

free state. Those ruffians and on-lookers were apparently innocent of any such purpose, except a very few who were led to reflect seriously on the real meaning for *themselves* of those events.

So the mere sight of a Vaishnava under the impression that he is only a mortal, or the mere recollection of a Vaishnava viewed as a mortal, are properly speaking not seeing or recollecting him at all. The Vaishnava can be really seen and recollected only on the plane of the Absolute by the pure eye of faith possessed by the soul in the state of Grace. The recollection of such a sight has the efficacy of freeing from all difficulties. The endeavour to attain such sight and recollection is the spiritual practice available to the novice by the grace of the spiritual teacher. The process of spiritual novitiate under a pure devotee is not ignored by the words of Thākur Brindāvandās. The novitiate itself being also spiritual in character cannot be attained in this Iron Age except by the method of perfect submission to the teachings of Thākur Haridās and of those who are privileged to see as well as remember him as he really is. He is the Āchāryya of this Age of Evil. By following his teaching and practice one can be easily freed from every difficulty. There is *no* other way of our final and true liberation.

CHAPTER XXI

THĀKUR HARIDĀS—(Contd.)

THĀKUR Haridās experienced only one kind of pain while he was undergoing ferocious beating at the hands of the minions of the Moslem Governor. He felt sorry for those sinners who were involved in this terrible offence against himself. He prayed to Krishna to do him this Favour that those miscreants might not incur the Divine Displeasure by reason of their ferocious cruelty towards himself.

Those Yavanas, however, continued to beat him severely from market-place to market-place with the resolve of putting an end to his life. They beat him with all the strength they had. Haridās had no memory of his mental body and was perfectly immune from any sensation of suffering which was actually inflicted on his physical body. Neither did he die. The Yavanas now experienced a sense of surprise in their minds. They thought in this way, 'Can the life of a mortal survive such beating? The life of a man is extinguished by beating at two, or at most three, market-places. We have already beat him at no less than twenty-two market-places. Not only does he not die, but, the wonder of all wonders, he actually smiles now and then. All of them were filled with a terrible misgiving. 'Was this person after all the Pir that people claim him to be?'

At last the Yavanas put their own plight before Thākur Haridās. They said, 'Haridās, you will be the cause of the death of all of us. We have beaten you to the best of our ability. But although we are fatigued to death by our severe exertions life still refuses to quit your body. It will now be the turn of the Kāzi to punish us. He will take the lives of all of us.'

This pathetic and strange protest made Thākur Haridās laugh, as he said, 'If my being alive be the cause of mishap to all of you,

mark me well, I will die *just now* before your eyes'. Saying so Thākur Haridās became absorbed in the contemplation of Krishna. Haridās, observes Thākur Brindāvandās, is possessed of all power. He became perfectly inert and there was no sign of the breathing activity in any part of his body.

The sight of this phenomenon filled the Yavanas with great astonishment. They conveyed Thākur Haridās to the steps of the entrance of the Governor's residence. The Governor then gave the command, 'Let him have a burial'. The Kāzi opposed. He said, 'He will fare well after death if he is given the benefit of burial. Being born in a superior faith he stooped to accept a low creed. He should be dealt with in accordance with the gravity of the offence. It will benefit his soul if his body is allowed a burial. Let his body be, therefore, cast into the river so that he may be doomed to eternal misery.'

At these words of the Kāzi all the Yavanas caught hold of the body of Thākur Haridās with intent to cast him into the Ganges. Thākur Haridās now sat upright in the bliss of Divine contemplation and as he did so Viswambhar, Who upholds the whole world, manifested His Presence in his body. The Presence of Viswambhar made it out of the question for any one to move the body of Thākur Haridās. Mighty men pushed the body from every side. Lord Haridās remained immovable like a great tower. Haridās had been perfectly immersed in the deep nectarine Ocean of Krishna-bliss and there had been no manifestation of any external consciousness. Haridās had not known whether he was on dry ground, in the air above the ground or in the water of the Ganges. The devotion to Krishna, manifested in the recollection of Krishna by Prahlada, is the only parallel to that of Thākur Haridās. Thākur Haridās's conduct is also comparable to that of Hanumān, the servant of Sree Rāmachandra, who submitted to be fettered by the Rākshashas of his own accord, out of deference to Brahmā. It is in the like spirit that Haridās accepted the beating of the Yavanas, for the instruction of the world. That teaching is to be found in his words, 'If my sufferings know no end, if life itself leaves my body, yet will I not give up uttering the Name of Hari with my mouth.' This constant

loyalty to the Name is the teaching of this most wonderful exhibition of devotion by Thākur Haridās. Is it otherwise possible for any one to attempt any harm against Haridās whose Protector is Govinda Himself? All suffering is instantly ended by the recollection of Thākur Haridās. How can, therefore, any suffering be inflicted on Haridās himself? Let no one doubt that Haridās is verily the Iswara (Divine Ruler) of the world, one of the foremost of the greatest associates of Chaitanya-Chandra Himself.

