and the methods of the holy, made a wonderful arrangement for compassion. (1)

By his eloquence he steals away that of the lord of speech, by his poetry that of Kāvya (Śukrācārya) and by his beauty the loveliness of the moon. When the lord came to earth did they themselves place their qualities again in his heart? (2)

He taught the greatest *brāhmaṇas*, who in their previous births accumulated masses of merits. How can we describe the great virtue of those fortunate ones for whom the teacher of the whole world himself became their teacher. (3)

With beauty, sweetness, playfulness, and gracefulness, the whitish one (*gaura*), whose complexion was the color of the finest, most radiant gold, shone forth, his lotus-like feet cared for by Viṣṇupriyā, he the head of the kings of rasa-enjoyers who was filled with rasa. (4)

Hari, his arms swinging with the sport of knowledge, moved along the street surrounded by students. Returning home to his own mother, he gave her happiness along with his dear wife. (5)

Then, in order to teach the world by example, Acyuta made up his mind to perform his father's rites. He performed his father's Śrāddha according to regulation and knowing the method departed for Gayā accompanied by earth-deities (*brāhmaṇas*). (6)

गच्छन् पथि प्राकृतचेष्टया हसन्
नमोक्तिभिः कौतुकमावहन् सताम ।
रेमे कुरङ्गावलिराजितासु
स्थलीषु पश्यन्मृगकौतुकानि ॥ ७ ॥

स्नात्वा स चोरान्धयके हृदे मुदा
कृत्वाहिकं देवपितॄन् यथाविधि ।
सन्तर्पयित्वा सहसान्वितः प्रियैर्
मन्दारमारुह्य ददर्श देवताः ॥ ८ ॥

ततो'वतीर्यावजगाम सत्वरं
धराधराधो भवनं द्विजस्य सः ।
मनुष्यशिक्षामनुदशयन् प्रभुर्
ज्वरेण सन्तप्ततनुर्बभूव ॥ ९ ॥

बभूव मे वर्त्मनि दैवयोगाच्च
छरीरवैवश्यमतः कथं स्यात् ।
गयासु मे पैतृककर्म विघ्नः
श्रेयस्यभूदित्यतिचिन्तयाकुलः ॥ १० ॥

ततो'प्युपायं परिचिन्तयन् स्वयं
ज्वरस्य शान्त्यै द्विजपादसेवनम् ।
वरं स विज्ञाय तथोपपादयन्
तदम्बुपानं भगवांश्चकार ॥ ११ ॥

ये सर्वविप्रा मधुसूदनाश्रयाः
निरन्तरं कृष्णपदाभिचिन्तकाः ।
ततः स्वयं कृष्णजनाभिमानी
तेषां परं पादजलं पपौ प्रभुः ॥ १२ ॥

ततो ज्वरस्योपशमो बभूव
तान् दर्शयित्वा द्विजपादभक्तिम् ।
जगाम तीर्थं स पुनः पुनारुख्यं
चकार तत्र द्विजदेवतार्चनम् ॥ १३ ॥

While walking along the road he laughed like an ordinary person and amused the good with his jokes. He enjoyed seeing the antics of the animals in places frequented by antelope. (7)

And after happily bathing in a pond called Corāndhayaka, performing his daily rites, and making offerings to the gods and forefathers, he rapidly climbed Mandāra with his dear friends and saw the sacred images there. (8)

Then, he descended quickly and went to the house of a twice-born at the base of the mountain. To demonstrate a teaching for human beings, the Master's body became scorched with fever. (9)

“By heaven's influence my body has become ill on the journey. How then will my ancestral rites at Gayā be accomplished? An obstacle to my good fortune has arisen.” Thus, he became troubled by great worry. (10)

Then, while considering ways to break his fever he realized that serving the twice-born is the best and deciding on that the Lord drank their foot-wash. (11)

All those *brāhmaṇas* who depend on Madhusūdana are constantly mindful of the feet of Kṛṣṇa. Therefore, considering himself one of Kṛṣṇa's subjects, the Master drank their foot wash. (12)

Then his fever was cured. Having demonstrated for them bhakti for the feet of the twice-born, he went again to the holy place named Puna and performed there worship of the twice-born and the deities. (13)

ततः समुत्तीर्य नदीं स गच्छन्
तीर्थोत्तमे राजगृहे सुपुण्ये ।
ब्रह्माख्यकुण्डे पितृदेवपूजां
चकार लोकाननुशिक्षयन् सः ॥ १४ ॥

...

