

CHAPTER IX

PROFESSOR LIFE AND MARRIAGE

NIMAI now set up His own Academy in the Hall (*mandap*) of the family temple of the goddess Chandi which formed part of the frontal division of the residence of Mukunda-Sanjaya, a person of great good fortune and an opulent citizen of Nabadwip. The whole family of Mukunda-Sanjaya was devoted to the Lord. The spacious Chandi-Mandap accommodated a very large number of students. The Lord organised the body of His students into a school and taught them at this place. Thus was formed the Academy under Sree Gaurānga as Professor for the pursuit of learning.

The variety of Nimāi Pandit's interpretations and refutations knew no limit. In these erudite performances the Professors of Nabadwip were a standing subject of His regrets. He used to say that in the Iron Age those, who were ignorant of the elementary process of joining together two syllables (*sandhi*), which forms the opening chapter of the science of language, passed themselves off as Professors of the *Shāstras*. "I challenge them to expose My mal-interpretations. I would admit they deserve their high-sounding designations of '*Bhalla*' and '*Misra*,' if they can point out any flaws in my interpretations" The learned performances of all the Professors were declared to be 'only tissues of elaborate falsehoods which prevented them from realising the necessity of learning about the Truth by submission to Feet of Truth Himself. If those learned men had possessed the requisite degree of sincerity and clearness of thinking, they would have been inquisitive to know what He had to tell them.' But they were perfectly content with their ephemeral and misleading speculations and did not feel the least inclination even to give a hearing to their Challenger.

So it is not the manipulation of so-called material advantages by the pursuit of the different branches of empiric study that can rescue empiric learning from the charge of mischievous worthlessness. The relation of empiric learning itself to the Truth and to oneself must be grasped, if it is to be of any real use to a person. The absence of this knowledge vitiated the whole thing *ab initio*. It is owing to this fundamental defect that such studies only added to the delusions of obstinately ignorant persons. If those studies had been conceived and carried out in the proper spirit, they would have certainly led them to the *Truth*. But the real object and method of study are hidden from the view of deliberately ignorant persons and the knowledge of them can be had only from those who know about Him by unconditional submission at His Holy Feet. The Professors of Nabadwip did not know this, and their interminable labours accordingly only served to multiply their delusions and falsehoods which led their pupils and themselves farther away from the Truth Who is admittedly the Only Goal of all learning.

Sree Sachi Devi now bethought of finding a suitable bride for her youthful Son. There lived at Nabadwip a most worthy Brāhmana of the name of Sree Ballabhā Āchāryya who managed his household in the spirit of King Janaka of yore. He had a daughter whose name was Lakshmi and who was the same as Sree Lakshmi Devi of Vaikunṭha. The Brāhmana constantly thought of a suitable Husband for his daughter. Lakshmi was well-known to Sree Sachi Devi and Nimāi Himself.

Kavirāj Goswāmi has recorded the following incident of the Boyhood of Nimāi in his work *Sree Chaitanya-charitāmṛta*. In His Boyhood Nimāi was extremely turbulent and a source of trouble to everybody. He took particular delight in teasing the people while they were in the act of bathing in the Ganges. The details of these occurrences, as described by Thākur Brindāvandās, have already been reproduced. Nimāi, as we saw, did not spare even the girls from His turbulent attentions. One day as the daughter of Ballabhā Āchāryya was preparing to worship the gods after her bath in the Ganges, the Lord saw her and felt an inclination to make her acquaintance. Lakshmi also was delighted to

see the Lord. The love between Lakshmi and the Supreme Lord is eternal. It now manifested itself under the guise of childish behaviour. They expressed Their mutual joy under pretence of worshipping the gods. The Lord said to her, 'Worship Me. I am the Great Lord (*Maheshwara*). By worshipping Me you will get such Husband as you wish to have.' Lakshmi accordingly placed on His Body flowers sprinkled with the sandal-paste and did reverence by putting on Him garlands made of the *mallikā* flower. The Lord began to laugh on receiving her devotion and accepted the desire of her heart by reciting the *shloka* of the *Bhāgavatam* spoken by Sree Krishna to the milkmaids, 'Loyal maidens, I have become aware of the meaning of your worship which has, indeed, given Me very great pleasure. Your hopes are worthy of fulfilment.'

