

Self-conscious Principle, Krishna. Godhead sports in six Divine Forms, *viz.*, as (1) Krishna, (2) the Two Preceptors, (3) the Devotees, (4) the *Avatāras*, (5) the Manifestations, and (6) the Powers. In other words, the Spiritual Preceptors *are* Chaitanya-deva; the devotees such as Sribās, etc., *are* also Chaitanyadeva; the *Avatāras are* Chaitanyadeva; and the Powers *are* also Chaitanya-deva Who is himself Krishna's Own Cognitive Self, the Subjective Divine Personality Whose Essence is Pure Cognition. We shall discuss these truths in greater detail in the succeeding chapters.

I have tried briefly to put before the reader some of those considerations the substantive truth of which has to be realised by the disciple in order to be fit for studying profitably the holy narrative of the career of Sree Chaitanya.

I cannot do better than conclude this chapter with the cautious words of Thākur Brindābandās, 'Know for certain that the Activities of Chaitanyachandra, by listening to which the heart is purified, manifest themselves only by the grace of the devotees of Godhead. Who can know the Deeds of Chaitanya that are the hidden secret of the Vedas? I write only what I have heard from the lips of the devotees. I make my obeisance at the feet of all the Vaishnavas. May there be no offence committed by me by such attempt.'

CHAPTER III

BIRTH AND INFANCY

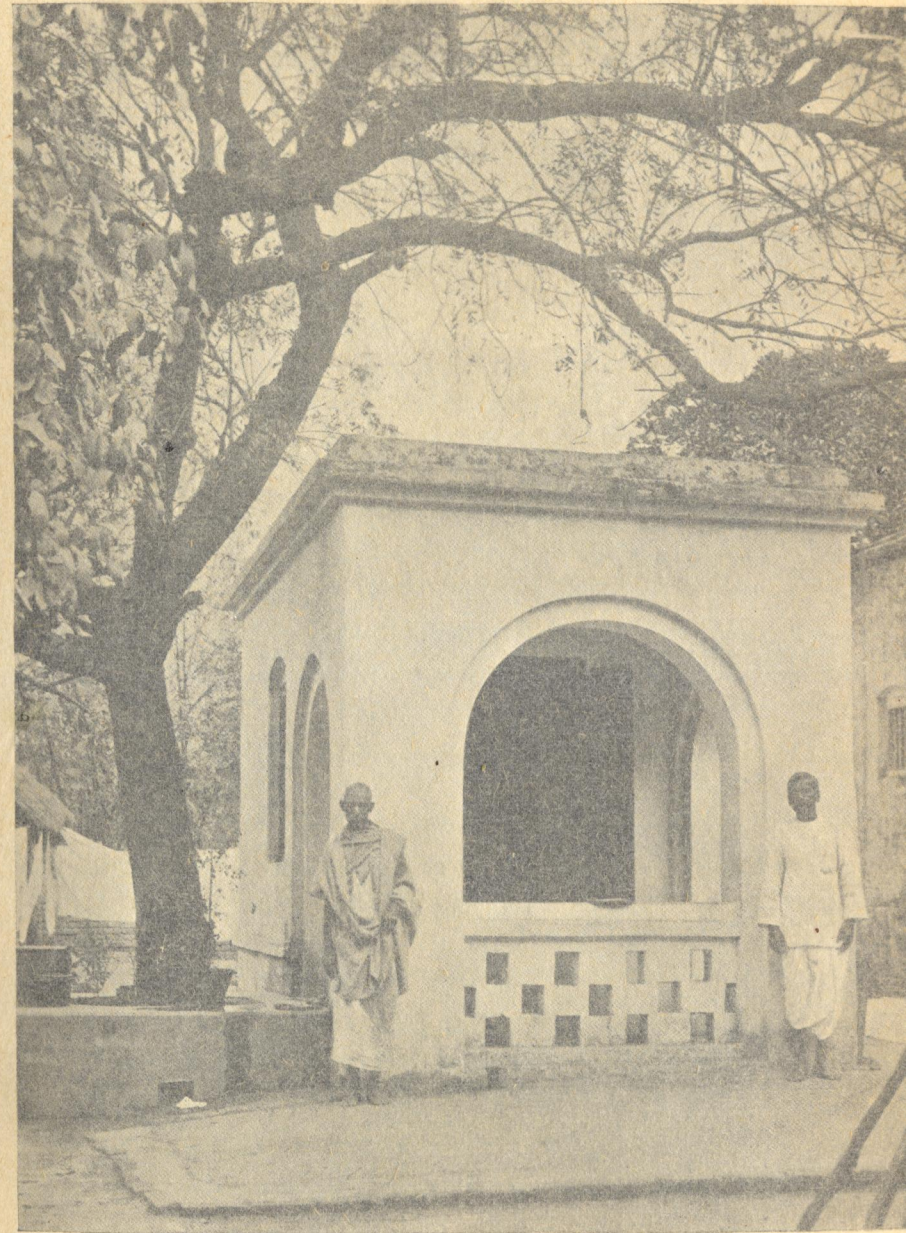
WHY Krishna comes into this world is known only to Himself. The invocation of the Lord by Sree Advaita Āchāryya is stated by devotees as the cause of the Advent of Sree Chaitanya. The spiritual Academy of Advaita was the gathering-place of all the Vaishnavas of Nabadwip. There they met daily and spent a greater part of their time in holy discourses about Krishna. They were regarded as a peculiar group whose ways and words appeared alike singular and distasteful to the people in the midst of whom they found themselves placed by Providence. This small group of devotees felt keenly for the miseries that their worldly-minded brethren brought upon themselves by their attachment to interests other than Krishna. They tried to instruct them about Krishna. But this only served to increase all the more their aversion to Krishna and His devotees.