Then Thākur Haridās exhibited the *leela* of being cast into the water of the Ganges by the Yavanas and lay afloat on the bosom of the holy stream. By the Will of Godhead Thākur Haridās soon regained his external consciousness. He then came out of the water and got to the bank of the river experiencing all the while the fulness of the transcendental bliss. In that manner he came on to the town of Fuliā continuing to chant loudly the Name of Krishna.

The Yavanas, as they witnessed this wonderful exhibition of his power, were cured of their malice against him and their minds were purified. All bowed to him with humility, being convinced that he was, indeed, the Pir. All these Yavanas thus received their deliverance. When Thākur Haridās recovered his external consciousness he found the Moslem Governor in presence of him. This made Thākur Haridās smile as he was moved to mercy. The Governor reverentially responded, with palms joined in the act of supplication, 'I now know most certainly that you are a great Pir. You have realised the knowledge of the One. People claim to be in touch with the Supreme Soul, to possess the knowledge of Him. But they only use their mouths to utter empty words. You have alone attained the realisation in very truth. I have personally come down here to have a sight of you. Have mercy on me, great one. May you be pleased to forgive all my offences. All are equal in your sight. You have neither friend nor foe. There is no person in all the three worlds who can know what you are. May you proceed auspiciously anywhere of your own free choice and continue to stay in your solitary cell on the bank of the Ganges. You may abide at whatever place you choose and do whatever you like at your own sweet will.'

Commenting on this change of heart of his oppressors Thākur Brindāvandās observes that if even those Yavana miscreants could forget their animosity at the sight of the holy feet of Thākur Haridās what to speak of those people who are endowed with a natural goodness of disposition? The change of heart was, indeed, quite marvellous. Those Yavanas had come forward in the greatest anger to beat him to death. They recognised him as Pir and threw themselves at his feet in the end. Thākur Haridās bestowed on the Yavanas his glance of mercy as he came on to Fuliā.

Thākur Haridās now presented himself again to the assembly of the Brāhmanas of Fuliā, in the act of chanting the Name of Hari with a loud voice. As they caught sight of Thākur Haridās, those Brāhmanas of Fuliā experienced in their minds the bliss that transcends all joys of this world. Those Brāhmanas spontaneously burst into chanting the Name of Hari. Haridās danced with joy in their midst.

The spiritual perturbations of Haridās pass all attempt at description. There were manifest tears, shivering, laughter, swooning, horripilation, thundering ejaculation. Haridās would often tumble down headlong on the ground by the melting quality of the liquid mellowness of love. The Brāhmanas swam on the current of a great joy on seeing these edifying exhibitions of love. As Haridās became quiet and sat still after a while the Brāhmanas also seated themselves in a circle round him.

Haridās then spoke these words to the Brāhmanas, 'O ye Brāhmanas, cherish no sorrow on my account. This has been condign punishment for me who have heard endless blasphemy against the Lord. It has been all very well, indeed. It has been a source of very great satisfaction to me that the Lord has been pleased to pardon a great offence by awarding such light punishment. One is doomed to the sufferings of the lowest Hell by the offence of listening to blasphemy against Vishnu. With my vile ears I have heard a good deal of the same. The Lord has awarded the just punishment for that offence, so that it may not be committed by me again.' In this manner Haridās passed the time in the company of those Brāhmanas in the great joy of the

congregational chant of Hari. While all those Yavanas, who had given him pain, were utterly ruined. They were destroyed with their families in a short time.

Haridās now lived in his cell in the bank of the Ganges. He lived in seclusion by constant recollection of Krishna. He took three lakhs of the Holy Name everyday. The cave became to him even as the realm of Vaikunṭha. Inside that cave there also lived a huge serpent. The extremely venomous quality of its poison vitiated the atmosphere of the cave so that no one could bear the burning sensation that was experienced on entering the cave. None of those, who came to have a sight of Thākur Haridās, could bear to stay in the cave. They all felt the burning effect of the most virulent poison. But Haridās on his part was not aware of it at all. All those Brāhmanas then met together and talked about it among themselves. They could not understand why there was such a great burning sensation in the cell of Haridās.

There lived in Fuliā persons who were skilled in the treatment of poisoning by snake-bite. They made the discovery that the sensation was due to the presence of some extremely venomous snake within the cave. They informed the people about it and said that it was advisable for Thākur Haridas to quit the cave without delay and shift to some safe place. Accordingly the people went up to Thākur Haridās and implored him earnestly to leave that cave. But Thākur Haridās said that 'he did not experience any inconvenience personally, although he had been there for a very long time. However, if they really felt it to be unbearable he was willing to move out of the cave the next day if the serpent did not shift elsewhere by that time, provided he was there at all,' adding, 'that there was, however, no cause for any anxiety,' and bade them to proceed with Krishna talk.