The Lord also wished to perform the duties enjoined by the *Shāstras* on a householder, as He was now settled in the household life. The spiritual duties of a householder cannot be discharged properly without co-operation of a helping female partner. The Lord accordingly conceived the desire of entering the state of matrimony. In the words of the *Smṛti*, 'the house itself is not called the household. The mistress is the real household. Being united to her by marriage a person attains the *four* coveted objects of life, *viz.*, the proper performance of his duties, necessities, objects of desire and liberation.'

While He was in this mood, the Lord accidentally came across the daughter of Ballabha Āchāryya on her way to the Ganges. He was then returning home from His studies. The sight kindled, in the hearts of both, the love that already existed there in its perfection. The Lord smiled as He met His Own Lakshmi. Sree Lakshmi Devi also greeted in her mind the Twin Lotus Feet of the Lord before They went back to their respective homes. 'Who,' asks Thākura Brindāvandās, 'can understand the Pastimes of Sree Gaursundar?'

The institution of marriage, as every other institution, misses its proper object if it does not serve the Supreme Lord. The prospect of carnal enjoyment, which the institution seems, to the

ungodly, to offer, is the snare that requires to be most carefully avoided. The Union of Lakshmi and Nārāyana is the Source of all manifest and non-manifest existence. Sree Nārāyana is the only Lord of all created things. He creates through the medium of Sree Lakshmi Devi. This eternal Marriage of Sree Lakshmi-Nārāyana is hidden from the view of mortals by the shadow of the desire for carnal enjoyment falling across their vision.

The *Shāstric* institution of marriage is intended to reclaim bound *jivas* from the deadly slough of carnality. If they follow the life enjoined by the *Shāstras* for the married state, they will thereby be enabled to progress towards freedom from the fascination of carnality. The bound *jiva*, misled by his sensuous hankering and preferring his own selfish enjoyment to the constant and eternal service of his Lord, is, of course, free to speculate about the advantages and disadvantages of the institution of marriage from the purely secular point of view. But such speculative attitude, however carefully one may try to guard oneself against the natural and inevitable consequences of carnality, will only forge a stronger chain to bind him to an unnatural and miserable existence.

The external gloss supplied by godless speculation only aggravates the real mischief by hiding the unspirituality of all empiric conceptions of one's duty. The Greek opinion that the gods are opposed to the happiness of man through malice is true in this sense. The gods always try to prevent the sensuous happiness of man. This is most beneficial in its possible results for humanity. The so-called happiness for which man hankers is but gilded misery, because the soul in the conditioned state understands and cares only for the things of this world. This is the disease to which all people of this world are subject. This malady is increased if the cause of it is strengthened. By increased hankering for new opportunities of material enjoyment, the cause of the malady is not likely to be removed.

The quest of happiness itself is not unnatural. But if we want to be happy, we must first of all try to understand what can make us truly happy. Desire for sensuous enjoyment is the cause of unhappiness. Abstinence from such enjoyment also will not do, as it leads to a worse form of misery. Desire to serve the Lord for

the sake of service can alone make us happy. Every activity can give us happiness to the extent that it is really service of Godhead, or, in other words, to the extent that it tends to absolute submission to Him.

The marriage of Lakshmi and Nārāyana does not belong to the category of the carnal marriage of sensuous *jivas*. The marriage of the fettered *jivas* becomes successful, according to the *Shāstras*, only if it succeeds in reclaiming them from the bondage of carnality. When this result is actually produced by faithfully following the injunctions of the *Shāstras*, there should necessarily remain no carnal desire in such persons and, therefore, no further sensuous necessity of such bodily union. This is, however, only the negative result. By the elimination of carnality one also gets rid of the delusion that the soul can be either male or female, or have any sex in the worldly sense. No individual soul can be an object of reciprocal enjoyment of another individual soul, either as male or as female. Spiritual love for Godhead is not the mundane sex-feeling or any kind of manipulation of the same. Spiritual love is the natural and perfectly wholesome relationship that exists eternally between immaculate individual souls (*jivas*) and the Supreme soul. In that relationship Godhead is the sole Enjoyer and the *jiva* is the object of His exclusive enjoyment. Godhead is the only Lover, the *jiva* belongs to the category of His beloved. Godhead is the Possessor of power, the *jiva* is a particle of His obeying power.