It was this apparently hopeless state of affairs that led Advaita to the conclusion that the universal and stubborn godlessness that prevailed everywhere could only be relieved by Krishna-chandra Himself. Advaita believed in the efficacy of prayer that is offered by one who knows nothing except Godhead. He believed that the intolerable anguish, of those sincere devotees who daily gathered under his roof, caused by the extreme misery of the worldly people due to their bitter aversion to Krishna, must appeal to the Lord and have power to draw Him in no long time from His Eternal Seat of Goloka into this world, for the consolation of His own beloved ones. Advaita, who was well versed in the Scriptures, noticed all these favourable indications. He was so convinced of the impending Appearance of Krishna that in his prayers he began to call upon Him most ardently night and day to save the world by His speedy Appearance.

That Advaita felt sure about the Appearance of Sree Krishna and worshipped Him for this specific purpose with *tulasi* and the holy water of the Ganges, which are most acceptable to Krishna, with the single-hearted desire for His Appearance, was known to all the Vaishnavas. He, in fact, actually assured them most clearly and emphatically about the expected Advent of Krishna into their midst within a short time. I have stated already that Sree Chaitanya Himself repeatedly declared that His Advent was solely due to the whole-hearted prayers of Advaita.

The Advent of Sree Chaitanya in the particular *Kali* Age that follows the Appearance of Sree Krishna at the close of *Dvāpara*, is also hinted by the Scriptures. In the *Mahābhārata* it is declared that Krishna appears in the *Kali* Age as a *Brāhmana* with a yellow complexion to promulgate the *yajna* in the form of congregational chanting of the *kirtana* of Hari. The *Bhāgavatam* contains the same statement and adds that Krishna appears in the above manner in the *Kali* Age with all His kin, associates, consorts and servitors. Krishna Himself appears towards the end of the *Dvāpara* Age of the *Vaivasvata Manvantara* of the twenty-eighth aggregate of four-*Yugas* of the *Kalpa* of the White Boar. He appears as a *Brāhmana* with the yellow complexion in the particular *Kali* Age following His Appearance in the *Dvāpara*. In the *Dvāpara* Krishna appears as Godhead served by His consorts, kindred and servitors. In the *Kali* Age Sree Krishna-Chaitanya appears as the Best of devotees in company of the congregation of devotees, *vis.*, His own beloved ones in order to teach by His own example how Krishna, *i.e.*, He Himself, is to be served. This is the *main* cause of the Advent of Sree Chaitanya. The prayer of Advaita and the suffering of the devotees are the *secondary* cause. Unless this real cause of His Appearance is properly grasped, the most characteristic Activities of Sree Chaitanya can never be rightly understood.

The Appearance of Sree Chaitanya came about in the following way. In Nabadwip there dwelt a most generous and pure hearted *Brāhmana* devoted to the zealous performance of all religious duties, resembling in his immaculate piety Vasudeva, the father of Sree Krishna. The name of this ideal *Brāhmana* was Sree



The Birth-site of the Supreme Lord Sree Krishna Chaitanya.

Jagannāth Misra. We have stated his ancestry in another place. His revered consort's name was Sree Sachi Devi. Sree Sachi Devi was the most loyal of matrons, the very embodiment of the pure devotion to Vishnu and mother of the whole world. Eight daughters were born to Sachi Devi one after another, all of them leaving this world in their infancy. The ninth issue was a son whom his parents obtained in response to their prayer to Vishnu for a male offspring. The name of this boy was Bisvarupa, the elder brother of Sree Chaitanya.

Sree Krishna entered the persons of Sachi and Jagannāth Misra towards the end of the month of *Māgh* in the *Saka* year fourteen hundred and six (January, 1485 A.D.). The mouths of Sree Ananta uttered pæans of triumph that were heard by Sachi and Jagannāth, as in a dream. Jagannāth Misra thereupon said to Sachi, 'I had a dream that a realm of light entered my heart and from my heart it passed into yours. It seems some great personage is about to be born.' There were other indications. Misra felt a difference everywhere. His body and the house appeared shining like a place dwelt by Lakshmi, the Goddess of every well-being. All people showed him honour at all places. Money, clothing, rice, etc., poured unsolicited into his house. Sachi noticed heavenly figures in the sky that appeared in the attitude of prayer to herself; but no one else observed them. Sree Jagannāth Misra and Sree Sachi Devi felt transported with inexpressible delight and applying themselves with a mind restrained from all other pursuits and with special ardour to the worship of Sree *Shālagrāma*, awaited the impending Advent of the Lord. Thirteen months were passed in this state of expectant suspense.

