

yana Himself. They discoursed in this way, Misra ignoring all other considerations in trying to uphold the point of view of the parent. That Brāhmana was at last satisfied and took his leave of Misra with great pleasure. Misra told all his friends about his dream and all of them were very much surprised to hear of it.

CHAPTER VII

GROWING BOY—(Continued)

SREE GAURSUNDAR pursued His studies at the Academy of Gangādās Pandit with great zeal. He soon acquired a great proficiency in the *sutra*, *pañji* and *tikā* of *Vyākaraṇa*. One day the Lord, making obeisance to the feet of His mother, begged for a boon from her. Having made mother promise to give Him whatever boon He desired, the Lord said that she was to promise that she would not eat cooked grain (*annam*) on the Lord's Day (*ekādasi*). Sachi agreed to follow His advice, and from that day observed the *ekādasi* fast.

In this manner Sree Gaur Sundar continued to manifest Himself in various ways under the guise of childhood pastimes. He was extremely turbulent and restless and paid no heed to the expostulations of His mother who tried to teach Him to be quiet. The warnings and entreaties of His mother seemed only to increase His waywardness. He used to break whatever article of the house He could lay His hands on. The parents, for fear of further mischief, gave up all attempt to oppose Him, to the great joy of the Child, Who was thereby afforded an opportunity of unrestrained play. Nimāi soon ceased to be afraid of all persons, including His parents. The only person, whom He still feared, was His elder brother, Viswarup, Whose very sight made Him exceedingly meek.

Viswarup had no attachment for the things of this world even from His birth. He devoted all His time to discourses about Krishna. He served Krishna with the ear, mouth, mind and all senses, and served only Krishna at all time. Viswarup was struck by the habits of His younger Brother, which were altogether different from those of ordinary children. He realised the conduct of Nimāi as *identical* with that of Boy-Krishna. He was aware

of the Transcendental Divine Nature of the Boy in Whose Form He could detect the Presence of sportive Krishna. Viswarup was, however, careful not to divulge His knowledge regarding His Brother to any one else. He was in fact always intent on His own devotions, was constantly in the company of the Vaishnavas and was wholly occupied with the joy of Krishna-talk, Krishna-devotion and Krishna-worship.

This aloofness of Viswarup from the world increased apace by the re-action of His godless surroundings. The people of Nadia of that time, as has already been noted, were inordinately and exclusively given to the pursuit of worldly objects. This was the condition not merely of the vulgar, illiterate mass, but also of the most highly educated people. The acknowledged headquarters of all learning of the country of that Age was absolutely devoid of love for God. The teachers of the *Bhāgavatam* themselves were no exception to the rule. These also neither understood, practised, nor explained the principles of devotion to Godhead and were equally mad after wives, wealth and fame. It was this godless atmosphere of the emporium of learning, abounding in luxuries of all kinds, that appeared to Viswarup to be so stifling and unbearable that He at last made up His mind to leave the place for good, to avoid the sight of such people.

Meanwhile He scrupulously avoided all association with the ungodly. He used to bathe in the Ganges very early in the morning and proceeded immediately to the gathering of the Vaishnavas at the house of Advaita. There He explained all the *Shāstras* showing how all Scriptures proclaimed the supreme excellence of devotion to Krishna. His explanations gave so much pleasure to Advaita that he often broke off abruptly in the midst of his worship with thundering shouts of joy and would clasp Viswarup to his bosom amid the joyous chants of the Name of Hari by all assembled devotees moved to raptures by the edifying spectacle. The devotees, assembled at Advaita's house, spent their time in the greatest happiness and no one was minded to return to his home or leave the company of Viswarup. Neither would Viswarup ever come home from His companions.

After cooking his meal, Sachi Devi would ask Vishwambhar to fetch His brother from the gathering at Advaita's. The Lord appeared before the assembly in the midst of Krishna-talk of those devotees. Pleased with their discourse regarding Himself, the Lord would bend His auspicious glance on His devotees as He asked His brother to come home for His meal. He then took hold of His brother's cloth and led Him away from the place.

On every such occasion the devotees felt the wonderful attraction of the Child. They remained silent, abstaining even from Krishna-talk, all the time the Boy was in their midst. They noticed, with rapt attention, every detail of the beautiful Limbs of the nude Child and every motion of His Body, and drank with the greatest joy His luscious Accents. And, after Vishwambhar had left the place, the great Advaita told them one day that he was unable to understand Who that Boy really was. Advaita had realised that He was no ordinary Child.

The subject has been treated in a remarkable dialogue between Sree Suka and King Parikshit in the *Bhāgavatam*. When this very Gaurchandra, says Thākur Brindāvandas, was born in the settlement of the cowherds as Sree Krishna, all the cowherds loved Him from His birth more tenderly than they loved even their own sons. They did not know that Krishna was Godhead Himself, yet they naturally loved Him more than their own sons.

King Parikshit desired Sree Sukadeva to explain how this was possible, as it was opposed to all experience of this world. Sree Suka said that there is nothing dearer to our souls than the Great Soul of all souls. The Son of Sree Nanda is the Supreme Soul. Therefore, the milkmaids of Braja had greater love for Krishna, as He is the Supreme Soul Himself. But this also holds true only in the case of the devotees; as otherwise, all the world should have loved Krishna. Kamsa and other atheists (*asuras*) bore malice against Krishna, although Krishna is also the Soul of their souls, by the effect of offences against Him previously committed by them. Sugar is naturally sweet. But there are some who find its taste bitter by reason of the defect of their own tongues. The fault is of the tongue, not of sugar. Therefore,

says Thākur Brindāvandās, although Lord Chaitanya is really All-sweet and was visible to everybody in this very town of Nabadwip, yet was He unrecognised by any one except the devotees. The Lord ever fascinates the minds of His Own devotees in every manner. This mystery is incomprehensible to the atheists.