The *jiva*, as an integrated particle of Krishna's *power*, can be truly cognisant of Krishna as the sole Proprietor of himself. But the *jiva* is not the direct plenary Power of Krishna, but a detached particle of His Plenary Power. The Integrated Plenary Power of Krishna is eternally and unswervingly obedient to Krishna and never loses sight of Him. The *jiva* can be cognisant of Krishna only, if he submits to function in the line of the direct Power under the latter's direction. Subordination to the direct Power of Krishna, in the case of the *jiva*, is the same as subordination to Krishna Himself Who is not directly cognisable by him. Sree Lakshmi Devi is the Plenary Power of Krishna. Through her Krishna manifests Himself to His dissociated particles of His

Power. The *jiva* may become a conscious partner in this process, if he subordinates his freedom of will, a gift of the Divinity, to the direction of the Will of Krishna, manifested for his guidance through Sree Lakshmi Devi. Sree Lakshmi Devi is the Consort of Sree Nārāyana, and the *jiva*, in his proper nature, is the eternal servitor of Sree Nārāyana under Sree Lakshmi Devi as a detached particle of Her Essence. This cannot be realised by the bound *jiva* till he wakes to his true nature and is thereby freed from all taint of mundane sensuous hankerings.

The marriage of Godhead, as every other Act of His, is identical with Godhead and as such is an object of our worship. The instinct of sexuality, that is so strong in all fallen *jivas*, is the perverted reflection of the highest function of his real nature which seeks eternally to subordinate herself to Godhead through serving love. This spiritual impulse of serving love appears in bound *jivas* in the unwholesome perverted form of lust seeking for its own gratification. This is, indeed, the worst of all the perversions appearing in this world and also the one that is the most difficult to get rid of. Man and woman in this world understand well enough the process of exploiting one another's lust for the reciprocal gratification of their senses. They choose to think gratuitously that, as God Himself has endowed them with the sexual impulse, it must, therefore, be also His intention that it is their duty to avail of the opportunity so mercifully provided. Moderate and well-considered sexuality thus comes to be wrongly regarded as a part and parcel of our proper nature and the institution of marriage *for the carnal purpose* is looked upon as providing the convenient and proper conditions for the exercise of this legitimate God-given impulse. The idea of a human being without any sexual weakness hence comes to be regarded with the greatest suspicion, being considered as either an impossibility or an abnormality.

But as a matter of fact carnal sexuality is not any impulse of our higher nature. It is a hankering for material enjoyment which can, by its nature, only gratify or disgust the material body and mind which have no substantive kinship with the soul. The corresponding pure spiritual impulse is completely free from the

desire of any selfish enjoyment. Our soul possesses spiritual senses which abstain from seeking their own gratification by a spontaneous tendency. They want to provide, and not to intercept for themselves, all enjoyments for the Divinity. This service on the spiritual plane has no grossness or impurity which we, from our experience of the corresponding material process, associate with the object of carnal marriage.

The marriage of individual souls with Godhead is the establishment of unreserved spiritual reciprocal communion with the Divinity which is confusedly reflected in an unwholesome and inverted form in the sexual impulse of this world. The realisation of the most intimate spiritual communion is the fulfilment of the same spiritual impulse. The pursuit of sexual gratification of oneself is the *obstacle* in the way of such realisation and is, in fact; the greatest punishment that is suffered by the *jiva* by reason of his desire for enjoyment.