Sree Krishna-Chaitanya made His auspicious Appearance in this world on the 23rd day of *Fālgun* of the *Saka* Year 1407, which corresponds to the 18th of February of 1486 A. D. He was born in the evening just with the rising of the full-moon, which was then in eclipse, in the midst of the loud chant of the Name of Hari by the people of Nadiā, as is the custom on the occasion of an eclipse. Nature joined with man and the gods to pay homage to the Moon of Nadiā risen on the *Eastern Hills*. The spotted lunar disc hid its face in shame, under the guise of eclipse,

on the Appearance of the Perfect Moon absolutely free from all spots. On that blessed Moment of Nativity of the exquisitely beautiful Baby were shed in unstinted profusion all the most auspicious influences of all the favouring constellations, that blended together to greet the Advent of the Lord. Strange forms were observed to crowd into the yard of Sachi, lying prostrate on the bare earth in the act of adoration, waving the whisk, holding aloft the umbrella, singing, dancing and beating the drum or playing on the flute, in an ecstasy of unbounded joy.

That very Moment Advaita suddenly leaped with delight in his home and danced with joy arm-in-arm with Thākur Haridās to the blissful surprise of on-lookers. All the devotees had the same experience. The tide of joy that swept and eddied over all Nadiā and threw the very birds and beasts and all dumb Nature into a delirium of ecstatic joy, the pens of Thākur Brindābandās and Kavirāj Goswāmi are alone privileged to describe. The brush of no earthly or celestial painter can do justice to the delicate assemblage of colour, warmth, holy perfume, the volume of delirious joy, free from the least suggestion of grossness, that manifested themselves at the Birth of Sree Krishna-Chaitanya and have ever clung to the Holy Eve of His Advent, most highly cherished by all pure devotees who declare the worship of the day of the Lord's Advent to have power to kindle love for Krishna.

The Birth of the Baby drew a long train of visitors, male and female, who hastened to have a view of the Divine Child and make suitable offerings. Gods and goddesses, assuming the forms of men and women, mixing with the crowd, made their way to the home of Jagannāth Misra, in order to obtain a sight of the Baby and greet the Feet of Sree Gaurasundar, dancers, singers, musicians, promulgators of auspicious tidings, flocked thither to swell the joy of the Festive Occasion.

Sree Chandrasekhar Āchāryya and Sribās Pandit duly performed the purificatory Birth Rites of the Son of Jagannāth Misra. Sree Purandar Misra made suitable gifts to all those who brought presents for his Boy on this auspicious occasion. Sree Sitā Thākūrāni, the consort of Advaita Āchāryya, made her way to Sree Māyāpur from her residence at Sāntipur to see the Prince of Boys. Sree

Mālini Devi, pure-hearted consort of Sribās Pandit, accompanied Sitā Thākūrāni with various presents and afforded her eyes the opportunity, that they longed for like the bird *chakora*, of feasting on the nectar flowing from the moonlike Face of the Transcendental Baby. Misra distributed whatever he had, with an open hand, to the Brāhmanas, having first offered the same to Godhead. He kept back nothing of the rich variety of presents for himself. Sree Nilāambar Chakravarti, father of Sachi Devi, taking Misra aside, informed him in a whisper that the signs on the Person of the Child prognosticated a very great Transcendental Personage Who would deliver the world.

The Birth of Sree Chaitanya, of which we have culled the above account from the narratives of His associates, was never regarded by them as anything like the ordinary occurrence of this world with which all of us are so familiar. The *raison d'être* of their attitude is thus put by Thākur Brindābandās in a passage of the Nativity Hymn sung by the gods on the occasion: 'He, Who is All-Will Who can destroy the whole world at His Will, could certainly also therefore destroy Kamsa, Rāvana and other enemies of Godhead instantaneously and by His mere fiat. But although He could do so, He killed Rāvana by being Himself born in the Home of Dasaratha and slew Kamsa by being Himself born as the Son of Vasudeva; because He is ever full of All-joyous Activities.

'The realm of Nabadwip where Krishna makes His Appearance is no mundane region.' The transcendental realm of Sree Krishna is identical with the power of Godhead known as *Neelā* or *Leelā* and is an object of worship of His devotees. The *Yogāpeetha*, i.e., the Abode of Sachi-Jagannāth, situate in the centre of Sree Māyāpur, is the Plane of the Appearance of the Lord and is identical with Brindāvana or the mind of the devotee constituted of the pure cognitive essence. Sree Nabadwip is replete with the ninefold devotion, being of the nature of the heart of those pure devotees who have found the Refuge of the Lotus-Feet of Sree Gurudeva. Such is the language of realisation that is used by the devotees in regard to Nabadwip, which is necessarily unintelligible by the method of delusive mundane analogies. But

we need not, therefore, reject the testimony of those whom we have accepted as our authorities, not on the ground that it is untrustworthy or dishonest but for the irrelevant reason that it is not perfectly intelligible to those who are destitute of pure devotion to the Holy Feet of Godhead. This would be against all principles of impartial history and, as regards the theistic account, will result in the retention of the chaff by elimination of the grain under the untenable plea of our own ignorance.