Viswarup would go home only in name and was never attached to it. While visiting home He would spend all His time there inside the chamber of worship of Vishnu. This behaviour led His parents to bethink themselves of His marriage. Viswarup thereupon carried out His cherished resolve of quitting the world. The foremost of the Vaishnavas thus became a *sannyāsīn* soon after this and left home in quest of the Infinite. As *sannyāsīn* Viswarup was known by the appellation of Sree Sankārānya.

These events raise a number of important issues. It is necessary to notice one of them at this place. The fascination, that the Divinity exercises over the minds of His devotees, should not be confounded with the clouding of the faculty of judgment produced by an excess of worldly joy or sorrow. The exclusive mood of the devotees at the Sight of Sree Gaurāṅḍar and the similar moods of Suka and Nārada are not to be put into the same category with the outwardly similar exhibitions of ultra-sentimentalism exhibited by the worldlings. The latter is recognised, under the name of *mōha*, by all the *Shāstras*, as one of the six evil passions (*ripus*) being classed with anger, lust, etc., that have to be carefully got rid of by all persons who are sincerely desirous of spiritual living. The former is the natural impulse of the pure individual soul who always experiences this spontaneous attraction for the Absolute. The genuine spiritual attraction is not a dry, abstract process; neither does it bear any affinity to the sensuous impulse, to which our body and mind are so wrongly subject, that is exercised by the prospects of worldly enjoyment. Those who have been enabled by their love for the Absolute to overcome the sensuous attraction exercised by the material universe, are thereby enabled to experience the far greater attraction of the service for Krishna. The great Love of Krishna for His servants cannot be consciously realised in the conditioned state. That love for Krishna, which is possible of realisation in the fettered state in

this world, is somewhat analogous to the attraction that is experienced by the cows, the cane, the flute, etc., for the Lord, in the realm of Braja.

Sree Sankārānya after acceptance of *sannyās* journeyed to various parts and exhibited the state of realised exclusiveness in the Lord (*samādhi*) at Pāndurangpur or Pandhārpur (in the Sholāpur District of the Bombay Presidency).

Sachi and Jagannāth were most profoundly affected by the *sannyās* of Viswarup. Sree Gaurāṅḍar exhibited the *Leelā* of fainting away at separation from His Brother (devotee). All the people of Nadia, high and low, whoever heard of the *sannyās* of Viswarup, were filled with a great grief. The home of Jagannāth Misra was turned into the abode of mourning. Jagannāth and Sachi cried constantly on the name of Viswarup. The friends and relatives of Misra tried their best to compose him. Some of their arguments bear to be repeated here. 'Be quiet, Misra,' said they, 'that great Soul has earned the deliverance of all His kindred. If a single member of a family accept *sannyās* three crores of generations of that family thereby attain to the happy realm of Vaikunṭha. Your beloved Son has performed a great meritorious deed. All His learning has at last been crowned with its supreme success. Rejoice greatly at this. All your sorrows will be removed by this other Son of yours. Vishwambhar will be the Support of the family. What are *crores* of sons to him whose Son is He?' Misra was inconsolable. He did not feel certain that the other Son will also stay in the family. He could not forget the many good qualities of Viswarup. By slow degrees, however, the worthy Misra picked up patience and regained the equilibrium of his faculties. He was helped in this by his enlightened faith in Krishna. 'Krishna gave me the Child and has now taken Him away. The Will of Krishna should certainly prevail. The soul of the *jīva* has no tittle of power of his own. I, therefore, surrender myself, my body and senses, to Thee, O Krishna.'

The devotees experienced a clinging sorrow in the midst of their joy, when they learnt of the *sannyās* of Viswarup. 'Krishna,' thought they, 'has robbed us of the only place where we might hear the talk about Him. We also will no longer stay among these

people but will go into the forest where we shall not have to see the faces of these sinful persons. It is impossible to bear longer the torment of the blasphemies of these atheists. All people are constantly pursuing the evil course. We cannot convince them of their error. If we tell them of it, they only receive the statement with ridicule, saying that we are not happier than they in any way by worshipping Krishna. What is the use associating with such people?’

The griefs of neither Jagannāth Misra nor of those devotees, are of the nature of the sorrows that overtake all worldly people at the curtailment of any possibility of their selfish enjoyment. Jagannāth Misra realised the true significance of the *sannyās* of Viswarup. His lamentations, properly understood, are really an expression of his appreciation of the transcendental nature of the Son who had left him for good. This realisation accordingly also effected the *sannyās* of Jagannāth Misra himself. The language of his friends echoes the attitude of the devotees. The devotees, however, fully sympathised with the keen sorrow of Viswarup at sight of the utter godlessness of the people, and appreciated the quality of Viswarup’s exclusive devotion to Krishna.

The tears of the devotees are always different from those shed by worldly people. The weeping of the devotees is the expression of their absorbing devotion to Krishna. The tears of worldly people are caused by their aversion to Krishna. Worldly people always think of their own personal joys and sorrows. Outwardly the exhibitions of both seem to be identical to those who are not conscious of their categorical difference; and self-deception in this form is unfortunately by no means rare as is proved by the sickening neurotic performances of hypocritical psilanthropists.

Sree Advaita Āchāryya consoled the assembled devotees. He declared that ‘they would assuredly obtain the highest bliss,—he, indeed, on his part felt perfectly sure about it. He experienced a great joy in his mind. It seemed to him that Krishna-Chandra Himself had appeared in the world.’ He asked them all to sing Krishna with the utmost delight. He assured them that they would see Krishna at that very place within a short time. ‘Krishna will display His joyous Activities in the company of yourselves.