पत्या स्वमातुः ससुरो'गमच्छनैर्
गयां गदाभृच्चरणं दिदृक्षुः ॥ १५ ॥

तस्मिन् शुभं न्यासिवरं ददर्श
स ईश्वराख्यं हरिपादभक्तम् ।
पुरीं परेशः परयात्मभक्त्या
तुष्टं ननामैनम् अथाब्रवीच्च ॥ १६ ॥

दिष्ट्याद्य दृष्टं भगवन् पदाम्बुजं
तव प्रभो ब्रूहि यथा भवाम्बुधिम ।
निस्तीर्य कृष्णाङ्घ्रिसरोरुहामृतं
पस्यामि तन्मे करुणानिधे स्वयम् ॥ १७ ॥

स इत्थमाकर्ण्य हरेर्वचो'मृतं
मुदा ददौ मन्त्रवरं मतिज्ञः ।
दशाक्षरं प्राप्य स गौरचन्द्रमा
तुष्टाव तं भक्तिविभावितः स्वयम् ॥ १८ ॥

न्यासिन् दयालो तव पादसङ्गमात्
कृतार्थता मे'द्य बभूव दुर्लभा ।
श्रीकृष्णपादाब्जमधून्मदा च सा
यथा तरिष्यामि दुरन्तसंसृतिम् ॥ १९ ॥

इति श्रीकृष्णचैतन्यचरितामृते महाकाव्ये प्रथमप्रक्रमे श्रीमदीश्वरपुरीदर्शनं नाम पञ्चदशः सर्गः ॥ १५ ॥

Then after crossing the river he went to Rājagrha, the most meritorious, highest of holy sites. At a pond called Brahma-kunḍa he performed worship of his father to teach the people. (14)

... With the husband of his mother and the gods he went slowly to Gayā, wishing to see the lotus-like feet of Holder of the Club (Viṣṇu).⁵² (15)

There he met a virtuous, exemplary renunciant named Īśvara Purī who was a *bhakta* of Hari. The supreme lord (Viśvambhara) bowed to him, who was pleased with his higher *bhakti* for him (the Self), and then said: (16)

“Today by good fortune, lord, I have met you.⁵³ Master, please tell me how I may cross over the ocean of becoming and perceive the deathless nectar of Kṛṣṇa’s lotus-like feet, you who are yourself an ocean of compassion.” (17)

He, hearing thus this sweet statement of Hari, joyfully gave him the best of *mantras*, knowing his preference. Receiving the ten-syllable *mantra*,⁵⁴ Gau-racandra (Viśvambhara) praised him filled with *bhakti*. (18)

“O compassionate renunciant! From connection with you my difficult to attain success now has been achieved and that success is intoxication from the honey of the lotus feet of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, such that I will cross over the endless cycle of birth and death.”

Thus ends the fifteenth chapter of the first section of the great poem the *Immortal Acts of Śrī Kṛṣṇacaitanya*, entitled “Meeting with Śrī Īśvarapurī.”

⁵²The first half of the verse seems to be lost. Perhaps the words *patyā svamātuh* “with the husband of his mother” (his father?) belong to whatever was communicated in that half. Neither of the translators, Hindi or Bengali, take any notice of the words.

⁵³Lit., “I have seen your lotus-like feet” (*[mayā] dr̥ṣṭam padāmbujam tava*).

⁵⁴The ten-syllable Gopāla *mantra*: क्लीं कृष्णाय गोविन्दाय स्वाहा. This *mantra* comes in two versions, a ten-syllable and an eighteen-syllable version, and is, along with the Kāma-gāyatrī, the main *mantra* for the worship of Kṛṣṇa.