We have merely referred to certain spiritual values to prevent misconception of the Great Event that we are describing. Those values will be fully discussed later on when we arrive at the proper point of the narrative. But there are other considerations that it is necessary to place before the reader in order to enable him to follow the development of the narrative itself.

Godhead and His devotees appear in this world by the operation of the transcendental *positive* Power of the Divinity that directly attends on His Person. Individual souls (*jivas*) are born by the operation of the deluding stupefying power of Godhead that can never abide in the Presence of the Divinity. The material cases enveloping individual souls (*jivas*) are the creation of the deluding power and such envelopment is the misfortune that overtakes them in consequence of the deliberate practice of aversion to Godhead. The worldly birth, through the medium of material bodies, belongs to the category of material phenomena, being brought about by the operation of the Deluding Energy as the result of the soul's desire for worldly enjoyment.

The Appearance of Godhead and His devotees in this world is not the consequence of the practice of any previous aversion to Godhead either by wish or activity, nor due to the operation of the Deluding Power. Godhead and His devotees appear in this world by their own will through the medium of the Transcendental Power. The Nature of Godhead and His devotees is such that it simultaneously enlightens and deludes conditioned souls to whom They appear. They reveal their transcendence to those conditioned souls who sincerely want to serve the Lord and at one and the same time appear to those who are averse to His service, as deluding phenomena of this world. The Birth of Godhead, the Realm of

Godhead, the devotees of Godhead, thus remain, in their proper transcendental nature, ever inaccessible to the deluded understanding of all irreverent persons. This may not be tasty to arrogant godless intellectualism, but is nevertheless the only position that is perfectly reasonable and logical to the understanding that is not prepared to hypocritically disown its consciousness of its present limitations and the consequent imperative necessity of welcoming the entry of the Truth, however opposed the Truth may seem at first sight to *all* its most deeply cherished prejudices.

Those, therefore, who are prepared to maintain that the Birth of Sree Chaitanya is an ordinary affair of this world, start deliberately on the wrong track and should not blame anybody but themselves if they find the narrative not perfectly amenable to those rules of probability which are derived from their worldly experience. Sree Chaitanya's Birth appeared, for this very reason at the time of its occurrence, as an ordinary event of this world to His contemporaries with the exception of the comparatively small group of His devotees. It is not the untrue experience of the atheists which the reader of these pages is offered as 'the *history* of theism'. Neither is he asked to deny the *existence* of the experience of the atheists. But he is asked not to accept their experience as theistic *or true* nor to confound Godhead with the fallen souls of this world.

The Birth of Sree Chaitanya was brought about by the operation of the Transcendental Power of Godhead Who is categorically different from His material Energy. Sree Jagannāth Misra and Sree Sachi Devi who is not metaphorically but really the mother of the whole world, are the eternal Parents of Godhead. Their minds and bodies are constituted of the principle of pure cognition which is categorically different from the constituent principle of the body and mind of ordinary mortals. 'Vasudeva' is the Scriptural term to denote this pure cognitive essence. Vāsudeva, Son of Vasudeva, manifests Himself only in Vasudeva, or the pure consciousness, for playing His Pastimes. The relationship between Sree Jagannāth Misra and Sree Sachi Devi or the seeming pregnancy of the latter, does not belong to the category of the sensual affairs of men and women who are given to the plea-

tures of the flesh. The real significance of the Conception of the Lord by Sree Sachi Devi and of its transcendental purity will appear to the mind, only if it is in a position to realise the eternal difference between the spiritual and the material. The account of the devotees will then be truly understood and it cannot be understood in any other way even by the greatest intellectual giants of this world.

The process of the Transcendental Birth of Godhead is thus described in Sreemad *Bhāgavatam*. 'Thereafter the Portion of the Changeless transmitted by Sree Vasudeva was conceived by Devaki of pure cognitive essence. Just as the quarter of the East conceives the image of the moon, Sree Devaki also conceived in the same manner Sree Hari, the Supreme Soul of all souls, by her non-mundane mind.' This process is not confined to only Vasudeva and Devaki. It is the same also in the case of the devotees. Before Godhead manifests Himself to the devotee in the Visible Form, a long period passes during which He is manifest internally in his pure consciousness. 'Thereafter as the quarter of the East holds the disc of the moon, Devaki of pure cognition by the process of initiation in Krishna by Surasena (Vasudeva) received in her transcendently pure heart Sree Achyuta, the Embodiment of the universal well-being, the Supreme Soul of all souls.' From these statements of the *Bhāgavatam* it would appear that Sree Krishna first appeared in the heart of Ānakadundubhi and from there appeared in the heart of Sree Devaki. The entry into the womb of Sree Devaki alluded to in the Nativity Hymn of the *Bhāgavatam* is not different from the above.