Advaita (referring to himself) is a pure servant of Krishna, only if this prove true. This servant of you all will gain such Divine favour that seldom falls to the lot of even Suka or Prahlāda.’ These nectarine words of Advaita filled the devotees with great joy and restored cheerfulness to all the faculties of their minds. In their joy they shouted the Name of Hari with a thundering voice. This reached the ears of Sree Gaur Sundar Who was then playing with the children. He entered Advaita’s Academy on hearing the sound of Hari. ‘What brings Thee here, Darling?’ asked the devotees. The Lord said, ‘Why did you ask Me to come?’ With these words the Lord sped into the midst of the children. No one could understand those, by the contrivance of His Divine Power.

It is the privilege of the pure devotee to have the Sight of Krishna being served by His devotees. Sree Advaita was right in maintaining this view. The empiricists blunder hopelessly, when they arrive at the conclusion, by the process of induction from their sensuous experience, that Godhead is devoid of Distinct Personality and Activities. By trying to know Godhead by the limited faculties of the human mind, the speculative philosophers, when they care at all to take up the positive attitude, arrive at an abstract conception of Godhead (*Brahman*) as the antithesis of this limited and imperfect phenomenal world. This is the utmost limit—the *ultima Thule*—of the ascending (?) effort of the human mind from the data of sense-experience. This consummation is perfectly logical. The human mind can conceive of nothing that is not limited. It, therefore, tries to arrive at the Absolute, simply by destroying the positive content of empiric thought. But this is neither here nor there. The revelationists realise the Absolute, not in this abstract form of the mundane, but as He really is. They find Him as the Living Reality and not an abstraction of the erring mind. They are enabled to receive the knowledge of the Absolute by the resuscitation of the dormant serving faculty of the soul by the Grace of the Absolute Himself. The Absolute *descends* into this limited world in order to reveal Himself to the redeemed soul of man. When He does so, He is recognised as the Absolute by His pure devotees who are eternally and divinely enlightened.

Advaita, the purest of devotees, was the first among the assembled Vaishnavas to realise the Descent of Krishna into the world. He also simultaneously realised that those assembled Vaishnavas were the servants of Krishna, who had appeared in the mundane world preparatory to the Advent of the Lord Himself. Thus the Whole Truth flashed on the spiritual consciousness of Advaita and he realised in it the special mercy of Godhead towards Himself in response to his single-hearted devotion.

The Lord became a little quieter from the time when Viswarup renounced the family. He was now found constantly at the side of His parents evidently for the reason that they might thereby forget their sorrow. He was also less devoted to play than before and gave more attention to His study. He did not leave His books even for a moment. His cleverness was wonderful. He puzzled all persons over every *sutra* by reading it only once. This became quickly known to all the people who were lavish in their praise of the excellent judgment of the Child and carried the glad tidings to Jagannāth Misra. 'You are, indeed, most fortunate in having such a Son. There is not another child in all the three worlds who is possessed of His good sense. He will surpass Bṛhaspati himself in learning. He can explain whatever He hears. But no one can explain His puzzles.'

Sachi was very much delighted on hearing these praises of the good qualities of her Son. But Misra was greatly dejected. He now opened his mind to Sachi. 'The Boy would not remain in the family. The same thing would happen in His case as in that of Viswarup. It was by studying the *Shāstras* in this manner that Viswarup became aware that the world was not true at all, and it was not worth one's while to live in it for a single moment. It was the knowledge of the transitory nature of the world that made Viswarup quit it. If this Boy came to learn the real meaning of the *Shāstras*, He also would give up all worldly pleasures. But this Son of ours is the Life of us both. If we do not see Him, both of us will surely die. Therefore, He must have nothing to do with study. Let our Nimāi only stay in the family. We do not mind if He is illiterate.'

Sachi at first demurred to the proposal. 'If He does not read anything, how will He earn His living? Will also any one give Him his daughter in marriage?' Jagannāth Misra told Sachi that she ought to know better, as she was the daughter of a Brāhmana. 'Krishna is the only Slayer, Master and Protector of everybody. The Lord of the world is the sole Maintainer of the world. Who had told her that it was learning that maintained anybody? One will surely have the girl whom Krishna assigns to him, whether he be a scholar or a fool. Family, learning, etc., are only apparent helps. It is Krishna Who maintains every one. Krishna is the strength of all. He himself has all along been starving, although he is a good scholar; while the door-steps of the most illiterate persons are thronged with hosts of begging savants. A life that is free from want, and death with ease, can never be the lot of a person who does not worship the Feet of Govinda. These blessings are obtained by worshipping Krishna, and not by learning. There can be no end of one's sorrows save by the mercy of Krishna. The possession of learning, high lineage and great riches does not make any difference. Krishna sometimes afflicts, with some virulent disease, a person whose house is full of all enjoyable things and makes it impossible for him to enjoy any of those things. Such a person is even more miserable than one who has not the wherewithal to procure those luxuries. Know this as certain that *nothing* of this world is of any avail. What is commanded by Krishna, alone comes to pass. Therefore, you need have no anxiety for your Child. I say Krishna will maintain the Boy. I will not allow any sorrow to touch Him, as long as there is life left in my body. Krishna is the Protector of all of us. There is no anxiety for One Who is the Son of a loyal matron like yourself. I tell you He must not read any more. Let my Son only stay with the family and be a fool.' The worthy Misra called his Son and told Him on his oath 'that He *must not read from that day*. He assured his Son that *he would supply all His wants*. All He had to do from now was to live at home in every comfort.' Without stopping for a reply Misra hastily left the place to attend to other works.

Nimāi was sorry at heart at this abrupt stoppage of the pleasures of study; but, in obedience to His father's command, He at

once discontinued His studies. His waywardness, however, now increased more and more. It now passed all bounds. He did indiscriminate damage to property both in the house and elsewhere. He took particular delight in smashing everything that came in His way. Some days He stayed away whole nights amusing Himself in all kinds of play with the children.