As the people continued their auspicious discourse about Krishna a most wonderful event came to pass then and there. On hearing that Haridās was to leave the cave the great serpent at once quitted his abode. In the approaching gloom of that very evening the huge reptile came out of its hole and moved off from the cell in the view of all the people. It was a most beautiful

creature, most wonderful to see and most deadly, spotted with yellow, blue, and white. A great gem burnt on the top of its hood. The Brāhmanas were struck with a great fear at the sight of the serpent and involuntarily recollected the Name of Krishna. As the serpent left the place there was no longer any trace of the burning sensation that its presence had caused.

The Brāhmanas felt a great joy on being relieved of the presence of the brute in that wonderful manner. They conceived a great regard for Thākur Haridās on witnessing this exhibition of his great power. It is a small proof of the power of Thākur Haridās that the huge snake left the place at his mere word. By the very sight of Thākur Haridās the bondage of Ne-science is snapped at once. Krishna does not oppose the word of Thākur Haridās.

The above incident is recorded in the work of Thākur Brindāvandās. Another story regarding the greatness of Thākur Haridās is also recorded by the same writer. It runs as follows:—

One day at the residence of a wealthy person of Fuliā a certain snake-bite healer was performing a musical dance when Thākur Haridās arrived there by accident and stood on one side to witness the dance. There now appeared the Prince of the Nāgas, by the force of the *Mantra* taking its effect, in the person of the dancing snake-bite healer and began to dance in that human form. He sang in a loud key the moving song of pity of the Dance that was enacted by the Lord of dancers in the Lake of Kāliya. On hearing the Song of Glory of his own Lord, Haridās fell down in a swoon and there was no sign of breath in any part of his body. Regaining his consciousness in a short time he gave expression to his joy in thundering ejaculations and began to dance rapturously in an infinite variety of figures.

The snake-bite healer on beholding the spiritual possession of Thākur Haridās stood still on one side of the arena. Thākur Haridās rolled on the ground decked in the wonderful manifestations of tears, horripilation and shivering. The great Thākur Haridās was filled with the Presence of Krishna by listening to the chant of the Goodness of his Lord and burst into weeping.

All the assembled people now sang the chant of Krishna, forming a ring round Haridās. The snake-bite healer looked on from one side with the palms of his hands joined in the attitude of humble supplication.

The spiritual trance of Haridās lasted for a short time. On its termination the snake-bite healer resumed his dance. All the people were filled with great joy by witnessing the trance of Thākur Haridās. All the people now began to rub their bodies with the dust of every place that was touched by the feet of Thākur Haridās.

There happened to be present in that crowd a hypocritical Brāhmana who now conceived the fancy of performing a similar dance, under the impression that 'foolish uncivilized people evince the highest devotion for even an insignificant person if he but dances.' As soon as this thought flashed across the brain of this Brāhmana he forthwith fell prostrate on the ground and appeared as if bereft of all power of movement. But no sooner did he fall in this manner inside the arena of the performance of the dance of the snake-bite healer than the latter at once began to beat him violently in a frenzy of anger. He began to beat him so ferociously on the head and shoulders and on all sides of his body with his big cane that the Brāhmana was in imminent danger of being killed outright by the violence of his repeated blows. The Brāhmana, groaning with pain under the merciless caning, fled from the spot screaming 'Oh father!' Thereafter the snake-bite healer danced for a long while feeling all along a great delight.

This strange conduct of the snake-bite healer filled the people with a great curiosity. With palms joined in supplication they begged the snake-bite healer to tell them the cause of his unnatural behaviour. 'Tell us why,' they asked, 'you beat this Brāhmana, and stood with your palms joined while Haridās danced. We wish to hear all about it from your own lips.'

Thereupon the Nāga, devotee of Vishnu, began to speak as follows, through the mouth of that snake-bite healer. 'What you have asked is, indeed, a great mystery and one that is not to be divulged. Yet I will assuredly tell you about the same. On