God does not accept the carnal sentiment, which is the worst form of aversion to Godhead, an act of personal disloyalty to the sole Enjoyer of all the spiritual senses of the *jiva* whose highest function consists in serving the Lord with all his spiritual senses. This spiritual service is available to the *jiva*, only if he happens to be in the state of perfect subordination to Godhead under the unconditional direction of Sree Lakshmi Devi, the Plenary Power Who is the Eternal Consort of the Lord. Sree Nārāyana communes directly with Sree Lakshmi Devi and the latter carries out the Divine Will in an infinity of ways. The *jiva* is enabled to commune with Godhead as a particle of the gratuitous extension of the Divine process by submitting to be an humble agent of Sree Lakshmi Devi Who is entitled to impart to him, for the purpose, a particle of the pure impulse by which She ever serves Her sole Lord. This is the most intimate reciprocal communion, or spiritual marriage, of the *jiva* with the Divinity. Those, who cherish the marriage of Lakshmi and Nārāyana, are by such devotion freed from the fell delusion of carnal sexuality on the attainment of the reciprocal spiritual communion with Divinity, which is the very highest form of service for the *jiva*. The fallen *jiva* is prepared to admit, at any rate in practice, the

inexorable penal laws of physical Nature, but, with strange perversity, is viciously disposed to oppose as irrational the existence of the far more inexorable code of love that regulates the affairs of the spiritual world.

But the Authority of Godhead is no less Absolute in the realm of spirit than it is in this prison-house of the physical world. The scientists try to understand, without questioning their *rationale*, the absolute potency, or authority, of the laws of this material universe. It is necessary to carry the same rational attitude into all enquiries regarding the spiritual world where, however, the laws of this physical world cannot prevail. The scientific spiritual method for attaining to the knowledge of the spiritual world, should, therefore, by strict analogy, also possess the following order of development, *viz.*, (1) actual perception of the spiritual world, (2) gathering of spiritual experience, (3) analysis of such experience, (4) acquisition of right conduct by assimilated knowledge. As the spiritual realm happens to be wholly unknown to us, we must be disposed to take the help of the experience of those who have access to it, if we hope to have even the initial working knowledge of its conditions during this short span of human life. All this is in strict analogy with the method of empiric science.

On the very day that Sree Gaursundar met Lakshmi Devi, a Brāhmana match-maker (match-making by the way was then an honoured office as it should be) who bore the name of Banamāli Āchāryya, providentially made his appearance before Sachi Devi. The Brāhmana, after making his obeisance to mother Sachi, accepted a seat which was cordially offered by her. Thereafter Banamāli Āchāryya broached his proposal: 'It was high time for her to think about the Marriage of her Son. Sree Ballabha Āchāryya, who also lived at Nabadwip, offered an unexceptionable connection as regards family, character and piety of life. His Daughter was the goddess Lakshmi Herself by the fame of Her beauty and disposition. Sachi Devi might accept this connection if she deemed it desirable.' Mother Sachi replied, 'My Son is a fatherless Boy. Let Him live and study. I am not thinking of any other thing just now.' The Brāhmana felt utterly discouraged by this dry rejoinder and left with a heavy heart.

Banamāli Āchāryya fell in with the Lord on His way back from His Academy, Who embraced him by way of merriment. The Lord asked where he had been. The Brāhmana said he had been to His mother to propose His Marriage. He could not understand why she did not take it at all seriously. On hearing of this the Lord became silent. He took His leave of him with a smile and returned home. He laughingly asked His mother why she had not received the Āchāryya in a gracious manner. Sachi was delighted on catching the hint from her Son and sent for the Brāhmana on the day following. She then said to him, 'Settle as expeditiously as possible the affair that you mentioned yesterday. You have my full consent.'

Thereupon, taking the dust of the feet of Sachi, the Brāhmana immediately set out for the home of Ballabha Āchāryya. When Banamāli Ghatak presented himself before Ballabha Āchāryya, the latter received him with great respect. Having accepted a seat duly offered by Ballabha Āchāryya, Banamāli proceeded to ask him forthwith to fix an auspicious day for the marriage of his Daughter. 'The Son of Purandar Misra, by Name Bishwambhar, most learned and possessed of all good qualities, was the only eligible Bridegroom for his daughter. That was also the proposal which Banamāli had to make to him. He accordingly advises Ballabha Āchāryya to accept the same, provided, of course, it really commended itself to him.