Godhead and His devotees are not born by the operation of the material Energy by means of the seminal fluid and blood, etc. The greatest of all offences that it is possible to commit against the Divinity is to suppose that His Body is material like that of the bound *jīva*. Godhead and His devotees have no material bodies and are not born by the operation of any material conditions. The Appearance of Sree Chaitanya and His devotees is free from any touch of the material principle. This is the realisation of all the devotees in accordance with the declaration of the Scriptures. Theistic history, although it certainly transcends and explains,

does not ignore this phenomenal world; and those, who object to the transcendental on the ground that it is not confirmable by the worldly experience of men, do not thereby disprove either the reality or the necessity of such history.

The successive disappearances of eight daughters, followed by the appearance of Viswarup and Sree Chaitanya, the two Sons, of Sree Sachi Devi, are explained on the analogy of the case of Sree Devaki recorded in the *Bhāgavatam* as symbolising the esoteric fact that the Appearance of Sree Krishna is preceded by that of Samkarsana, the Pure Cognitive Principle Who manifests Himself on the subsidence of the eightfold envelope of physical Nature, *viz.*, the eight pseudo-egoistic principles, that bars the access of the bound *jīva* to the transcendental.

The necessity of the closest consideration of the difference between the spiritual and material can alone enable one to reconcile the apparently contradictory statements regarding the Absolute that are a subject of standing complaint to all who, for extraneous reasons, do not seek the explanation in the Scriptures themselves. The Lord says: 'I exist eternally; nothing existed before Me, neither the non-existent nor the existent and nothing exists to the end and beyond the end except Myself. Therefore, those foolish persons, who think slightingly of My Human Form, do so through ignorance of My real Nature Who transcends everything of this world. They think that I am like themselves subject to the laws that have been made by Myself. They cannot understand that I exist in absolute independence of all rules which only serve to manifest Myself; and that I am the Supreme Lord of everything including all rules and conditions. Therefore, I can make My real Form visible to mortal eyes without ceasing to be the Master of this world and without submitting to any laws of physical Nature, and may at the same time delude all those who are averse to Me by appearing to them as an ordinary human being, subject, like themselves, to the operation of the laws of this universe. Know that this is the specific privilege reserved for Godhead, and herein lies the proof of His Supremacy, that He remains unaffected by the qualities of physical Nature even when He appears to be situated within its sphere.' Godhead has a specific Personality of His own, but He is subject to no limita-

tions. In Him all opposite qualities meet and are reconciled losing all their apparent grossness. But He also chooses to appear as an abstract principle to the idealist and as capable of grossness to the materialist, who are thus punished for trying to make the Absolute submit to their deluded speculations.

Sree Chaitanya appeared in this world on the full-moon eve of the month of *Falgun*, that most glorious eve of spring, which is reverentially consecrated to the Swinging Festival of Sree Krishna, like unto the spotless Moon risen on the Eastern Hills of Gauḍadesha, the lunar disc itself having just then undergone a total eclipse. His Advent was greeted by an outburst of the universal chant of the *Name Hari* by all people of Nadia. In the midst of this unconscious jubilation, the Baby came out of the mother's womb and began at once to smile. Sachi and Jagannāth were transformed into the very image of joy on beholding the beautiful Face of their Son. The ladies in attendance got perplexed and did not know what to do and accordingly began, for no reason, to shout '*Jais*' (jubilations).

The glad tidings quickly brought together all the relations and friends who dwelt in the neighbourhood. We have already related the communication of Sree Nilāmbar Chakravarti, father of Sachi Devi, to Misra regarding the marvellous signs that he noticed on the Person of the new-born Babe. Nilāmbar Chakravarti was a very great astrologer. After considering the positions of the planets and the constellations at the Birth of the Child, he declared that the Boy would be far greater than a 'King', greater than Brihaspati, the celestial sage, in learning and would without effort come to possess all good qualities. Presently there arrived by accident a certain Brāhmana, also an astrologer, who applied himself to the casting of the horoscope of the Newborn. That Brāhmana declared as the result of his calculations that the Boy is no other than Nārāyana Himself. 'He will re-establish the Religion. He will be the extraordinary Preacher of the Religion. He will deliver the whole world. All persons will obtain from Him what is constantly coveted by the greatest devotees, such as Brahmā, Siva, Suka, etc. At the sight of Him all the people of the world will be melted to pity for all *jivas*, become indifferent to pain and pleasure alike, and attain to love for Him the Embodi-

ment of love for Krishna. Not to speak of others, even the Yavanas, who are declared enemies of Vishnu, will worship the Feet of this Child. All the countless worlds will sing His praise. All people, from the Brāhmanas downwards, will do obeisance to Him. His Form is the very Embodiment of the religion of the greatest devotees, the Embodiment of patience and of respect for the gods, Brāhmanas, preceptors and parents. Just as Viṣṇu appearing in this world persuades all *jivas* to religion, exactly same will be all the Doings of this Child. How fortunate indeed am I to be called to calculate such a horoscope! His name will be Sree Vishwambhar.' The astrologer purposely omitted to mention the Renunciation of Sree Chaitanya, lest it would mar the unmixed happiness of the occasion.

Misra was so greatly moved by these statements that he first of all thought of offering a suitable reward to the astrologer; but, presently remembering the extreme poverty of himself, grasped the feet of the Brāhmana and burst into tears, unable any longer to contain his joy. That Brāhmana also wept, clasping the feet of Sree Jagannāth Misra. All the people caught the impulse and joyously shouted the Name of Hari. The friends and well-wishers of Misra, on hearing of the nature of the Divine Horoscope, joined in this loud demonstration of joy.