Two boys hid themselves under a piece of blanket and went about as a bull. In this fashion He and a companion broke up during the night the plantain grove of a household that He had marked out for the raid in the day-time. The inmates of the house lamented their damage under the impression that it was the doing of a bull. The Lord with the children bolted, as soon as people of the house were astir. He would bind fast the door of a house from the outside, preventing the members from attending to calls of nature. As they began to shout in a great perplexity, demanding to know who had done the deed, and tried to find out the mischief-monger, the Lord decamped with His followers. The Lord was occupied in this manner night and day in the company of the children. But Misra did not utter a single word, despite all this.

One day while Misra had been called away from the house on some business, the Lord, indignant at being kept out of His studies, sat on a pile of refuse earthen pots that had been cast away after being used by the family in cooking offerings for Vishnu. The soot from the sides of the pots blackened the whole Body of the Boy as He sat there laughing. The children of the neighbourhood were not slow in conveying the tidings to Sachi Devi. 'Nimāi' they said, 'is sitting on the refuse cooking-pots.' The mother was most disagreeably surprised on receiving this news, as she hastened to the spot and found the report true. She importuned her Son to come down from His unclean seat, telling Him that He ought to have known at His age that it was necessary to bathe if one touched a refuse cooking-pot. The Lord at first said that He could not be expected to possess the knowledge, as He was debarred from all study. All places were the same to Him. He possessed no knowledge of good and evil. His knowledge was always one and the same. And when the mother repeated her remarks that He could

by no means be considered clean as He sat in a dirty place, the Lord plainly told the truth to His mother.

'Mother', said He in the manner of a child, 'you are no better than an infant to speak so thoughtlessly. I never stay in any unclean place. The spot where I am, is full of all holinesses. All holy *tirthas*, the Ganges and the rest, abide there. My cleanliness or uncleanliness is purely a matter of the deluded imagination. Ponder this well. Can there be any sin in the Creator? Even if a thing happens to be impure according to the opinion of men or of the Veda, can such impurity exist when it is touched by Myself? As to these pots, there has been no cause of any uncleanliness in them, as you yourself used them for cooking the offering for Vishnu. The vessel used in cooking offerings for Vishnu is never made unclean thereby. On the contrary, the touch of pots so used sanctifies all places. For all these reasons I am not staying in any bad place. The purity of all things is due to My touch.'

The Lord laughed in the mood of a child as He spoke these words. No one understood their real meaning by the force of the beneficent Power of the Lord. These words of the Child only amused and made them laugh. Thereupon Sachi asked Him to come down to bathe. But the Boy refused to descend from His seat, although Sachi urged Him to make haste lest father might come to know. 'I will never come down,' said the Lord, 'if you do not allow Me to read.'

The people, who had collected to the spot, now took the side of the Lord. They found fault with the mother for having stopped the studies of the Child. 'All people are most careful to make their children learn to read and write. It is a rare good fortune when a child himself wants to read. There could be no greater enemy than a person who had advised her to stop the studies of the Boy in order to keep Him at home and make a dunce of Him. The Child was not at all to blame in this matter.' They also implored Nimāi to come down, telling Him to go on doing all sorts of mischiefs if He was not allowed to read from that very day.

The Boy, however, still lingered where He was and went on laughing from His seat on the top of the pile of the refuse cooking-pots. Those who saw it were fascinated, and the joy of those

persons of good deeds knew no bounds. Till at last the mother herself went up to the Child and fetched Him with her own hands. The Lord now came away, laughing all the time, like a blue opal shooting its sparkling light in all directions. Thus did the Lord speak out the truth in the mood of Dattātreyā; but no one understood it by the interposition of the Power of Vishnu.

Virtuous Sachi, now helping her Son to descend from the pile, made Him bathe in order to be cleansed. Misra then made his appearance. Sachi told Misra everything. 'The Child is grieved at heart by not being allowed to read.' All present pressed Misra to lift the ban. 'He is wise and liberal and should be better advised. What Krishna-Chandra wills, is sure to come to pass. He should, therefore, allow the Boy to read and you need have no anxiety on His account. The Boy Himself is very willing to read. So Misra should forthwith invest the Child with the sacrificial thread on an auspicious day and in a fitting manner.' Misra agreed to their proposal.

The acts of the Child were super-human and astonished everybody. But no one understood their real significance. Occasionally some, who happened to be exceptionally fortunate, told Misra not to regard his Son as mortal child and had advised him to cherish the Boy with the greatest care and affection. The Lord thus passed the days unrecognised and played in the yard of Sachi after the resumption of His studies which He did with the greatest delight by command of His father. The diverse restrictions that have been put upon worldly activities by the religious codes (*smṛtis*) cannot be understood, if they are regarded as intended for the promotion of worldly enjoyment. Those, who uphold the rules, as rules, have found it necessary to secure their observance by promises of enjoyment and threats of misery. This method has been a failure, because it did not take a long time for worldly people to find out that those promises and threats were not really to be fulfilled. Neither did they attract the really intelligent class of people, as they promised only worldly rewards which naturally appeared to such persons to be out of place in religion. This is the plight of canon-ridden (*smārta*) 'Hinduism'. The rules themselves have accordingly lost the effective support of all classes.

It does not follow, therefore, that the mode of life enjoined by the *Shāstras* is defective. That mode, if rightly understood, is necessary to be followed for our eternal welfare. The conduct enjoined by the *Shāstras* forms Divinely ordained system for all those who desire to qualify for a spiritual life, that is to say, are prepared to subordinate their apparent temporary, to the real, permanent and eternal interests. Such a desire is possible only in man and constitutes the special privilege and glory of human life.

Material enjoyment does not satisfy man, as it does other animals. The quest of the spiritual is the distinctive, imperative necessity of man. He wants to know why he is here at all. Those, who think that it is the principal duty of man to improve the conditions of his present worldly existence, try to find out the best way of promoting the scope and quality of mundane activities. The *smārtas* also belong to this class. To this category belong, directly or indirectly, most people of this world. There is, however, a class of people who think that it is our principal, nay only, duty to serve the Absolute, irrespective of apparent worldly loss and gain which are transitory and unreal. The *Shāstras* are accepted for their constant guidance only by this class of people. The *smārtas* only pretend to agree with this class regarding their acceptance of the *shāstric* method. The *smārtas*, however, really want to serve the false ego, which craves for the transitory enjoyment of this world, by the rules of the Scriptures followed by the former who serve the true ego by dint of their natural attachment to the Absolute. The method of the *smārtas* is, therefore, rightly condemned by even consistent worldly people, as being both irrational and ineffective and, in no less unambiguous language, by those who really want to walk in the path of the soul.