Ballabha Āchāryya was filled with the greatest joy on receiving the proposal. He said that such a Son-in-law was to be had only by sheer good fortune. 'If Krishna is gracious to me or the goddesses Lakshmi and Gauri are pleased towards my daughter, only then, and not otherwise, I shall deserve to have such Son-in-law. Be pleased to put forth your best endeavour by all means to settle this affair with the least possible delay. But there is one point which I feel ashamed to mention. I am poor. I am unable to afford any dowry. It is only my daughter whom I shall give away and five myrobalans as her dowry. This is my request to you. You are to obtain their assent to this.' On hearing these words of Ballabha Āchāryya, the Ghatak felt a deep joy at the success of his mission and, coming back to Sachi, delivered to her the

happy news and asked her to fix an auspicious day for the ceremony. All friends of the family were filled with gladness on hearing the happy tidings and applied themselves assiduously to make every preparation for the due solemnization of the Nuptials of Sree Lakshmi and Sree Nārāyana.

The preliminary (*adhibās*) ceremony was duly performed on an auspicious day, to the accompaniment of dance, song and a great variety of music. The Brāhmanas recited the Veda on all sides. Nimāi took His seat in the centre of the gathering. The friends and Brāhmanas performed this ceremony of betrothal by making offerings of perfumes and garlands to the Lord. The Brāhmanas were specially pleased, being treated to excellent perfumes, sandal-paste, betel and garlands. Ballabha Āchāryya came over to the home of Sachi and, having duly performed the same rite, returned with a joyous heart to his residence.

Rising early next morning the Lord bathed, gave away alms and honoured the *Manes* with due worship. There was a great jubilation of dance, song and music. On all sides there arose a mighty tumult, amidst shouts of 'give and take.' There was a multitudinous gathering of loyal matrons, well-wishers, friends, Brāhmanas and good people. Mother Sachi joyfully offered to the ladies, who were present, fried rice, plantain, vermilion, betel and oil. The gods and their consorts assuming human forms merrily assembled to witness the Marriage of the Lord. Ballabha Āchāryya also performed the worship of the gods and departed ancestors in the customary manner.

At the hour of twilight, in an auspicious moment, the Lord set out in marriage procession to the house of Ballabha Misra. No sooner did the Lord arrive at the residence of Misra, the minds of Misra and all his family were filled with a boundless joy. Misra with due respect and a glad heart helped his Son-in-law to the Bridegroom's Seat. He then brought out his daughter Lakshmi, decked in all Her ornaments, to the Presence of the Lord. The people began to shout the Name of Hari. They lifted Lakshmi Devi from the ground and carried Her on their shoulders through the function of perambulating the Lord seven times. Then,

after making Her obeisance to Him, Lakshmi stood before the Lord with the palms of Her hands joined in the attitude of supplication. Then the Two threw flowers at Each Other, and Both Lakshmi and Nārāyana were very much pleased. Lakshmi then placed a beautiful garland at the Feet of the Lord and, making obeisance, made the formal surrender of Herself. The crowd thereupon raised a pæan of triumph on all sides, singing with many voices the Name of Hari so that no other sound could be heard. The holy rite of beholding Each Other's Face was next performed in the same manner. Then the Lord was seated with Lakshmi on His Left Side. The Lord was in the first bloom of youth, surpassing the god of love in beauty, by Whose Side Lakshmi now took Her seat. The beauty and joy that manifested themselves in the house of Misra no one has power to describe.

Thereafter Ballabha sat down to the function of giving away his Daughter. It seemed as if Bhismaka himself had re-appeared in this world. After robing the Body of the Lord with rich clothing, garlands and sandal-paste, the best of Brāhmanas washed His Lotus Feet, by Whose adoration Brahmā, his prime ancestor, had been enabled to create the world. He then bestowed his Daughter in Marriage in due form. The Brāhmana was immersed in the sea of bliss. It was now the turn of the matrons who duly performed the customary rites of the family.

The Lord passed the night in the house of Ballabha Āchāryya. On the following day He set out for His own home in the company of Lakshmi. All the people rushed out to have a Sight of the Lord as He was taken home on the shoulders of men, in a *dolā*, with Lakshmi seated by His Side. Lakshmi and Nārāyana were both richly decorated with perfumes, garlands, ornaments, crowns, sandal-paste and collyrium. All the people praised Them, as they caught a glimpse of the Divine Pair. The ladies were specially affected by the Sight. That fortunate Maiden must have long worshipped Hara and Gauri with Her heart's best devotion. Could such Husband be obtained by a girl except through extraordinary good luck? Some said that the Bridegroom and Bride seemed to be Hara and Gauri themselves. Some said, 'They were Indra and Sachi, or Rati and Madana.' Some said, 'They were Lakshmi

and Nārāyana.' A group of ladies declared them to be 'Seeta and Rama, shining with incomparable Beauty, seated together on the *dolā*.' Thus said all those ladies. They beheld Lakshmi and Nārāyana with an auspicious intent. In this manner the Lord returned Home at night-fall with the tumult of dance song and music.