beholding the spiritual trance of Thākur Haridās all of you showed in a special manner your great devotion towards him. This Brāhmana watched your conduct and through sheer malice tumbled on the ground to make a hypocritical display of devotion. But no one has power to disturb the joy of my dance by any malicious performance. Inasmuch as he falsely set himself up to caricature the devotional perturbations of Haridās I have inflicted this severe punishment on him. The idea by which this wicked Brāhmana was led to act the part of a hypocrite was that people might be thereby deceived to honour him as a great personage. His only object was self-advertisement by means of an exhibition of seemingly pious activity. Such arrogant people have no love for Krishna. One may obtain the devotional aptitude to Krishna if only one is perfectly free from all desire to deceive. You have witnessed the dance of Haridās. Those, who have the good fortune of ever beholding *his* dance, are wholly relieved from the bondage of the world. Krishna Himself dances when Haridās dances. The whole world is sanctified by the sight of his dance. He is, indeed, deservedly named 'the servant of Hari'. Krishnachandra eternally dwells in his heart. He is a lover of every entity, is the benefactor of all, appearing in the Company of the Lord Himself in every birth. He is free from offence against Vishnu and the Vaishnavas. His vision does not stray to the wrong path even in sleep. The soul, who finds his company for the fraction of a moment, verily gains the Refuge of the Lotus Feet of Krishna. The highest souls such as Brahmā, Shiva, etc., experience a great exultation of heart if they chance to be favoured by the company of a devotee like Haridās. He has appeared in an inferior race in order to prove the utter worthlessness of birth and lineage for the purpose of worshipping Krishna. All the Scriptures declare that if the devotee of Vishnu makes his appearance in the lowest of families he is still the only person who is fit to be honoured. If one, who is born of the highest lineage, do not serve Krishna, he is doomed to perdition, his high birth being of no avail. In order to bear testimony to the truth of those declarations of the Veda Haridās appeared in a family of the lowest social standing. Just as Prāhlāda is a demon, Hanumān

a monkey, so is Haridās a low-born person, only in name. The celestials covet the touch of Haridās. The Ganges herself desires the immersion of Haridās in her sacred stream. It is not necessary to touch but only to have a sight of Haridās, to be relieved for good from the bondage of the eternal chain of one's fruitive activities. If I go on speaking for hundreds of years it would not be possible for me to reach the limit of his greatness. You are most fortunate. It is for the sake of such as you that this imperfect account of his glory has manifested itself on my lips. He, who takes the name of Haridās only once, will assuredly attain to the Realm of Krishna.' The King of the Nāgas lapsed into silence after delivering the above discourse. The good people were satisfied on hearing this wonderful speech. The great Nāga, who is the eternal devotee of Vishnu, made known in this manner the nature of the spiritual perturbations of Haridās. All people were already well-disposed towards Thākur Haridās. They were most highly delighted on learning these things about him from the mouth of the Nāga.

These performances of Thākur Haridās may be ordinarily supposed to belong to the class of events that are called miracles in the theology of certain creeds. But they are not supernatural occurrences in the sense of being immune from the operation of the laws of physical Nature for no other reason than that they are the performances of possessors of superior power. Like his immunity from physical and mental suffering under severe castigation at the hands of the Yavanas, the conduct of Haridās towards the serpent, his dance, perturbations and trances are only expressions of his great love for Krishna. They are justified and explained properly by the laws of spiritual love which transcend, and by transcending fulfil, the imperfect and essentially unwholesome laws of physical Nature.

The cudgelling of the hypocritical Brāhmana is similarly an exhibition of love for Godhead on the part of the snake-bite healer; while the barbarous behaviour of the Yavanas towards Haridās is an act of hatred against the Divinity notwithstanding the Scriptural language in which it was sought to be clothed by

the Kāzi. It is not the external appearance of an act that constitutes its spiritual worth. In the one case an act of apparent cruelty is to be justly regarded as the exhibition of unalloyed devotion to the Truth; in the other case an externally identical act against Thākur Haridās is to be justly condemned as it proceeded from sheer malice and cruelty of disposition. So it is not the external appearance that determines the spiritual quality of an act.

But it is much more difficult to prove, to the satisfaction of atheists, how love for Krishna can be the sole criterion of spiritual activity. Haridās Thākur cares only to act under the impulse of love for Krishna in all situations. It is only for this reason and for no other that his conduct is to be regarded as spiritual. The relation to Krishna is the only condition by which to distinguish spiritual from non-spiritual conduct.

Spiritual conduct is beneficial to the person practising it as well as to those who are in anyway brought within its influence. Any form of conduct, which is devoid of reference to Krishna, is bound to be equally and altogether harmful to all parties concerned. It is this consideration which lifts the activities of the theist above the level of the so-called moral conduct, which is related to a standard of duty towards others independently of the exclusive reference to the Divinity.

The dance, the trance, the horripilation and other perturbations also belong to the category of spiritual activities that are supremely beneficial for all concerned because of their *exclusive* reference to Krishna. If a hungry man is fed by the birds at the command of another person, the latter may be credited with the possession of extraordinary power for removing physical suffering; but such conduct should not, therefore, be called also spiritual, although it may be moral in the empiric, *i.e.*, worldly sense which that term has come to acquire quite wrongly at the hands of empiric exponents of ethical (?) conduct *unconnected with Godhead*. The theistic point of view cannot logically recognise the possibility of any person being really benefited by any activity that has no direct, conscious and sole reference to Godhead.

