

tion of an actual physical body was not necessary as the Eternal Consort of the Lord is the Mistress of physical Nature and performs all Her Spiritual Acts, even in this world, without any positive help of the Deluding Material Energy, Who is Her Own subservient Shadow.

But the Grief of Sree Lakshmi Devi, which was the cause of Her Departure, was not a pretence. The Lord has the Power of making Himself invisible even to Sree Lakshmi Devi Herself. The Grief of Sree Lakshmi Devi is, however, not like the grief of conditioned souls who are pained by being deprived of their opportunity of selfish enjoyment. Sree Lakshmi Devi is the Eternally Inseparable Consort of the Supreme Lord, but is nevertheless not identical with Him. It is this which makes possible Their Relationship of Love in Union and Separation. She has Her Existence in the Divine Function of causeless loving service of the Supreme Lord. She serves the Lord equally both in union and separation. So there is no decrease of love or bliss but only a change of the form of service when Sree Lakshmi Devi displays the extreme Grief of Separation from Her Only Lord.

CHAPTER XIV

#### TAPAN MISRA: RETURN FROM EAST BENGAL

AFTER staying for a while in East Bengal the Lord made up His mind to return Home. On being apprised of the intention of the Lord the people of those parts brought various offerings of all their treasure. The presents included gold, silver, pots for holding water, excellent seats, finely dyed blankets, a great variety of clothing, etc. All persons gladly made an offering of all the best things of their households. Lord Gaurānga-Sree Hari was pleased to accept their offerings, bestowing His Merciful Glance on all. Having taken His leave of all persons Lord Sree Gaurānga set out for His Own Home. Many students from East Bengal followed the Lord to Nabadwip to study under Him there.

The Lord apparently did not think it to be incompatible with the duty of a house-holder to accept the presents of the people of East Bengal for imparting them knowledge of the *Shāstras*. This may be objected to on the ground that it amounts to nothing less than the selling of knowledge which is forbidden by the *Shāstras*. There is a distinction between professional teachers of different branches of secular knowledge and the preacher of the Religion.

The profession of a secular teacher is recommended by the *Shāstras* as un-objectionable from the worldly point of view and is given preference over other occupations for earning a livelihood. The Lord does not appear in East Bengal as Preacher of the Religion. The *Shāstras* forbid selling of religious teaching. The preacher of religion must not accept any remuneration for his services as preacher. If he accepts payment and is dependent on it for his livelihood he cannot but desire to please his pay-masters and thus fail to maintain his unconditional adherence to the Truth, which is essential in every *bona fide* preacher of the religion. The least concession to any worldly purpose makes a person unfit for



being a preacher of the Absolute Truth. It is, therefore, absolutely necessary to keep the whole arrangement for the preaching of Religion outside the obligations of the social systems devised for the attainment of purely worldly ends; as any adulteration is bound to be productive of irreparable mischief for all concerned. There is no harm in any one accepting presents in return for imparting knowledge of the *Shāstras* to his students. These payments also were voluntary and not confined to the students.

It was apparently regarded as the duty of all house-holders to place the best part of their wealth at the disposal of the secular teachers of the people. This was a social arrangement for the promotion of secular learning. It had nothing to do with the preaching of the religion. The people naturally flocked to Nimāi Pandit in order to study Vyākaraṇa as He was reputed to be the greatest scholar of that day. They had their reward in gaining scholarship of a superior order in a short time.

There was, however, one notable exception. A most fortunate Brāhmana, by name Tapan Misra, presented himself before the Lord on the eve of His return from East Bengal, with the intention of obtaining a solution of his doubts regarding the real nature of the Object and method of spiritual practices. Tapan Misra was not one of the ordinary type of enquirers who believe it to be their duty to be curious about everything and therefore also about religion. The problem, with which Tapan Misra approached the Lord, had been suggested in course of a long endeavour to find the Truth by the method of sincerely following out the injunctions of the *Shāstras*. Tapan Misra had already lost all taste for worldly life. He was in that critical state when the mode of life, with which he had been familiar, had ceased to interest, but when yet no satisfactory substitute had been found. Being naturally of a perfectly sincere turn of mind he had not sat down tightly on his doubts. He had been to all persons whom he considered likely to be able to help him in solving his doubts. These doubts were troubling him in spite of the conventional religious life with its theory and practices which, as the duty of one born in a Brāhmana family, he had duly inherited and which he had been trying sincerely to follow up in life. He was too