Then Sachi Devi accompanied by the Brāhmana matrons, with great joy, led her Daughter-in-law into the house. She satisfied all the Brāhmanas and the dancers and musicians by lavish gifts of money, clothing and sweet words. We have it on the authority of Thākur Brindāvandās that those who listen to this holy narrative of the Lord's Marriage are completely freed from the bondage of this world.

As Sree Lakshmi Devi took Her place by the Side of the Lord, the Home of Sachi glowed with a transcendent radiance. Sachi noticed, always both inside and outside the house, a wonderful flaming brilliance which could not, however, be definitely located. She sometimes saw a blazing tongue of fire by the side of her Son; but as she turned to see again, it had vanished. She experienced off and on the fragrance of the lotus flower. Her amazement reached its climax and made her thoughtful. Mother Sachi mused, 'I understand the cause of it. Lakshmi abides in this Maiden. For this reason I perceive the Light and the Fragrance of the Lotus. There is now also no pinch of the poverty of the bygone days. Ever since this Lakshmi, my Daughter-in-law, came into the house, wealth in every form has been pouring in from all sides in a most unaccountable manner.' Mother Sachi often spoke in this strain. The Lord still chose to remain unmanifest. No one can understand the Will of God or how He sports at any time. When God does not make Himself known even Lakshmi Herself cannot know. This is testified by all the Scriptures, by the Vedas and the Purānas, that he alone can know the Supreme Lord whom He Himself favours.

I have retained the actual words of Thākur Brindāvandās in describing the Marriage of Sree Gaurisundar with Sree Lakshmi Devi. The Activities of Sree Chaitanya are not like those of mortal men. They were manifested in this world for the purpose

of healing the disease of mortality by Their contemplation. Most fallen souls, who are denizens of this world, like nothing better than marrying and giving in marriage. It may be supposed that the detailed narrative of the Marriage of Sree Chaitanya has been recorded by His devotee to serve as a model to be followed by the fallen *jivas* and as sanctioning the institution of marriage itself for ensuring spiritual progress. Such a conclusion would also be most acceptable to those who are disposed to find a religious sanction for carnality.

But the associates of Sree Chaitanya have cautioned us in unmistakable terms against *imitation* of the conduct of Sree Chaitanya. The Marriage of Sree Chaitanya is not a carnal affair. It is not to be understood as the glorification of the mundane institution of marriage. If Sree Chaitanya is regarded as a mortal, His Marriage will naturally be considered as an affair like that of man and woman of this world. Those who choose to think in this way are of course free to follow the dictate of their empiric judgment. Only the associates and true followers of Sree Chaitanya, who have recorded the true meaning of the Events of His Career for the benefit of humanity and who have acquired the eligibility to be heard, by fully acting up to their professions, require us to forget *tentatively* the stubborn insinuations of our worldly experience which is bound to fail utterly to give us the knowledge of the reality of which we stand in such urgent need.

The details of the Marriage of Sree Gaurasundar should be listened to from the lips of *sādhus*, i.e., of those who are wholly devoted to the exclusive service of Godhead. God is the sole Proprietor of our senses. When our senses are directed Godward, they lose their grossness engendered by their wrong employment on subjects of this world. If the spiritual instinct, corresponding to sexuality, could be directed towards Godhead, it would be realised as the spiritual impulse of love. So long as it deliberately courts its stultification by directing itself to non-God for support, it finds itself stranded on this unwholesome mundane plane. Lust is the perversion of love into a loathsome mundane entity due to its adulterous and perverted application amounting to a suicidal

crime against its own nature. In other words, when the faculty of amorous love is exercised by the soul, who is free from all mundane hankering towards the All-holy, it is love. Once this change of direction is really established, the substantive existence of the spiritual function corresponding to lust is realised on the automatic elimination of all mundane unwholesomeness. The spiritual function possesses perfectly wholesome nature and permanent substantive existence. The corresponding mundane function is devoid of both these essential characteristics. This is altogether inconceivable to the materialised mind.