The conduct of the hypocritical Brāhmana is on a par with that of the Kāzi who ordered that Thākur Haridās should be beaten to death for taking the Name of Hari. Hypocrisy and fanaticism are not far removed from one another as regards genesis. The reference to Krishna may be, and, as a matter of fact, often is, intended to cover a selfish purpose. The Kāzi wanted to punish Haridās for a political and racial reason. The Brāhmana sought his own fame and also to spite Thākur Haridās. These motives have nothing to do with Krishna Who is the Absolute Truth Himself in Whom there can be no scope for malice or narrowness. The apparently harsh conduct of the snake-bite healer towards the hypocritical Brāhmana is an act of mercy, solely because it is prompted by exclusive regard for the servant of Krishna.

If Krishna Himself is conceived in any narrow sense any reference to such false concept of the corrupt brain of man will not also make one's conduct spiritual. Krishna does not owe His Nature to the particular conception of the person who wants to be related to him. There is only one way in which one's relationship with Krishna may be really established, *vis.*, by the resolve of single-hearted devotion to the Truth Absolute combined necessarily with the equally single-hearted resolve to eschew all association with non-Krishna. Any act, that expresses these complementary characteristics, is alone entitled to be designated as spiritual conduct. Partiality for any really narrow conception, by merely calling the same Krishna, will not enable a person to escape the punishment that is due to the enjoyment of non-Krishna, any more than any other form of covert hostility to the Truth.

The kind and forbearing attitude of Thākur Haridās towards the offending Yavanas must not also be praised for its quality of toleration of any form or degree of untruth. Thākur Haridās did not pity the Yavanas for the reason that they were not responsible for their ignorance. Haridās knew that ignorance is really identical with aversion to Krishna, and he had, therefore, no motive to find any excuse for their hostility to Truth. All, that he desired to express, was that his own punishment was fully

deserved and not that the unpardonable aversion to Krishna, that was openly displayed by the Kāzi and his myrmidons, did not deserve to be punished. He was silent on this last point.

Thākur Haridās passed his days in the performance of the chant of the Name till the period when Sree Gaurachandra at last began to manifest His *Leelā* of bestowing loving devotion to Krishna on the people of this world. The world stood in extreme need of the Manifestation of Divine Mercy in His highest perfection. In all parts of the country all the people were altogether lacking in devotion to Vishnu. No one knew that there could be such a thing at all as the *Kirtana* of Krishna. Not only was there no sign of any spirit of devotion to Vishnu in any part of the country but it was the public fashion to ridicule the Vaishnavas. The attitude of hostility and contempt towards the Vaishnavas was universal, there being no exception to the rule. This state of public feeling compelled the Vaishnavas to sing the Name of Sree Krishna by clap of hand only among themselves. Even this modest activity proved too much for the patience of those wicked people. The atheists hurled their invectives against the Vaishnavas, whenever they met one of themselves.

The grievance of those people against the Vaishnavas have been recorded by Thākur Brindāvandās in many passages of his work and we have already referred to them at several places of this Narrative. Here are a few additional samples of the ordinary charges that were brought against the Vaishnavas by their implacable enemies. 'These Brāhmanas will bring ruin upon the country'. 'These Brāhmanas resort to various devices in the shape of singing the Name with excessive display of sentimentality, in order only to live by begging'. 'The Lord sleeps during the four months of the rainy season. Is it meet to call upon Him with a loud voice at all time? If the sleep of the Lord is broken by their noise He will be most angry and afflict the country with famine. There can be no doubt of this.' There were not a few who said, 'If the price of paddy is found to increase ever so little we will make our fists familiar with the shoulders of these miscreants'. Some opined that it is indeed fit to chant loudly the Name of Govinda by keeping awake during the night of the

eleventh day of the lunar fortnight. What is the use of uttering the Name everyday?' This was the utmost concession that the best disposed people of the society were prepared to make to the Vaishnavas, although the people in general did by no means endorse such a policy of undeserved indulgence towards them.

The devotees felt sorely grieved at heart by hearing night and day all these blasphemies, but no one of them ceased to chant loudly the Name of Krishna in the company of the Vaishnavas. Haridās was also filled with sorrow on beholding the absence of any regard for the communion of devotion in the people. Yet Haridās continued to chant his Lord with a loud voice and employed his mouth exclusively to this supreme function. But the loud chant of Hari even by Thākur Haridās proved unbearable to certain extremely wicked sinners.

A certain wicked Brāhmana, who belonged to the village of Harinadi, angrily protested against his practice. 'Haridās,' said he, 'what is this that you are doing? What is the reason of your uttering the Name with such a loud voice? It is enjoined by the religion that the Name is to be taken mentally without being audible. What Scriptures tell you of addressing Godhead by calling upon His Name with a loud voice? By whose teaching is the Name of Hari recited with a loud voice? Let this assembly of the Pandits judge what you have got to say to this.'