The restrictive rules of the *Shāstras* are intended for curtailing the opportunity and scope of worldly enjoyment. This is their negative aspect. But these rules really impose obligations of a positive nature. The object of the rules is to direct the mind towards Godhead. These rules are not numerous nor unintelligible. There are, however, rules of various grades. These Scriptural dogmas differ from ordinary rules of worldly conduct by their

possession of a much more advanced and consistent philosophical nature. In the hands of the *smārtas* these rules have suffered mechanical elaboration and stultification for being adopted to the worldly purpose.

Cooking for oneself is discouraged by the *Shāstras*. The act of cooking meal, as every other act, must be performed only for Godhead. For those who do not want to accept this view, the way is prepared by a number of restrictive observances in regard to cooking done for the appeasement of hunger. These restrictive rules are necessarily superfluous, or rather fulfilled, if cooking is actually done only for Godhead. *If we search for the spiritual principle, it is not difficult to understand the rules*, although it is not possible for a worldly-minded person to follow them consistently, unless he is really prepared to subordinate the worldly out-look to the spiritual requirement.

The ideas of purity and impurity, as applied by the mechanical *smārtas* to lifeless objects, are ridiculous. It is a product of eclipsed cognitive existence due to aversion to Godhead. An object or an act is impure by reference to the attitude towards it of the conscious entity who is responsible for its performance. According to the *Shāstras*, everything is pure which is used in the service of the Absolute by reason of the fully conscious use by the performer of it. An object, which according to the eclipsed point of view appears to be objectionable, is necessarily rendered wholesome, *i.e.*, is purified by being consciously used in the service of Godhead. Whereas the cleanest or most wholesome objects from the worldly standpoint may become necessarily dirty by their unspiritual use. The reference to Godhead is the only cause of purity in its rational sense. The reference of any object to the false ego is the only cause of its impurity. All the Scriptures bear unanimous testimony to the truth of this conclusion.

'The Lord, the Moon of the home of Sachi-Jagannāth, thus enjoyed His childhood sports, infinitely more diverse than are found in this world, of which an infinitesimally small part will be hereafter made known to the world, by way of revelation, by the Achāryya'. These are the words of Sree Brindāvandās Thākur. The words of the Veda reach only the ears of the most fortunate

persons. The rest of the world must submit to receive the knowledge from those few. These sports of Sree Gaursundar were witnessed by all the people. Yet no one recognized the Lord. They all took Him to be a mere human child. Similar is the case as regards the words of the Veda. Most people do not really hear them, although they are available for being heard by all.

While Sree Gaurchandra was occupied with these pastimes of childhood, apparently oblivious of everything else, the time for His investiture with the sacrificial thread drew nigh. The friends and relatives of the family, duly invited by Misra, met together in the house of Jagannāth. The different functions connected with the ceremony were distributed among them, each taking up the part that suited him best. There was great rejoicing. The ladies sang of the Excellent Qualities of Krishna amidst frequent exclamations of 'jai'. The dancers kept pace with those who played on the *mṛdanga*, the *sānāi* and the *baṅshi*. Brāhmanas read the Veda and minstrels recited eulogies. Thus joy assumed a visible form in the home of Sachi. All auspicious planetary conjunctions hastened to serve the occasion. In this manner did Sree Gaursundar put on the holy thread of sacrifice.

As the beautiful thread adorned the Divine Form, it seemed as if Sree *Shesha* himself encompassed the Lord in the guise of the slender line. The identical *Leelā* of the Lord, that He performed in His Appearance as Vāmana (Dwarf), was thus re-enacted. Sree Gaursundar manifested the *Leelā* of Sree Vāmana to the delight of all beholders. All saw the fiery radiance of the Brāhmana and no longer thought Him mortal.

As is the practice on such occasions, the Lord, with the Brahmachari's staff in His hand and the wallet for receiving alms across His shoulders, went on a-begging tour to the doors of all His devotees. The ladies of every household put as much alms into the wallet of the Lord as their resources enabled them to do, with the utmost satisfaction and with a smiling countenance. The consorts of Brahmā and Rudra and the help-mates of all the contemplative sages (*munis*), assuming the forms of Brāhmana matrons, availed themselves of this opportunity of beholding the Divine Form of Sree Vāmana, and all of them laughingly poured their alms



into the wallet of the Lord. The Lord enacted this *Leelā* of Vāmana for the deliverance of all persons.

There is a controversy among worldly sections in regard to the question of the attitude of Sree Chaitanya towards the caste-system. The Lord Himself was born in a Brāhmana family and went through all the purificatory ceremonies that are enjoined by the *Shāstras* for the observance of Brāhmanas. Are we to suppose from this that the fact is to be interpreted as favouring the retention of the present caste-distinctions? It has also been pointed out by the controversialists that as a *sannyāsin* Sree Chaitanya resorted to the houses of Brāhmanas to beg for His meals. This was apparently the rule, though there were also notable exceptions.