It may interest the reader to be reminded of the fact that the great astrologer Garga who calculated the horoscope of Sree Krishna is described in the *Bhāgavatam* as a Brāhmana skilled in the transcendental science. The Name Viswambhara is applied to Vishnu in the Atharva-Veda Samhita (2-3-4-5) and means 'One Who holds or nourishes the world'.

Sachi noticed female figures, who were divinely beautiful, who smilingly put blades of the *durbā* with grains of unhusked rice on the Head of the Infant and uttered the benedictory formula, 'Live Thou for ever', and who took the dust of her feet on their heads as they departed. Sachi was dumb with joy and could not even ask the names of those new-comers. These performances were accompanied by the customary song, dance and music of the professional musicians on such occasions.

The Baby had to remain for a full month in the lying-in chamber according to custom. The small hut, that was made for the occasion for the temporary accommodation of the mother and the Child, was watched night and day by all kinsfolk. This was due to two reasons. The Boy cried incessantly and kept quiet only just as long as He heard the Name of Hari uttered in a loud voice. This was soon grasped by all, who chanted aloud the Name of Hari, as soon as the Child began to cry, as the only means of pacifying Him. There was another reason for constant vigilance. There was an unaccountable fear, which was shared by all persons, that the life of the Baby was in danger from goblins and thieves. They accordingly often recited the customary invocations to Vishnu and Devi for the protection of the Child. The Name of Nrisimha was often similarly taken. *Mantrams* were used to render all sides of the hut secure against evil influences. But notwithstanding all these precautions, there were frequent alarms caused by supposed detection of the egress of thieves and goblins who often made their way into the house unperceived even by such a large body of devoted watchers. It was, in fact, the gods who played all these pranks for a sight of the Baby and lingered to amuse on the causeless anxiety of all persons on the Baby's account.

At the end of the period of confinement all the ladies accompanied Sree Sachi Devi for her bath in the *Bhagirathi*. After bathing in the river and having worshipped the Ganges, they made their way to the grove of the goddess '*Sasthī*' accompanied by singers and musicians. On their return to the house, Sachi honoured every one of the party by presents of fried rice, plantain, oil, vermilion, areca-nut and betel. Thereupon the ladies went back to their homes after greeting the feet of the mother.

Orthodox *smārtha* Hindus are likely to read in the above account an apparent justification of their customary practices as being confirmed, by having been duly observed by Sree Jagannāth Misra and Sree Sachi Devi whose minds are free from all impurities and errors. Those, on the other hand, who look upon such local Hindu practices as being due to ignorance of the *Shāstras*, superstition or historical circumstances, will also naturally experience a certain measure of the qualms of an outraged

conscience if they have to prepare to swallow these descriptions, with the best of grace that they can call to their help, through sheer good-will for an otherwise untenable cause. Historians will feel scandalized by this attempt to chronicle the *unnecessary* details of such *petty domestic* matters that are perfectly known to everybody. Those, who look for the account of the Absolute as a *philosophical realisation*, will regard it as puerile sentimentalism. Those, who believe in the Personal God but expect a narrative in keeping with the supreme dignity of the Subject, may also be disposed to scratch their heads. And the atheists will *pooh pooh* what they will at once recognize as a brazen, ridiculous, insipid, and silly attempt of passing off the *minutæ* of Bengali superstitious usages upon credulous religionists in the name of the latest Divine Dispensation, etc., etc.

But the reader, who has followed the narrative so far, need not be told that events that happen in this world are divisible into two groups that are quite distinct from one another, *viz.*, (1) those events that take place on the physical plane, and (2) those that occurring on the spiritual manifest themselves also on the mundane plane. The Birth of Godhead in this world is an Event that belongs to the second group. It appears like an event belonging to the first group, to all bound *jīvas* for the reason that they try to see Godhead by their own right, whereas the Absolute never submits to the inspection of the limited. To such people accordingly even the Transcendental Activities of Godhead appear as limited occurrences capable of being accurately graded in an order of importance (?).

But Krishna is declared by the Scriptures to be identical with the Absolute Truth Whose Activities admit of no such offensive classifications. Good and bad, great and small, are notions that only belong to the realm of the relative, limited, divisible and fragmentary knowledge. The Reality is Only One, in spite of the fact that only a perverted view of Him happens to be the sole, undoubted birthright of all conditioned souls. No event is really good or bad, small or great. All events are of infinite dimensions and instinct with the cognitive potency. They appear to be limited, inert, cramped and possessed of unwholesome qualities to those

jivas whose own natures seem to their deluded judgment to be limited, inert, cramped and gross for the time being. The vision of the devotee is free from all defects, and when they describe to us what they see, we, conditioned souls, pretend to feel in duty bound to disagree with them on the strength of our own unreliable but actual experience of those very same events.