Haridās said, 'You are all Pandits and well versed in the Scriptures. You must know very well all the reasons in favour of this method. You are also well aware of the greatness of the Name of Hari. In reply to your question I can only repeat what I have heard from the Pandits such as you are yourselves. If the Name is uttered with a loud voice no offence is committed. On the other hand the excellence of the process is augmented a hundredfold if the Name is uttered with a loud voice. This is declared by the Scriptures. The particular text of the Scriptures I refer to, is as follows,—'by uttering (the Name) with a loud voice the excellance is augmented a hundred-fold.'

The Brāhmana asked, 'What is the reason that the meritorious effect is increased a hundred-fold by uttering the Name with a loud voice?'

Haridās proceeded to explain, 'Listen, revered Sir,' said he, 'the reason of it as given in the Veda and the Bhāgavatam'. All the Scriptures manifested themselves on the holy lips of Thākur Haridās. He was impelled to expound by the joy of Krishna-bliss. 'Hear, O Bipra,' said Thākur Haridās, 'by listening to the Name of Krishna, only once, beasts, birds and insects find unobstructed passage to the Holy Realm of Vaikuntha. Here is my text. 'What is the wonder of the brute (serpent) being delivered by the touch of the Feet of Krishna, by the taking of Whose Name the person uttering the same is at once sanctified along with all those who listen to him?' The beasts, birds, insects, etc., cannot utter the Name of Hari. They are saved as soon as they chance to hear the Name. If the Name of Sree Krishna is taken mentally only the person taking the Holy Name is saved thereby. By chanting the Name with a loud voice the chanter benefits others also. It is for this reason that all the Scriptures declare that the good is augmented a hundred-fold if the Name is chanted with a loud voice. The text of the Bhāgavatam is as follows, 'It is, indeed, fit that the chanter of the Name of Hari with a loud voice is a hundred times better than one who takes the Name mentally. The person, who takes the Name mentally, saves only himself, one, who chants the Name with a loud voice, saves also his hearers.'

So by the authority of the Purana I hold that one, who chants the Name with a loud voice, is a hundred times superior to him who does so mentally. The reason of this, O Bipra, also deserves to be listened to most attentively. By mentally taking the Name a person maintains only himself. If one chant the Name of Govinda with a loud voice every creature is delivered as soon as he hears. All animals, with the sole exception of man, although they are privileged to possess a tongue, are unable to utter the Sound of the Name of Krishna. The process, by which even those, who are born in vain, are saved, certainly does not deserve to be condemned. There are those who maintain thousands besides themselves. Which of them is superior? This is easy to find by a tittle of reflection. It is for this reason that the superior merit of the process of chanting the Name with a loud voice is held to be well established.'

The reply of Thākur Haridās only served to augment the anger of that wicked Brāhmana who now threw off the mask of the hypocritical enquirer and began openly to revile Thākur Haridās. He said, 'Haridās has at last become the maker of our Philosophy! So the path of the Veda is going to be destroyed before our very eyes after enduring through the Ages. It is said that the Sudra is destined to expound the Veda towards the close of the Iron Age. That thing has come to pass at this very moment, without our having to wait for the end of the Yuga. I can now see what it really is. You go about from door to door feeding on the choicest delicacies by this capital method of cheap self-advertisement. If the explanation thou hast offered is proved to be wide of the mark thy nose and ear require to be chopped off on the spot.'

On hearing these blasphemous effusions of that wretch of a Brāhmana, Thākur Haridās smiled slightly as he uttered the Name of Hari. Without making any further reply Haridās left the place continuing to chant the Name of Hari with a loud voice. Those, who happened to be present in the assembly, were also sinful persons and, being of an evil disposition, made no proper answer to what was said by that Brāhmana. All these Brāhmanas, observes Thākur Brindāvandās, are verily cannibals (*Rakshasas*). They are Brāhmanas only in name. All of them are proper objects of punishment by Yama. In the Kali Yuga all the *Rākshasas* are ordained to be born in the families of the Brāhmanas for venting their spite against the good people. 'The *Rākshasas*, under the fostering care of Kali, are born in the womb of Brāhmanas. They oppress the few who really possess the knowledge of the Vedas.' The Dharma-Shāstra, indeed, forbids to touch, hold talk with or bow to these Brāhmanas in any circumstances. 'What more need be said. It is incumbent to avoid addressing or touching those Brāhmanas, who are non-Vaishnavas, even by mistake.' 'In this world it is one's duty not to see a non-Vaishnava Brāhmana, even as one should avoid the sight of the dog-eating Chandāla. The Vaishnava, although he be born outside the *Varnas*, sanctifies the three worlds. 'If one, born a Brāhmana,

be not a Vaishnava, by even talking with such a person one loses the merits acquired by his previous good deeds.'

I have reproduced the words of Thākur Brindāvandās and also the texts of the Scriptures quoted by him. Thākur Brindāvandās informs us that a terrible calamity overtook the offending Brāhmana only a few days after the above occurrence. The nose of the Brāhmana fell off by an attack of the small-pox. The punishment, which he had proposed for Thākur Haridās, was allotted to himself by Krishna.