Visit to Gayā (षोडशसर्गः)

गुरौ स भक्तिं परिदर्शयन् स्वयं
फल्गुषु चक्रे पितृदेवतार्चनम् ।
प्रेतादिशृङ्गे पितृपिण्डदानं
ब्रह्माङ्गुलीरेणुयुतेषु कृत्वा ॥ १ ॥

देवान् समभ्यर्च्य ददौ द्विजातये
पितॄन् समुद्दिश्य यथेष्टदक्षिणाम् ।
ततो वरुह्याशु ययाव उदीचीं
पितृक्रियां दक्षिणमानसे च ॥ २ ॥

कृत्वोत्तरे मानससंज्ञके च
ययौ स जिह्वाचपले द्विजान्वितः ।
श्राद्धं पितॄन्नाम् अथ देवतानां
कृत्वा गयामूर्ध्नि जगाम हृष्टः ॥ ३ ॥

द्विजोत्तमैः शोडशवेदिकायां
चकार पिण्डं पितृकर्मपूर्वकम् ।
श्रीमज्जगन्नाथपुरन्दराख्यः
प्रत्यक्षीभूय जगृहे मुदान्वितः ॥ ४ ॥

यथा श्रीरामेण हि दत्तपिण्डः
गृहीत आगम्य तदीयपित्रा ।
एवं हि सर्वत्र हरेश्चरित्रं
तथापि दुष्प्राप्यतमं यदेतत् ॥ ५ ॥

स विष्णुपद्यां हरिपादचिह्नं
दृष्ट्वातिहृष्टो मनसाब्रवीच्च ।
कथं हरेः पादपयोजलक्ष्म-
प्रेमोदयो मे न बभूव दृष्ट्वा ॥ ६ ॥

तस्मिन् क्षणे तस्य बभूव दैवात्
सुशीततोयैरभिषेचनं मुहुः ।
कम्पोर्ध्वरोमा भगवान् बभूव
प्रेमाम्बुधाराशतधौतवक्षाः ॥ ७ ॥

Demonstrating himself the nature of *bhakti* for one's *guru*, he performed ritual worship of his father-deity at Phalgu.⁵⁵ At Preta Peak, in the midst of those attended by the dust of the fingers of Brahman,⁵⁶ he offered special funeral cakes (*piṇḍa*) to his father. (1)

Having worshiped the gods, he gave to the twice-born enough donations to be directed to his forefathers. Then descending quickly, he traveled north and after performing his father's rites at Dakṣiṇamānasa and at Uttaramānasa,⁵⁷ he went, surrounded by the twice-born, to Jihvācapala.⁵⁸ Then after performing a *śrāddha* ceremony for his forefathers and the gods he was pleased and went to the head of Gayā.⁵⁹ (2-3)

Through the foremost of twice-born priests he offered cakes, preceded by rites for his father, on the sixteen-altar. Śrīmad Jagannātha Purandara himself became visible and accepted them with pleasure. (4)

It was like when Śrī Rāma offered cakes and his father came and accepted them. Such are Hari's activities everywhere, yet they are the rarest of all. (5)

In Viṣṇupadī⁶⁰ he saw the impression of Hari's foot and became extremely thrilled. He said to himself, "Why, after seeing this, has my love for the marks of the lotus-like feet of Hari not arisen?" (6)

In that very instant, by good fortune, [it was as if] he was sprinkled again and again with very cold water. The Lord began shivering and his hair stood on end, his chest was drenched with streams of tears of love. (7)

⁵⁵Phalgu is a holy site near Gayā.

⁵⁶It is unclear what the expression *brahmāṅgulireṇuyuta* means. The other translators have either ignored it or taken it as a reference to some sort of place. *Reṇu* means dust or pollen. Altogether the compound means "possessing the dust of the fingers of Brahman or the *brāhmaṇas*." Or, perhaps *brahmāṅgulī* is some kind of pollen-bearing plant that grows on Preta Peak. It could also mean, I suppose, that Viśvambhara was surrounded by others who followed the Brahmanical way or culture, i.e., they were "dusted" by the fingers of *brāhmaṇas*.