The perception of the associated correlatives of inferiority and superiority, grossness and wholesomeness, evil and good, smallness and greatness etc. is the inevitable concomitant of our gross sensuous experience. God reserves the right of appearing to any and every entity as He pleases. And as soon as He chooses to favour an entity by His acceptance of his service, he is instantly freed from all grossness by such acceptance. The marriage-rite of a Bengali Brāhmana has nothing inherently spiritual in it. But it is nevertheless an Eternal Activity for God to accept those rites and all rites, and by such Acceptance they are necessarily freed from all grossness and imperfection. Those, who do not want to enter fully into this real meaning of the Activities of the Divinity when They become visible in this world, earn only damnation by their mis-reading of the Scriptures.

The marriage-rite of a Bengali pseudo-Brāhmana is categorically different from that of Sree Chaitanya for the reasons suggested above. The former produces and aggravates the malady of carnality. Such a result cannot be avoided by merely choosing to imagine that the sensuous affair is sanctioned by the Divine; because the Divine Marriage is located wholly above the plane of the conditioned soul. The sight or contemplation of the Divine Event re-acts on the conditioned soul, if he does not oppose the process by the persistent abuse of his freedom of will in the matter of sexuality. The result of such re-action is spiritually beneficial. The non-spiritual, even in the case of the votary of intangible abstractions, can only re-act on the non-spiritual and complicate the non-spiritual condition. The actual Existence and redeeming Potency of the

Divinity is unconsciously, but none the less decisively, denied by the idealist whose vision is completely deluded by the subtler potency of matter by reason of such attitude. Gaurasundar is Godhead Himself. The contemplation of His Marriage-Rite, in its minutest details with an enlightened serving faith elicited by the instructions of the good preceptor, is bound to re-act on the fettered soul and free him from the bondage of carnality.

We are servants of Krishna. We are not masters of anything. Sree Lakshmi Devi is the Eternal Consort of Sree Gaurasundar and serves Him as Consort. Sree Gaurasundar is the Lord of Sree Lakshmi Devi. The *jiva* cannot be the Lord of any entity. The marriage institution of this world establishes a mundane connection between two material bodies inside which two offending *jivas* are imprisoned. Having lost all consciousness of his real, *i.e.*, spiritual nature, the bound *jiva*, supposing his physical body to be identical with himself, falls under the power of the physical senses and considers himself as an enjoyer of sensuous pleasure accruing from such reciprocation of bodily and mental activities. The sexual relationship in the flesh is the perverted caricature by material symbols of the state of intimate spiritual communion of the individual soul with God in his pure natural state. The institution of marriage is sinful if the *jiva* regards it as a means of his sensuous gratification, as such amorous activities necessarily tend to prolong the bondage of matter and consequent forgetfulness of Godhead. The bodily marriage is harmful and unnatural. In the conditioned state it may not be always possible to avoid the married state in a natural way. But it is always possible even for a married couple to honestly try to steer clear of carnality. They are enabled to do this if they learn the nature of the real connubial connection, which is possible only in the Supreme Lord, from the lips of *sādhus*. Being thus enlightened by the mercy of *sādhus*, one is enabled to realise the true meaning of *Shāstric* provisions in regard to marriage that are intended to unite individual souls to God by the gradual but complete elimination of all carnal desire. Sometimes also a self-realised soul (*sādhu*) may adopt the married state in order to serve God by setting an example to fallen *jivas* embodying the *shāstric* ideal of the married state. But nothing is gained by lifeless imitation of

the external conduct of such a person. It is necessary first of all to seek for true enlightenment at the feet of the guileless and sincere servants of the Lord. To the understanding, enlightened by the causeless mercy of *sādhus*, the real significance of the *sacrament* of marriage discloses itself. Conditioned souls have no right of entry into the spiritual realm until and unless they are enabled to realise the necessity of submitting to the purgatorial process of the cleansing of all worldly dirt by the unconditional service of the true devotees of Godhead.