Why did Sree Gaur-sundar assume the sacrificial thread? Why was He born in a Brāhmana family? The answer of course is not very difficult to find. What is the harm? The Lord is free to do as He likes. It will be a mistake to suppose that He can be subject to any limitation whatever. The contention, that He should have proved the futility of castes and ceremonials by being born outside caste and refusing all ceremonial, is itself an attempt, of its kind, to limit the unlimited. He was not against caste, nor in favour of it. He was above the caste. The hereditary Brāhmana caste is, however, very different from the scriptural *varna* of Brāhmanas who know the Brahman, *i.e.*, the *greatness* of Godhead. The knowledge of the greatness of Godhead is the necessary pre-requisite for attaining to the service of God. Any one who possesses this preliminary knowledge is alone a Brāhmana by *varna*. The knowledge of the *Brahman* is not the effect of seminal birth. A person born in a Brahmana family is born again, *i.e.*, becomes a *dvija*, by the ceremony of investiture with the holy thread. He ceases to be a seminal-born by his formal accepted submission to receive spiritual enlightenment from the spiritual Guide. There are two successive enlightening ceremonies. By the first of these ceremonies, which is called the *upanayana*, the seminal-born obtains the right of listening to the words of the Veda from the good preceptor; by the subsequent

ceremony of *initiation* (*dikshā*), he obtains the positive knowledge of the transcendental.

These are the two successive stages through which every disloyal soul has to pass, on the way to the spiritual service of Godhead. These processes have nothing to do with the hereditary caste or lifeless ceremonial that is sought to be monopolised by any hereditary caste.

But Sree Gaur-sundar does not merely uphold the non-secular scriptural Brāhman ideal and practice in going through the *upanayana* ceremony. He was re-enacting the Activities of Vāmana, that possess a very much higher significance. Vāmana begs for alms from His devotees. Godhead is the Absolute Proprietor of everything. What alms can He beg and what alms can also a soul offer to Him? This is the real point at issue in the Vāmana *Avatāra*. Sree Vāmana begged from King Bali (*Sacrifice*) for that measure of space which is covered by His Three Strides. He encompassed the gross world with one Stride and the subtle material world by the second Stride. The surrender of everything, physical and mental is not enough to satisfy the Lord Who also begs for the surrender of the soul of the *jīva* who is located in the third region, *viz.*, Vaikuṅṭha which transcends both the gross and the subtle material worlds.

This *Leelā* of the Divine Dwarf was re-enacted by Sree Gaur-sundar for the deliverance of all souls. In other words, the individual soul can be delivered from ignorance regarding himself only by the constant practice of this supreme sacrifice. Godhead chose to be born in a Brāhmana family in the *Kali* Age, not to prove that the seminal Brāhmana *caste* is superior to the other seminal *castes*; neither for the purpose of establishing the superior excellence of seminal birth in a Brāhmana family. Sree Krishna had already been born in the family of a cowherd.

By the express testimony of the *Shāstras*, the pseudo-Brāhmanas of this *Kali* Age are the worst of all classes of the people. Sree Gaur-sundar appeared in a Brāhmana family, in fulfilment of the words of the Scriptures, for showing His mercy to the degraded Brāhmanas. As Sannyāsin Sree Chaitanya was a strict observer of the *Shāstric* rules that impose various restrictions

on a person belonging to that order, in order to set an example to the degenerate *sannyāsins* of the *Kali* Age. Such conduct does not mean that a *sannyāsin* is, spiritually speaking, superior to a householder, but that both should really follow the Word of God, if they want at all to serve Him which alone matters. It would be a blunder to suppose that there could be any excellence in any institution if it ceases to serve God, or that any institution which serves the Lord can be inferior to any other, or that any mundane class-difference can apply to the servants of the Lord. Those, who are unduly attached to the vanities of seminal birth or the externals of ceremonials and institutions, are ever condemned to the delusion that their ungodly worldly preferences are endorsed by God Himself. It is not possible to be completely free from the influence of such worldly predilections except by the Causeless Grace of Sree Gaur Sundar Manifested in His Activities.

The *Shāstras* fix the eighth year from birth as the proper age for investiture with the sacrificial thread. Such investiture admits one to the right of studying the Word of God under the spiritual preceptor. The Lord was now eligible to study under the spiritual preceptor in the company of other students. He threw out a hint that He would like to study under the great Grammarian Gangādās Pandit.

Sree Jagannāth Misra accordingly took his Boy to the *chatus-pāthi* (Academy) of Sree Gangādās Pandit who received him with the greatest respect. Misra communicated to him his intention of placing in his hands the education of his Boy. Gangādās most gladly accepted his new Pupil.

Gangādās always treated Nimāi with special consideration. The extraordinary Capacity of the Child soon manifested itself. Nimāi fully understood whatever His teacher explained only once. He practised to refute all the explanations of His teacher in order to re-establish them more firmly. The number of students, who attended Gangādās Pandit's classes, was very large. But there was no one who had the ability to find fault with the explanations of Nimāi. On the contrary Nimāi gave constant trouble to all His fellow-students by His puzzling questions. He did not spare even the senior students such as Sree Murāri Gupta, Sree Kamalākānta,

Krishnānanda and their associates. They, however, took this favourably, as they regarded the Child with special affection. Gangādās Pandit was most highly gratified on noticing the wonderful intelligence of his new Pupil and accorded Him the honour of the highest position among all his students.

The Lord went with the boys to bathe in the Ganges at noon after study. To these bathing-places of the Ganges all the students of Nabadwip flocked for their daily bath at midday. The number of students who studied at Nabadwip baffled all calculation. Every single professor taught thousands of students. The pupils of the different teachers quarrelled incessantly among themselves. The Lord was on the threshold of budding youth—a period that is naturally full of strange excitement. He disputed freely with all the students. These quarrels of the students possessed certain invariably common features. The ordinary forms of attack were these: 'Your teacher has no brains'; and 'Look here; he is the only real teacher whose pupil am I'. In this manner, from small beginnings, the pastime soon came to a free fight in right earnest, in which much water was splashed; then sand was thrown; and finally they began to beat one another using clay as the favourite missile. Some were taken in custody by the police on the spot, in the name of the King. Some escaped the royal officers across the Ganges after thrashing their adversaries. These performances acquired such violence and dimension that the entire stream of the Ganges was converted by them into a thick mixture of sand and clay. Women who came to fetch water were debarred from filling their pitchers, and Brāhmanas and honest citizens from their legitimate baths. Lord Vishwambhar was the most turbulent of all. He made a systematic tour of all the bathing-places of the Ganges in this fashion. There was no dearth of scholars at any of the bathing-places (*ghāts*). The Lord quarrelled with them at every place. Swimming down with the current, the Lord visited all the bathing-places stopping to sport at each of them for some time.