⁵⁷Possibly two sacred lakes somewhere near Gayā.

⁵⁸Another sacred site? Lit. "active or impertinent tongue." *Jihvā* could mean the tongue of *agni* or fire, as well.

⁵⁹Viśvambhara is thought to have made this journey to Gayā in 1509 C.E. at the age of 23.

⁶⁰The still existing Viṣṇupada temple in Gayā.

स विह्वलः कृष्णपदाब्जयुग्म-
प्रेमोत्सवेनाशु विमुक्तसङ्गः ।
त्यक्त्वा गयां गन्तुमियेष रम्याम्
मधोर्वनं साधुनिषेवितां ताम् ॥ ८ ॥

प्राहाशरीरा नवमेघनिस्वना
वाणी तमाहूय चल स्वमन्दिरम् ।
ततः परं कालवशेन देव
मधोर्वनं चान्यदपि स्वचेष्टया ॥ ९ ॥

भवान् हि सर्वेश्वर एष निश्चितः
कर्तुं ह्यकर्तुं च समर्थः सर्वतः ।
तथापि भृत्यैर्गदितं च यत्प्रभो
कर्तुं प्रमाणं हि तमर्हसि ध्रुवम् ॥ १० ॥

स इत्थमाकर्ण्य गिरं सुदिव्याम्
आगत्य गेहं निजबन्धुभिर्वृतः ।
ननाम मातुश्चरणे निपत्य
बभूव हर्षाश्रुविलोचना शची ॥ ११ ॥

गृहे वसन् प्रेमविभिन्नधैर्यं
रुदत्यलं रौति मुहुर्मुहुः स्वनैः ।
स वेपथुर्गद्गदया गिरा लपत्य
अलं हरे कृष्ण हरे मुदा क्वचित् ॥ १२ ॥

श्रीवासादिविप्रगणैः क्वचिन्नवं
गायत्यलं नृत्यति भावपूर्णः ।
नानावतारानुकृतिं वितन्वन्
रेमे नृलोकाननुशिक्षयंश्च ॥ १३ ॥

He became agitated by the blossoming of divine love (*prema*) for the two lotus-like feet of Kṛṣṇa and quickly left aside his companions. He wanted to leave beautiful Gayā, which is filled with holy people, and go to the forest of Madhu (Vṛndāvana). (8)

An unembodied voice, sounding like the thunder of a new cloud, called to him and said: “Return to your own home. Then, later, when the time is right, lord, [go] to Madhu’s forest and other places as well by your own effort. (9)

“You are indeed the controller of all. This is certain. You are able to act or not act always. Still, you should always make true what is said by your servants, o master.” (10)

Hearing these divine words, he returned home with his friends and falling at the feet of his mother, he bowed to her. Śacī was blinded by her tears of joy. (11)

While living at home his composure became disturbed by divine love. He wept; he roared repeatedly, making various sounds; he trembled and with a choked voice, he sometimes joyfully uttered “Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare.” (12)

Sometimes he sang praise with *brāhmaṇas* led by Śrīvāsa and danced filled with emotion. And, imitating the various descents (*avatāra*) [of Viṣṇu], he enjoyed himself while teaching human beings. (13)