We next meet Thākur Haridās in Nabadwip, whither he was attracted by the prospect of the society of the Vaishnavas. He resided there, as the honoured guest of Sree Advaitācharyya, on a footing of intimate friendship with all the devotees.

It is, however, necessary, before we leave this portion of our narrative, to offer a few remarks on an important aspect of the incident just described.

The method of chanting in company the Name of Hari with a loud voice within the hearing of all persons, is the form of worship that was subsequently instituted by Sree Chaitanya as the Dispensation for the present controversial Age. The only offence, which may stand effectively in the way of one's taking the Name of Hari, is absence of faith in the Transcendental Nature of the Name Himself and of Sree Guru on whose lips the Name manifests Himself. Provided one is not deliberately resolved to disbelieve the Divine Nature of the Name and the spiritual nature of His chanter there is no other circumstance that can stand in the way of one's taking the Name mentally or uttering Him with a loud voice. The second of these methods is called *Kirtana*. This is held to be much more efficacious than the mental process.

By taking the Name only once a person is relieved from the bondage of Ne-Science for good. On the manifestation of the natural function of the soul the abnormal function automatically disappears. The *Kirtana* or loud chant of the Name is the only function of the soul in the state of Divine Grace. By His means the whole world is to be saved. This is the Dispensation of this Age.

But this is vehemently objected to by Brāhmanas of the stamp of the person who reviled Thākur Haridās at Harinadi. It is necessary to consider the mentality that produces such vehement opposition to a method which should appear even to those who may not have any faith in it, as hardly capable of giving offence to anybody.

No one is likely to be angry with the loud chanter of the Name of Hari unless he is himself accustomed to take the Name in the offensive manner. The rank atheist is less dangerous than the hypocrite. A person takes the Name of Hari mentally, but opposes the loud chant of the Name. What can be the reason of such opposition? It can be but due to the natural partiality for the wrong method to which he has been accustomed, as he must believe, on principle.

But if he is asked further why he takes the Name of Hari even mentally, the opposer of the loud chant should have no reasonable answer to give. The Transcendental *Sound* is the Name of Hari. The Name as *Sound* is identical with Hari. Hari's Name makes His Appearance in this world as *Sound* through the medium of the chanters of the Name. The Name is to be *heard* only from the lips of pure devotees. If He is so heard, even without faith but without offence, the dormant function of the soul is aroused thereby, enabling the hearer also to *chant* the Name. As soon as the Name *appears on the tongue* Hari is fully served. But why should the Name, received from His loud chanter, appearing on the tongue of the hearer, be recited *mentally* in order to prevent others from hearing Him?

The *mantra*, indeed, requires to be repeated to oneself mentally. The *mantra* is also the Name, but not in the form of direct address. The *mantra* is the formula by which the person, repeating the same, makes a *surrender of his mind and its function* to the Name Who is yet inaccessible to the worshipper because of his conditional state. If the Name is compared to the full-blown flower the *mantra* would be comparable to the unopened bud. The *mantra* is the formula for getting rid of the vanity of one's mental existence. The *mantra* helps to clear the way for the Appearance of the Name. The *mantra* involves mental surren-

der to the Guru and is, therefore, a deliberate act of conviction on the part of the person who is entitled to practise this method. The *mantra* in fact represents the special favour of the Guru and the personal relationship between the disciple and the spiritual guide. The imparting of the *mantra* is tantamount to recognition by the Guru that a person is accepted as disciple. This process is called *dikshā* which means the bestowal of spiritual enlightenment by elimination of sinfulness, by the spiritual guide to the disciple who is disposed by sincere conviction to walk in the path of service under Divine Guidance manifested through the Guru.

The chanting of the Name of Hari, after hearing Him from the lips of the pure devotee, in the company of His devotees, is the method of worship that was to be promulgated by Sree Chaitanya as the only Dispensation for the Age. Thākur Haridās is the Āchāryya, or the Divinely Authorised Practising Teacher, of this very function. He is here found to declare that the chanting of the Name with a loud voice is open to all persons and does not require on the part of the neophyte any precondition of fitness except the absence of deliberate opposition to recognising the Name as being identical with the Transcendental Possessor of the Name, *i.e.*, Godhead Himself. If there is no deliberate intention of refusing to acknowledge the Divinity of the Name appearing on the lips of the pure devotee of Krishna a person is eligible to hear and, after hearing, sing the Name in the company of His devotees by discarding all unnecessary association with unbelievers. By practising the chant of the Name in this manner, that is to say by being free from the offences of intimate association with unbelievers and the intention of deliberately cherishing any doubt or disbelief regarding the Divinity of the Holy Name manifesting Himself in the form of the Sound on the lips of pure devotees, a person should be enabled in due course to realise the Divine Nature of the Name, *i.e.*, of Krishna, His service and of his own soul as being the eternal servant of Krishna.