genuinely inquisitive to be content without troubling about the real value of his inherited activities and their necessity for himself as an individual. He was, therefore, deeply pious in his external conduct but distracted within by the gravest doubts regarding his own real condition. This is a very rare combination. Habit is a formidable enemy on the path of progress if it happens to be unduly enamoured of itself and breeds the inclination to be really content with a bad thing. The human soul by his constitution is naturally opposed to anything short of the Absolute Truth. No mechanical dogmatism can satisfy him. The affairs of this world are carried on by most of us on the basis of working hypotheses called by the misleading designations of Natural Laws and Moral Principles. Their proper function is merely to stimulate, without being able to satisfy, our loyal inclination for the service of Truth. Those who suppose that it is never possible for us to attain the Real, Immutable Truth, soon get reconciled to this ever-shifting hypothetical mode of living which alone is possible with the help of empiric ethics and the other empiric sciences. They are not pessimists as regards their own method. They subsist on the hope of a hypothetical notion called progressive improvement, without really caring to examine seriously the basis of such hope.

Tapan Misra had ceased to be a contented empiricist. He had also failed to understand the basis of his own faith in the Scriptures. A careful study of the *Shāstras* and prolonged performance of *Shāstric* practices had failed to solve his doubts. He was studious, thoughtful and practical and had also been trying honestly to live the unworldly life enjoined by the *Shāstras*. As the result of this he had made the discovery that it was not possible to understand or obey the *Shāstras*, as their theories and injunctions seemed to contradict one another and certain principles also seemed wholly impossible to carry out in practice. He was too honest to be disposed to ignore or lightly explain away such discrepancies. In one word he was a seeker of the *Absolute Truth* and determined not to serve anything else under the name of the Truth.

In this dilemma Tapan Misra had a wonderful dream. A celestial being appeared to him in his dream and advised him to



proceed to Nimāi Pandit Who would solve all his doubts. The god told him further that Nimāi Pandit is no other than Nārāyana Himself Who had appeared in this world in His Human Form for delivering the conditioned souls. The Brāhmana was also warned not to divulge this secret of the Vedas to any one else as such conduct would entail trouble for him in all subsequent lives. The Brāhmana shed copious tears on beholding this auspicious dream. Recovering his balance of judgment he blessed his good fortune and, fixing his thoughts on the Lord, hastened to His Presence.

Tapan Misra made his way to the place where the Lord was seated in the midst of His pupils, and, after making obeisance, stood before Him with the palms of his hands joined in the attitude of supplication. He then completely laid open his heart to the Lord, saying that the ordinary duties of life had lost all their charms for him, and that he was passing his days in a state of intense suspense, due to failure to understand the proper method and object of spiritual living. He had, therefore, come to Him for enlightenment on the subject, being fully convinced that there was no other way out of the difficulty except through His Mercy. He hoped to be delivered from the bondage of the world by His Kindness and prayed that He would overlook his unfitness and mercifully communicate to him the right method and object of spiritual living. He desired to learn the Truth from His Own Lips, and to be delivered thereby from the state of unbearable misery.