न्यासं च चक्रे हरिपादपद्मे
 सर्वा क्रियां न्यासिवरो बभूव ।
 ततो गमत्क्षेत्रवरे महात्मभिर्
 वृतो मुकुन्दप्रमुखैर्हरिप्रियैः ॥ १४ ॥
 ददर्श देवं पुरुषोत्तमेश्वरं
 चिरं चिरानन्दसुखातिसत्सुखम् ।
 लब्ध्वागमद्राघवदेवनिर्मितं
 सेतुं पथि प्राज्ञजनैः स साधुभिः ॥ १५ ॥
 तत्र स्थितान् सप्तमालवृक्षान्
 आलिङ्ग्य चक्रे मुहुरेव रोदनम् ।
 ततः समागत्य ददर्श कूर्मे
 स कूर्मरूपं जगदीश्वरं प्रभुः ॥ १६ ॥
 तत्रागमच्छ्रीपुरुषोत्तमाख्ये
 क्षेत्रे जगन्नाथमुखं ददर्श ।
 कियद्दिनं तत्र निवासमच्युतो
 विधाय यातो मथुरां मधुद्विषः ॥ १७ ॥
 पादाब्जचिह्नैः समलङ्कृतां स्थलीं
 रुरोद सम्प्राप्य लुठन् क्षितौ भृशम् ।
 कियद्दिनं तत्र स्थितो जगद्गुरुः
 प्रेमामृतास्वादनमात्र उत्सुकः ॥ १८ ॥
 इति स मधुपुरीं प्रभुर्वितन्वन्
 परमसुखं सहसा जगाम हर्षात् ।
 पुनरनुपदमेव साधुसङ्गात्
 परमपदं पुरुषोत्तमप्रदीव्यम् ॥ १९ ॥
 श्रुत्वा स तीर्थस्य विधिक्रियां हरेर्
 लभेद्गयातीर्थफलं महत्तमम् ।
 देवावसाने विमलां गतिं नरः
 श्रद्धान्वितो गच्छति पूर्णलालसः ॥ २० ॥

इति श्रीकृष्णचैतन्यचरितामृते महाकाव्ये प्रथमप्रक्रमे गयागमनं नाम षोडशः सर्गः ॥ १६ ॥
 समाप्तस्तथायं प्रथमः प्रक्रमः ।

He offered all his actions to the lotus-like feet of Hari and became the foremost of renunciants. Then he went to the best of holy places⁶¹ surrounded by great souls headed by Mukunda who were dear to Hari.⁶² (14)

He visited the god, Lord (Jagannātha) of the holy land of Puruṣottama (Purī), and after gaining an everlasting happiness greater than the happiness of everlasting bliss, he went to the bridge built by Rāghava⁶³ [meeting] on the way with wise holy men. (15)

He embraced the seven Tamāla trees standing there and wept repeatedly. Then the Master returned from there and in the sacred place called Kūrma saw the Lord of the Universe in the form of the tortoise. (16)

Then he returned to the sacred site Śrī Puruṣottama Kṣetra (Purī) and saw the face of Jagannātha. After staying there for some time, Acyuta (Viśvambhara) went to the Mathurā of the Enemy of Madhu.⁶⁴ (17)

Reaching that place, decorated with the markings of the lotus-like feet [of Kṛṣṇa], he wept rolling about vigorously on the ground. The teacher of the world stayed there some days, eager for nothing other than the taste of the nectar of divine love. (18)

Thus, increasing the highest happiness in the town of Madhu, the Master abruptly returned joyfully on foot in the company of holy men to that highest abode illumined by Puruṣottama. (19)

Hearing of these observances of Hari at the sacred places one obtains the greatest result of visiting the sacred site Gayā. A faithful person in the end reaches the pure goal with all desires fulfilled. (20)

Thus ends the sixteenth chapter of the first section of the great poem the *Immortal Acts of Śrī Kṛṣṇacaitanya*, entitled “Visit to Gayā.”

⁶¹Jagannātha Puri in Orissa.

⁶²From here the text gives a brief account of the rest of the life of Viśvambhara, his becoming a renunciant, being given the name Śrī Kṛṣṇacaitanya, and his touring the various sacred places in India. Perhaps if this section of the poem was an early version of the work that was later added to and expanded, either by Murāri or someone else, into the larger work that has come down to us.

⁶³This is Setubandha, a ridge of rocks extending into the ocean from Rāmeśvaram on the south eastern side of India towards Śrīlaṅka. These are believed by the faithful to be remnants of a bridge which, according to the *Rāmāyaṇa*, Rāma had built to Śrīlaṅka for his army to cross over when he attacked Rāvaṇa.

⁶⁴Madhudviṣ, another name of Kṛṣṇa.

Glossary of Important Terms

bhakta

bhakti

brāhmaṇa

kīrtana

līlā

preman

Other Books by Golden Avatar Press

1. *Experiences in Bhakti: the Science Celestial* by Dr. O. B. L. Kapoor (2014, ISBN: 978-1-936135-05-9).