The senior boys were at last fain to ask Him why He was so extraordinarily quarrelsome. 'Let the youngsters,' they said, 'ask instead questions for testing one another's knowledge. Only then it could be really known who possessed the correct information of

his *britti*, *panji* and *tikā*.' The Lord welcomed their suggestion and invited all the urchins to put to Himself whatever questions they liked. One of the students protested saying that He ought not to be too boastful. The Lord only repeated His challenge to be asked any questions. The irate scholar forthwith demanded that the Lord would then and there expound all the formulæ of the verbal root. The Lord, desiring them to listen attentively, at once explained all the *sutras* in the correct manner. All the students praised His exposition. The Lord said that He would, however, refute all that He had said to them just then, challenging them to defend the very expositions which they had approved. They were struck dumb with astonishment on recognising that the refutation was also flawless. He told them that He would re-establish the previous expositions and fully satisfied every one by His explanations to that effect.

The senior students were so highly pleased that they enthusiastically clasped Him to their bosoms. Then the boys took leave of Him for that day with the challenge that He should come prepared to answer their questions again the next day. The Lord of Vaikunṭha indulged in these delightful sports in the stream of the Jāhnavi tasting unceasingly the pleasures of learning. It seemed that the all-knowing Bṛhaspati with all his disciples, indeed, appeared in Nabadwip for participating in these sports. Jāhnavi's heart's desire was thus fulfilled at last. She had envied the superior fortune of her sister Sree Yamunā, in whose water Krishnachandra had sported in the *Dvāpara* Age. Sree Gaurasundar is verily the Purpose-tree that fulfils all desires. He sported incessantly in her pure current.

On His return home from these sportive performances in the sacred stream of the Ganges, the Lord, *the ideal Brahmachārīn*, duly worshipped Vishnu and, having offered water to holy *tulasi*, beloved of Vishnu, sat down to His meal. As soon as meal was finished, the Lord retired to a secluded part of the house with His books. He made His own *tippani* (annotations) of the *sutras* of Kalāpa Vyakarana and forgot everything else by the sweet taste of books.

Misra noted this exemplary conduct of his Son and was filled with the highest happiness. He knew nothing but joy night and

day. Every day he derived fresh and inexhaustible delight by looking on the Face of his Child. The joy of Misra cannot be expressed in words. He drank in the Beauty of his Son with such ardour that he all but merged in the Body of his Boy with his own frame and all individuality, the consummation so vainly wished by the pseudo-liberationists. But as a matter of fact, the joys of merging in the Divinity or of any other form of liberation are as nothing to the bliss of Jagannāth Misra who had no occasion to think of those coveted trivialities. The Lord of all the worlds is the Son of Jagannāth Misra. The *eternal* father of the Lord is the revered of all the devotees of the Supreme Lord.

Misra experienced all the anxieties of this absorbing and exclusive love for his Boy. The marvellous Beauty of every Limb of Sree Gaurasundar, surpassing the loveliness of the god of love himself, filled Misra with constant anxiety, lest his Son attracted the malignant attention of the witches and evil spirits. This fear drove Misra to quit all his claims on the Boy and make a complete surrender of Him to Krishna. Gaurasundar laughed as He overheard the outpourings of Misra's prayers. 'Krishna,' prayed Misra, 'Thou are the Protector of all. Deign to cast Thy most auspicious Glance even on my Son. Danger never comes to the threshold of the person who remembers Thy Lotus Feet. Witches, ghosts and bodyless evil spirits haunt those places of sin that are void of the remembrance of Thee. Evil spirits carry their sinister influence to all places where selfish activities and fruitive sacrifices are performed in lieu of listening to the account of the Doings of Godhead which destroys the power of all evil-doers. Lord, I am Thy servant. May Thou protect all that belongs to me, as they are Thine. May no evil nor danger ever come near my Son.' This was the constant prayer of Sree Jagannāth Misra. With both hands lifted in prayer he always supplicated Krishna for this *only* boon.

One day Misra had a most wonderful dream which filled him with the utmost grief in the midst of all this happiness. Rising up in great anxiety Misra prostrated himself in obeisance, reciting the prayer, 'Govinda, may my Nimāi stay in my house. This is the *only* boon I pray from Thee, O Krishna, that my Nimāi may be

a householder and stay in the family.' Sachi noticed this and being greatly surprised asked Misra the cause of his prayer offered to Krishna with such sudden anguish. Misra narrated to her the story of his vision. 'I have had a dream,' said Misra, 'as if Nimāi had shaved His Head. I cannot describe His marvellous attire of *sannyāsin*. He laughed, danced and wept, uttering continuously the Name of Krishna. Advaita Āchāryya and other devotees, forming a circle round Nimāi, chanted the *kirtan*. Sometimes Nimāi seated Himself on the throne of Vishnu and, holding up His Feet, put Them on the heads of all. Four-faced, five-faced, thousand-faced forms sang Victory to the Son of Sree Sachi. All recited hymns of praise to Him from every side with the greatest joy. I was dumb with fear at what I beheld. Then I saw that Nimāi went along on His way dancing, through each and every town, taking with Him *crores* of people. *Lakhs* of *crores* of people ran after Nimāi and sang the Name of Hari, Whose sound rang through the universe. I could hear on all sides only the praises of Nimāi Who journeyed to Puri in the company of all those devotees. It is this most strange dream that has made me so anxious, lest the Boy leave the family through lack of attachment for things of this world.' Sachi Devi did not think that there was any real ground for anxiety, notwithstanding the dream, as 'the Boy was so completely engrossed in His books that the taste of learning had verily become the whole of His duty.' The father and mother of the Lord were of a disposition that was utterly unselfish. They had between them many a discussion on the subject by reason of their exclusive love for their Son.