The ladies of the neighbourhood gave vent to their opinion that the Bride and Bridegroom were no other than Lakshmi and Nārāyana; or, in other words, They were regarded as Godhead and His Eternal Consort. This was also fully applicable to the case. But we should be on our guard against the utterly profane carnal sentimentalism that proposes to regard every newly married pair as resembling Lakshmi and Nārāyana, or, for the matter of that, which proposes to regard *any jiva* as the husband or wife of another by his spiritual nature. The mundane relation of husband and wife is of the flesh, being the grossly perverted eternal relation that unites *mediately* the individual soul, in his state of grace, with the Fountain head of All-existence through his willing, unconditional submission to the guidance of the plenary Power. It is sheer folly to confound the one with the other.

Similarly those are also equally deluded who choose to regard the issue born of such bodily union as being on a level with Divine Gopāla. Such people affect to be innocently unconscious of the eternal difference that separates this nether world, its concerns and the conditioned souls from the Divinity and His Own. The *jiva* commits a great offence against Godhead when he marries another *jiva* for the practice of carnality, and a sacrilege when he chooses to regard such bodily union as Divinely ordained. The soul of the *jiva* can be neither wife nor husband in the worldly sense. He has nothing to do with this world. The flesh and all its concerns are the snare which entraps the soul who is disinclined to serve Godhead and seeks, in lieu of the spiritual and absolutely pure service of the Lord, his own selfish enjoyment. So long as the desire for such enjoyment retains possession of the mind of the *jiva*, he is

apt to turn a deaf ear to the Word of God always warning him from without and within against the seductions of the flesh. To such a person the world appears to be a place of legitimate sensuous enjoyment. When such a person also sets up as a preacher of the Word of God, he is bound to mis-interpret the Scriptures in order to make them tally with his own sensuous outlook and often carries this mis-interpretation to such lengths that he feels no scruple in representing his sensual activities as being indetical with the service of God on the ground that they are also applauded by all other sinners. It is these pseudo-preachers who also declare the consummation of carnal marriage between one *jiva* and another as identical with the institution sanctioned by the Scriptures. Let us beware of these pseudo-preachers who are infinitely worse than even the proverbial wolves in sheep's clothing. One should on principle refuse to be instructed in the Word of God by a worldlyling who deceives himself and others by putting on the holy garb of a servant of God, and should avoid the society of such a person as that of an open enemy of Godhead. Toleration of such persons is the worst cruelty to oneself as well as to the person himself, being an offence at the Feet of the Lord and against the express teaching of all Scriptures. These hypocritical teachers of the religion are worse than even the rankest of atheists by profession.

CHAPTER X

PROFESSOR LIFE—(Contd.)

THE figure of Sree Gaur Sundar as professor (*adhyāpaka*) has been described in some detail by Thākur Brindāvandās. He was constantly surrounded by a host of admiring pupils. He was extremely proud of His learning and took a particular pleasure in ridiculing and exposing the ignorance of everybody. He cared for nothing except His books. He had an extraordinarily Beautiful Appearance and was in the bloom of His Youth. Grace and Beauty marked His every Limb. His Hands reached down to the Knee. His wide Eyes resembled the *petals* of the lotus flower. His Lips were always tinged by betel. He wore the most handsome clothing.

This beautiful, young, arrogant Scholar's teaching was also unique in character. No savant of the then greatest centre of learning of India presumed to understand it really. The quondam teacher of Sree Gaur Sundar, fortunate Gangādās Pandit, was the only exception. The Lord opened out the store of His Learning freely to His old teacher. Worldly-minded people praised the Scholar and said that the parents of such a Son were the possessors of the richest of all treasures. To the woman-kind this insolent Scholar appeared in the likeness of the god of love himself. To the atheists He was terrible as Death. To the Pandits He was like a second Brihaspati by His wonderful learning. Different persons viewed Him in a different light in accordance with their particular standards of the highest worth.

But there was one group of people who did not share this general admiration of the particularly well-dressed Teacher. This was the community of the Vaishnavas. They were utterly disappointed to find no trace of inclination for Krishna in this fascinating Youth Whose great learning, they knew well, would be of no avail to save Him from the clutches of ignorance and