Coming soon:

1. *Gosvāmins of Vṛndāvana* by Dr. O.B.L. Kapoor. Edited, introduced, and annotated by Neal Delmonico.
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And From Blazing Sapphire Press:

1. *On Associating with Great Ones* by Śrī Kānupriya Gosvāmī. Introduced, translated, and annotated by Neal Delmonico. This volume contains some of Kānupriya Gosvāmī's lectures, translated into English for the first time, on the topic of the uplifting power of associating, that is to say, meeting and conversing with *sādhus*, the holy men and women of the tradition. This is a topic that is of fundamental importance to 20th century Caitanya Vaiṣṇava theology. The lectures were originally collected, edited, and published in Bengali as *Mahat-saṅga Prasaṅga* by Kānupriya Gosvāmī's nephew, Gauraray Das Goswami. (2014, ISBN: 978-0-9817902-9-9)
2. *Fundamentals of Vedānta*, Part 1: *The Vedānta-sāra* of Sadānanda Yo-gīndra and the *Prameya-ratnāvalī* of Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa (trans. by Neal Delmonico). *Fundamentals of Vedānta*, Part One, is a translation, with a detailed introduction and notes, of two short Sanskrit texts,

the *Vedānta-sāra* (Essence of Vedānta) of Sadānanda and the *Prameya-ratnāvalī* (Necklace of Truth-Jewels) of Baladeva, from opposite ends of the Vedāntic spectrum. Each has been used in India for centuries to introduce beginning students to the fundamental ideas of Vedānta. (2006, ISBN: 978-0-9747968-3-3)

3. *The Life and Teachings of Krishna Das Baba of Radhakund* by Zakrent Christian. This is a work on the life and teachings of a 20th century saint from the Caitanya Vaiṣṇava tradition. Krishna Das Baba was a well known practitioner and guide who lived in a community of renunciants nestled around a holy lake called Radhakund (the Pond of Śrī Rādhā) in North India. His story is typical of many stories of modern Indian men and women who gave up participation in modern society to pursue religious and spiritual goals. It thus presents insight into the yearnings of many modern Indians who, when faced with the challenges of modernity, have turned towards tradition. (2nd ed. 2012, ISBN: 978-0-9747968-5-7)
4. *Nectar of the Holy Name* by Manindranath Guha (trans. Neal Delmonico). This is a translation of Manindranath Guha's classic Bengali book (*Hari-nāmāmṛta-sindhu-bindu*) on the beliefs and practices centering around the "holy names" (the names of Kṛṣṇa and of his consort Rādhā) of the Caitanya Vaiṣṇava tradition. Guha's book is a good introduction to an area of theological reflection in Caitanya Vaiṣṇavism called the "theology of the holy name." (2005, ISBN: 978-0-9747968-1-9 soft; 978-0-9747968-2-6 hard)
5. *Sādhū Sādhū: a Life of Baba Śrī Tinkudi Gosvami* by Binode Bihari Dasa Babaji. This is an English translation of Śrī Binode Bihari Das Babaji's short Bengali work on the life of Baba Tinkudi Goswami, one of the great Vaiṣṇava practitioners and saints of the 20th century. This work is translated by Neal Delmonico with an introduction and annotations. It also contains two Bengali songs by his disciples remembering Tinkudi Goswami's life and some short recollections of him by some of his American disciples. (2008, ISBN: 978-0-9747968-8-8)
6. *The Song Divine, or Bhagavad-gītā: a Metrical Rendering (with Annotations)* (English and Sanskrit edition), trans. by C.C. Caleb. This is a new edition of the delightful 1911 English metrical translation by C.C. Caleb of the Hindu classic, the *Bhagavad-gītā*, with a new introduction, annotations, and appendix. The original Sanskrit text of the *Gītā*, in both Devanāgarī script and Roman alphabetic transliteration, has been included on the left hand pages for easy access and comparison with the translation. An appendix has been added containing short summaries

of the teachings of the *Gītā* by many of the great commentators on the text: Śaṅkara, Yamunā Muni, Rāmānuja, Madhusūdana Sarasvatī, Viśvanātha Cakravartin, and Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa. (2011, ISBN: 978-0-9817902-3-7)