In this manner Misra passed his days for some time longer and, thereafter, he withdrew his eternally pure form from the view of this world. The Lord wept much at the departure of Misra, like Sree Rāmachandra on the disappearance of Dasaratha. The attraction of Sree Gaurasundar is irresistible. The life of His mother was preserved thereby. It is a most affecting topic, and Thākur Brindāvandās, our authority, stops abruptly and confesses his inability to linger on the pathetic subject.

The only point that remains to be noticed in this connection is the statement that the form of Sree Jagannāth Misra is

described as eternally pure and also that he withdrew himself from the view of the people of this world and *did not die*. In fact, the soul is also our only real *body*. The physical case is a temporary accretion as a corrective contrivance for curing our godlessness. But Sree Jagannāth Misra, the father of Sree Gaurasundar, is eternally pure plenary Divine Essence and has *no* physical body, as there can be no godlessness in his case. What seemed to godless people as his physical body was really his eternal all-holy spiritual form. The Father of Godhead, who is ever identical with his body, manifested himself in this world of matter, in obedience to the Will of Godhead and for the purpose of participating in the Divine Activities when the Latter appear in this world. He remained visible in this world as long as his part was being played. He ceased to be visible after this function was fulfilled. His manifestation in this world was brought about by the Spiritual Power of Godhead and was a wholly spiritual affair, unlike the birth of sinful *jivas*, which is brought about by the deluding Power of God and is really transitory and unsubstantial. Those, who suppose that there is no difference between this mortal body and the apparently similar bodies of the eternal devotees of Godhead when they manifest their appearance in this world, ignore thereby the eternal and categorical distinction between matter and spirit. To the material eye of the conditioned soul, the body of a Vaishnava, when by the Grace of Godhead he becomes visible to *him*, may appear to be material, just as to a jaundiced eye everything seems to be yellow. The defective vision of the sinner is, however, solely responsible for this delusion. The deluded soul is not *privileged* to have the sight of the real form of the Vaishnava. The birth, death and activities of the Vaishnava, although they have an external resemblance to those of conditioned souls, are categorically different from the latter. It is only the spiritual eye, the eye of the pure soul, which can actually see this difference.

The Sorrow of Sree Gaurasundar at the disappearance of Misra was not also a delusion. It would, however, be a profane delusion, if we suppose that He felt sorry *for the death of His father*, like ordinary people of this world. To Him Jagannāth Misra can never die. Nor can Misra ever disappear from the View of his Son.

Therefore, neither of these can be the cause of the Sorrow of Sree Gaur Sundar. Sree Jagannāth Misra's anxiety on account of his Son, lest He became a *sannyāsin*, and Sree Gaur Sundar's Sorrow at the apparent disappearance of Sree Jagannāth Misra, are instances of Divine Activities which are absolutely free from all taint of unwholesomeness, unlike the apparently similar activities of fettered souls which are altogether unwholesome. There is separation, pang of separation and anxiety at the prospect of separation, also in the Transcendental Realm of the Spirit. The conditions for this are supplied there by the Spiritual Power of the Divinity and are, therefore, also spiritual, that is, absolutely free from all unwholesomeness. This is inconceivable to the fallen *jivas* but is the only Reality obscured to the view of the latter by the joys and sorrows of the physical body and the materialised mind. In the realm of the Absolute, there is no break of existence but only the semblance of it, in order to heighten, diversify and enrich the positive joy of eternal existence. In regard to the things of this world the case is otherwise, and it is the greatest of *mercies* that this is so. Had it been otherwise, it would have only perpetuated the barren experience of mundane activities which are the trivial and unacceptable distortions of the facts of the eternal existence. The Absolute exists by Himself. This physical world has not only a relative but also superfluous, unwholesome and *altogether subordinate* existence. It is so, because everything is *real* in Godhead, although it is often both unnecessary and impossible for the individual soul to understand it, except in so far as it is actually divulged to his *servicing disposition* by the Mercy of the Supreme Lord.

## CHAPTER VIII

### EARLY YOUTH AND STUDENT LIFE

THE LORD still chose to remain self-concealed, passing His days mostly in the company of His mother. Sree Sachi Devi, in lieu of His father, now devoted herself exclusively to the service of the Boy. If she did not see her Son for the fraction of an hour, the power of sight left her eyes, and she would lose all self-consciousness. The Lord also displayed constantly His love for His mother and consoled her with encouraging words. He bade her have no anxieties since He Himself belonged to her, and as He would supply all her wants and fetch for her, with ease, things that were obtainable with great difficulty by Brahmā and Siva. As she gazed on the beautiful Face of the Child, Sachi Devi lost the memory of her bodily existence, not to speak of her sorrows. The Lord Himself, by the mere remembrance of Whom all wants are fulfilled, was ever present to her in the form of her own Son. How could, therefore, any bodily sorrows persist in her? The Lord made His mother the very soul of joy.

There is no desire for selfish enjoyment in the realm of the Absolute (Vaikunṭha). The servants of Godhead, who are the denizens of that Happy Realm, being always in the Presence of the Lord by reason of their entire dependence on Him, are altogether forgetful of their own selves. The inhabitants of this mundane world, due to their forgetfulness of Krishna, put their reliance on their own bodies, and are accordingly liable to cherish all those concerns that minister to its transitory pleasures. It is in this manner that fallen *jivas* by their own contrivance become subjected to the various miseries of this mundane world. There was no room for selfish grief in the pure heart of Sachi which was wholly occupied with love for Godhead. The eternal spiritual impulse of maternal affection for the Divine Child alone possesses the quality of causing complete forgetfulness of one's own body. A