No petty domestic event of this world, meaning what appears as such to the vision of bound *jivas*, can have even its so-called limited existence, unless it belongs to the realm of *Vaikunṭha* where it can be also neither petty nor great in the material sense. The domestic events, connected with Godhead Himself (and His own) when He chooses to appear in this world, possess this additional peculiarity that they are really free from all grossness even from the point of view of the bound *jiva*, if he does not deliberately shut his eyes and ears and refuse to see and hear. That is to say, if he only really begins to see and hear with an unbiased mind, he at once realises this *truth* for himself. This process is known as the *descent* of the transcendental into this world. The birth and activities of conditioned souls (*jivas*) do not possess the transcendental quality. Their bodies and minds are of this world and their activities are only unsubstantial mimics of the Reality. This mimicry is not Absolute but relative reality, being the result of the operation of the deluding power of Godhead. Its existence is not denied, nor its nature which is, however, categorically different from that of the spiritual. Its essence is comparable to that of the reflected image of the actual form of an object. By no manner of inspection of the image a knowledge of the nature and qualities of the actual substance can be obtained. But when the actual substance presents itself to our inspection, we can easily get the true knowledge of it, if only we do not perversely choose to regard it as image on the strength of deceptive analogical arguments supplied by our exclusive experience of a world of reflected images.

The paternal affection of Sree Jagannāth Misra and Sree Sachi Devi for Sree Gaursundar is also likewise different from the apparently similar affection of mundane parents for their mundane child. In the former case, the Parents, Son and Affec-

tion are real and free from all worldly grossness, while the latter is a perverted mimicry of the same event reflected on the screen of the physical plane. But this qualitative difference between the two cannot be grasped by those who have not the patience to give an unbiased hearing to the words of the devotees describing the Reality Who alone possesses an unclouded vision, even though they may appear to hasty, prejudiced or superficial observers to be in no way unlike ordinary bound *jivas*. The devotees *alone* can teach us the real meaning of the Scriptures, and our duty, as will appear from what has been said already, consists in listening to their words with faith in order to be able to understand what they have got to deliver.

The affection of Sree Jagannāth Misra and Sree Sachi Devi for their Divine-Son, being the Substantive Reality deserves to be considered by all bound *jivas* from every angle of vision with the object not of ignoring but of understanding its transcendental nature.

Sree Jagannāth Misra and Sree Sachi Devi, by reason of their perfect purity of heart, when they desired to have a Son born to them, could only mean to serve Godhead thereby. This exclusive and real reference to Him in every act is innate in the only function of the pure cognitive principle. A really pure heart is not satisfied with the mundane relationship, neither does it want to lose the faculty for contracting all relationship. It wants to realise all relationships in their true forms. This is its very nature who finds himself thwarted at every step in the conditioned state by undesirable factors. The ascetic's heart is not really pure, if it stands merely for the negation of all attachments for the reason that they happen to be always of a mixed character in this world. Such a view errs by seeking the ease of its deluded self by the self-contradictory process of suicide. This is the strange aspiration of all negativist thinkers. Those, whose hearts are somewhat purer, try to adjust themselves to *existing conditions* to the best of their power. They also err in as much as they vainly try to deal with the shadow by gratuitously assuming it to be the substance. This wild goose-chase goes in our *Shāstras* under the name of *fruitive work (Karma)*. Those, whose hearts

are purest, begin to see the impossibility and unwholesomeness of the task that is attempted by fruitive workers and the suicidal policy of nihilistic thinkers and ascetics. It is at this stage that the Reality manifests Himself of His own accord to the absolutely pure vision. And as soon as such favoured persons have thus a vision of the Truth, they want to communicate the tidings of Him to their suffering brethren; but they soon find that the hearts of the latter are not sufficiently pure either to grasp or even tolerate the real Truth Whom they also profess with their lips to be willing to serve. Such perverse people can hardly be expected to understand the nature of the longing for a Son of Sree Jagannāth Misra and Sree Sachi Devi, nor the reason of their causeless and holy joy on beholding the beautiful Face of New-born Gaurisundar.

Of course neither Sree Jagannāth Misra nor Sree Sachi Devi was aware that their Son was Sree Krishna Himself. They simply looked upon Sree Gaurisundar as their Son Whom it was their duty and pleasure to serve in every way. This is also the highest form of the spiritual service. The Lord can be served in all circumstances and under every form. He is served as a Son, because a perfectly pure heart serves nothing except the Lord, but also does so unconsciously by reason of the very perfection of his serving disposition. Those, who want to serve Sree Krishna as their Son in a conscious way, are not altogether free from the idea of reverence due to Godhead! They will fail to practise the unmixed parental affection for the Lord, if they are at all conscious of His Divinity. In such a case they will revere and love Him. Such parental affection does not perfectly please Godhead, the Son. He wants to be served with the perfect impulse of unmixed parental love which is absolutely free from any considerations that stand in the way of loving by a spontaneous impulse. In such hearts the Lord Himself appears as the Son Who is also entirely dependent on His parents for His safety and nourishment.

It will appear, therefore, that the only condition of the service of the Lord is a perfectly pure heart. No opposition to form is admissible. Therefore, those who look only to the form, may

suppose that the customs of Bengal or India *should* be adopted, if the Lord is to be properly served. This is the national or *smārta* point of view.