7. *The Song Divine, or Bhagavad-Gita: A Metrical Rendering (with Annotations) (English-only Edition)* trans. by C.C. Caleb. This is an edition of the metrical English translation by C.C. Caleb of the great Hindu classic, the *Bhagavad-gītā*, or The Song Divine. It includes an introduction to the text, annotations drawn from the commentary of Śaṅkara, and an appendix containing some of the traditional summaries of the text from different schools of interpretation. This edition does not include the original Sanskrit text of the *Gītā*. (2012, ISBN: 978-0-9817902-8-2)
8. *Śrī Kṛṣṇa the Lord of Love*, Premananda Bharati. Premananda Bharati's classic work, *Sri Krishna: the Lord of Love*, was originally published in 1904 in New York. It is the first full-length work presenting theistic Hindu practices and beliefs before a Western audience by a practicing Hindu "missionary." Premananda Bharati or Baba (Father) Bharati had come to the USA in 1902, encouraged by his co-religionists in India and by a vision he received while living in a pilgrimage site sacred to his tradition. He arrived in 1902 and stayed until 1911 except for one return journey to India in 1907 with several of his American disciples. His book was read and admired by numerous American and British men and women of the early 20th century and captured the attention of the great Russian writer Leo Tolstoy through whom Mahatma Gandhi discovered it. This new edition contains two introductions, one by Gerald T. Carney, PhD, a specialist on Premananda Bharati's life and work, and another by Neal Delmonico, PhD, a specialist on Caitanya Vaiṣṇavism, the religious tradition to which Baba Bharati belonged. In addition, the text has been edited, corrected, annotated, and newly typeset. Twenty-six appendices have been added containing supporting texts and additional materials bearing on Baba Bharati's sources for ideas in his book, on his life and practices in India, and on his astute readings of international politics in a world heading ineluctably toward World War I. (2007, ISBN: 978-0-9747968-7-1)
9. *Śrīmad-Bhagavad-Gītā (Sanskrit Edition)* ed. and introduced by Neal Delmonico. This is an edition of the *Bhagavad-gītā* in the original language of the text, Sanskrit. No translation of the text is given in this book. Only a Roman transliteration is provided alongside the Devanāgarī version and a number of the most common variant readings in footnotes. There are hundreds of translations of the *Gītā* in various of the languages of the world and some of them include the text in either its na-

tive script, which is called Devanāgarī (the city of the gods), or in some transliterated format. A few even include word-by-word translations. But, many translations include neither text nor word equivalences. This edition is for those who would like to have access to and get to know the text itself better. It can be paired with any of the translations available in any language, including our own companion volume called the *The Song Divine*, which is a reprint/re-edition of the old classic verse translation of C. C. Caleb completed in India in 1911. (2012, ISBN: 079-1-936135-00-4)

10. *Vaishnava Temple Music in Vrindaban: the Radhavallabha Songbook* by Guy L. Beck. This is a collection of 108 songs from the Radhavallabha tradition, a major North Indian *bhakti* tradition dating from the 16th century. The songs have been collected by ethno-musicologist Guy L. Beck over a period of thirty years during which time he paid many visits to the religious headquarters of the sect, in Vrindaban, UP, India. In the book, Beck analyzes each song, discussing its rhythmic characteristics and its melodic structure within the raga system of classical Indian music. The verbal text for each song is given along with a faithful translation into English. In a long introduction, Beck discusses the development of religious music in India with reference to the special history and contributions of the Radhavallabha tradition. Two CDs filled with recordings of sample music are available free to purchasers of the book and the entire collection of recordings covering 18 expertly mastered CDs is available for purchase separately. (2011, ISBN: 978-0-9817902-4-4)

Coming soon from Blazing Sapphire:

1. *The Blazing Sapphire (Ujjvala-nīlamanī)* by Rūpa Gosvāmin (translation by Neal Delmonico). In three volumes. In Sanskrit and English with introduction, notes, and the commentary of Śrī Jīva Gosvāmin.
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