But the *mantra* is not really different from the chant of the Name. It only marks a stage of progress in an identical process. After the Name begins to be chanted in the manner that is free

from offence against the Name, one begins to make progress on the path of spiritual endeavour. The first sign, that actual progress is being made, manifests itself in the form of the conviction that it is necessary to follow unconditionally the guidance of the Guru from whose lips the Name has been heard. This is the specific entry into the properly serving state of the process.

The position may also be explained in another way. The chanting of the Name with a loud voice in the manner that is free from offence is not possible for a person till he is relieved of the exclusively mental outlook on life which is inevitable in the conditioned state. So long as the mental outlook retains its prevailing force a person cannot conscientiously recognise the necessity of unconditional submission to the guidance of the Guru. This is so because he cannot realise by mental speculation the spiritual nature of the personality of the *bona fide* Guru and the consequent necessity of unconditional surrender to the *bona fide* spiritual guide.

It also does not follow that after the *mantra* is received one is not entitled to chant the Name with a loud voice. On the contrary it is the *mantra* who in his turn strengthens the faith of the chanter in the Divinity of the Name by relieving him from the obstructive force of mental speculation regarding the spiritual function. The *mantra* has to be repeated mentally because all persons are not entitled to listen to it nor does it concern any one else except the person to whom it is imparted. The identity between the Name and the *mantra* is established by the fact that the *mantra* is also the Name with the addition of the personal admission that the chanter is convinced that he can be relieved from the state of ignorance regarding the spiritual nature of the Name only by following unconditionally the guidance of the Guru.

It will not do to repeat the *mantra* mentally without receiving the same from the Guru, for the reason that the process would then be meaningless. The *mantra* really means that a person places himself under the unconditional guidance of the Guru in order to realise the spiritual function of chanting the Name of Hari without offence. If there is no Guru whom the person is

to follow there is no meaning in merely uttering a formula which implies one's consent to practise obedience to the Guru.

The Guru understands the particular state of spiritual eligibility of the conditioned soul and is also aware of Krishna's intention in regard to him. He is the channel used by Krishna to convey His Mercy to the conditioned soul. The best of devotees are alone privileged to enjoy this supreme confidence of Krishna. It is the function of the Guru to raise the disciple to the level of the intimate confidence of Krishna, because Krishna is fully served only by the congregational method to be found in the perfectly spiritual community of His pure devotees. The unfortunate Brāhmana of Harinadi and the learned Pandits assembled there could not understand the necessity or propriety of chanting the Name of Hari with a loud voice because they were satisfied with their individual mental outlooks and speculative opinions regarding the teaching of the Scriptures, although the same Scriptures are never tired of warning their readers against committing the offence of confounding the spiritual with the physical or mental issue. Those learned Pandits had found the untruth which they were seeking in their lives by precept and example. No sincere seeker of the Truth should, however, allow himself to be deliberately committed to views regarding the worship of Godhead for the purpose of thereby ensuring his own superiority over his fellowmen. Those pseudo-Brāhmanas were too fond of the social superiority of their hereditary position to be inclined to pay heed to the real meaning of the Scriptures which is so utterly incompatible with the social privileges, which they so unworthily monopolised. It is seldom that the prosperous and confirmed thief is inclined to pay serious attention to the counsels of stainless honesty.

CHAPTER XXII

PILGRIMAGE TO GĀYA AND INITIATION.

NIMAI Pandit continued to teach His students in Nabadwip after His Marriage with Sree Vishnupriyā Devi. The Lord was leading the ideal life of the householder Brāhmana up to this point of our Narrative. It was the life that is enjoined by the Dharma-Shāstras for those who want to lead a life that is not opposed to spiritual well-being. But it is not itself the spiritual life. The life of the Brāhmana is the model for the other classes of the worldly people. It places before us the necessity of not putting one's trust exclusively in the so-called good things of this world. If one has to live in this world, as one must till he finds it really necessary to change his worldly life for one that is higher, he should constantly keep before him the purpose underlying the life of the Brāhmana as laid down in the Scriptures.

It does not mean that every one should embrace the calling of the teacher of religion nor that every one should marry. So long as a person feels any affinity for the activities of this world he should learn a calling that is to his taste and follow the same. Those, who feel a taste for the work of a teacher, have also to qualify themselves for the same by adopting a life that is in keeping with the proper discharge of the responsibilities of that particular worldly calling. The teacher of the people must in the first place lead a life that is in conformity with the interests of his pupils. The highest of all interests is knowledge of the Brahman. One, who is devoid of the knowledge of the Brahman is debarred by this radical disqualification from taking charge of the education of the people.

It is not the purpose of the Scriptures to prevent the proper cultivation of any branch of knowledge by thus making the