The perfectly pure heart is neither wedded, nor opposed, to the form of the mundane customs of any Age or country. What he wants to do is to serve the Lord. Any real method is legitimate that actually enables him to do this one thing needful. If he appears thereby to put himself even under specific restraints, he does so for all the greater facility of such unconditional service. Why the devotee behaves in a particular way is known only to himself and to Krishna. It is not something external and capable of external regulation or explanation. It is perfectly free. It cannot be squeezed into the four corners of a social or a tentative religious code. *Whatever* the devotee does is right and proper by reason of his exclusive devotion to Sree Krishna. Sree Jagannāth Misra and Sree Sachi Devi really belong to this superior plane. Their conduct should not be supposed to come under any class of activities capable of being regulated by a conventional and rigid code of rules. Rules are intended for those who are disinclined to serve, *i.e.*, for *restraining* those who are disposed to worldliness, for the purpose, if possible, of preventing a conduct that is incompatible with real freedom. But the rules themselves are not identical with freedom. The strict observance of any rules cannot produce the purity of heart that is necessarily free. Therefore, one must not allow himself to be unduly obsessed by these rules, when one has to consider the transcendental conduct of the real devotee. We should rather try to understand the limits of the rules from the conduct of the devotee. It is only the underlying principle of devotion to Godhead that can impart any value to such rules.

The worship of the Ganges and of the goddess '*Sasthi*' by Sree Sachi Devi are such concrete processes. In her case they were rendered of universal significance fit for the service of the Lord by reason of her devotion to Sree Gaurisundar. This led the Lord Himself to directly accept any service, whatever its form, that was rendered by her pure heart. Whatever method is adopted for the service of the Lord forthwith loses its mundane cha-

acter by reason of its being so employed and becomes spiritual on being accepted by Krishna. All those, who watched the Baby and recited invocatory verses calling upon Devi and Nrisimha for the protection of the Baby, also served the Lord in the perfect manner, because they served Him spontaneously. Whenever any efforts are directed towards the Divinity without reservation, they automatically lose all their unwholesomeness for the reason that God is pleased to accept our whole-hearted service. This causeless Divine mercy towards all souls prompted the Appearance of Sree Gaursundar in this world.

It will thus appear that *any and all* exercise of the senses, when it is really directed towards the Lord of our senses, is perfect, while apparently the same activity, when it is practised towards any other object, is not only not perfect but is positively harmful being obstructive of the possibility of attainment of the natural function. In the language of the Vaishnavas, "Serving Sree Krishna with all our spiritual senses, is 'love'; while similarly serving any other object is 'lust'." Or to put it in another way, 'the desire to gratify the senses of Krishna is *love*, while the wish to satisfy one's own senses is *lust*. The proposition is liable to be misunderstood and, as a matter of fact, has actually been misunderstood, in different ways. The psilanthropists have supposed that it is mundane relationship with Krishna that is recommended. But as Krishna is not available in a bodily form in this world, they accordingly want to devise a method of serving themselves by personating Krishna and the milk-maids, or trying to imagine that they are spiritually occupied in every act of their gross sensuality. They choose to think gratuitously that Krishna is a being of this world like themselves. There is another class of psilanthropists who proceed in the negative way, being repelled by the debaucheries of the first group. These suppose that it is a sin to believe that the Absolute can at all be served in a concrete manner. The Absolute is accordingly supposed to be capable of being served *only* on the *mental* plane by the homage of thought. These psilanthropists keep their life in its concrete acts strictly separate from the Absolute reserving it for the gratification of their own sensuous desires excusing themselves by imagining that

this is unavoidable *as long as they continue in the state of mundane existence*. They supplement their disregard of the virtuous activities of this life by an endeavour to rise *above them* (?) by meditation (?) on the Activities (?) of Krishna, or by fictitious avoidance of all thinking.

In these ways the people of this world delude themselves by the pernicious practice of actual debauchery or by hypocritical and impracticable abstention into supposing that their method is higher than that of professed sensualists. But in both cases the root of the error is the same, *viz.*, the belief that Krishna, when He chooses to appear to us in the Human Form, puts on a body of flesh like ourselves and that, therefore, those, who served Him at the time of His Appearance in different ways as servants, friends, parents, sweet-hearts, practised activities that are in no way different from those with which we ourselves are so familiar in this world and from the grossness of which we have no desire of seeking to escape. The one class directly swallows the mud, the other group pretends to live on nectar while actually deriving their sustenance from the same polluted source but with great labour and through a longer pipe. None of them suspect that it is the mud, nor that it is capable of being transformed into nectar by the real Touch of the Divinity, or, in other words, that there is a third alternative to enjoyment and hypocritical show of abstention which has the form of spiritual service that transcends both and reconciles those opposites on a higher plane. What is really necessary is not to wrangle over the sharing of the mud, but to be lifted out of such necessity for feasting on the manna. The idealist's position is a mere travesty by which the love of gross matter is attempted to be disguised from the observation of dull persons. But it only mocks the thirsty soul by the offer of the masked bowl of the dregs of the noxious preparation, in place of the ostentatiously filled cup of poison, to the thirsty soul who has need of only the life-giving drink.