The Lord told the Brāhmana that he was most fortunate, as there cannot be any fortune higher than the condition of one who is desirous of serving Krishna with all his faculties. The service of Godhead is a subject that is most difficult to understand and is vast beyond all measure. The Supreme Lord Himself settles the form of His worship for every Age, proclaiming the same for the information of all. For this purpose He comes down into this mundane world in each of the four Ages. He returns to his Realm after settling the form of the Religion that is appropriate for each particular Age. The account of the Lord's Appearances in this world is recorded in the *Shāstras* for the information of

every one. The Lord Krishna Himself says in the Geeta, 'I appear in this world in the successive Ages for the purpose of delivering the *sādhus*, for eliminating those who are addicted to evil and for fully establishing the Religion.' The *Bhagavatam* says that 'Krishna appears in each of the four Ages with a Different Complexion. He is White, Red and Yellow respectively in the three other Ages and is of a Dark Hue in Dwāpara. The Colour That Krishna assumes in the different Ages corresponds to the character of the particular Age. The form of Religion, laid down by the Lord for the Kali Age, is the congregational chant of the Holy Name. There are four different forms of the Religion to be followed by the souls in the different Ages. The object of all forms is the same. This common object is realised in the Krita Age by following the method of meditation (*dhyana*) on Vishnu; in the Tretā Age by worshipping Him with sacrifices (*makha*); in the Dvāpara Age by the mode of serving the Holy Form in the manner of ritualistic worship (*archana*) and in this Kali Age by chanting (*Kirtan*) Hari. The performance (*yajna*) of the chant of the Holy Name is, therefore, the only mode of the worship for the Kali Age. One cannot be delivered in the Iron Age by following any of the other prescribed forms of worship. The Vedas themselves fail to describe fully the praises due to one who takes the Holy Name night and day, eating or sleeping. It is necessary to note carefully that the modes of asceticism (*tapas*) and sacrifice (*yajna*) are *forbidden* in the Kali Age. Those, who worship Krishna, are most fortunate'. The Lord advised Tapan Misra to worship Krishna by staying at home, avoiding whatever was opposed to it positively or negatively, by the method of single-hearted devotion. Sree Gaurisundar also assured Tapan Misra that he would realise the true nature of the object and mode of worship, and in fact everything, by means of the congregational chant of the Name of Hari. 'The Name of Hari alone is efficacious. There is absolutely no other course in the Kali Age'. The Lord told Misra that the Name, or *Mahāmantra*, That should be chanted consists of sixteen Names and thirty-two letters possessing the potency of the *mantra*, viz., "Harē Kṛshna Harē Kṛshna Kṛshna Kṛshna Harē Harē Harē Rāma Harē Rāma Rāma Rāma Harē Harē."



He assured Misra that he would know the true object as well as method of spiritual living when by constant practice of chanting the Holy Name the first tender shoots of spiritual love (*prema*) would manifest themselves.

Misra made repeated prostrated obeisances at the Feet of the Lord on learning this Teaching from the Mouth of the Lord Himself. The Misra said that he would like to remain with the Lord, if so commanded. But the Lord asked him to proceed to Vārānasi (Benares) without delay, promising to meet him there and to tell him all the principles regarding method and object of spiritual living.

This short Catechism, of the Creed laid down by the Supreme Lord as the only form of Religion of the present Age, will give the reader a concrete and definite but not the detailed idea of the form of worship established by Sree Chaitanya Deva. The principles as well as the practice, that are taught, will become clearer as we follow the Career of the Lord and His devotees through each successive chapter. But it is necessary to make a few observations on the subject without anticipating what is to follow in order to clear up certain initial misconceptions that may trouble the reader in regard to the outline that is just offered.

It is definitely declared that the object of Religion is one but its form varies from Age to Age. But the form is not evolved by the course of events of this world. The establishment of the form of worship appropriate for the particular Age is also a Divine Event. This task is performed by the Supreme Lord Who comes down in this world for the purpose of establishing and proclaiming the form of the worship to be followed in each Age. This is a most important point. Those, who object to variety of the form of worship, are in the wrong. The variety of form is not evolved by the changing circumstances of this world, although it is of the nature of an adjustment. But the adjustment is not human, nor natural, but Divine, which is also made by the Lord Himself. By the side of this special form of worship established and proclaimed by the Lord Himself as the Dispensation of the Age there may and, as a matter of fact do, actually spring up quite a crop of the

*historical forms* devised by the blind speculative instinct of the human mind to find its own independent solution of the problem of the true function of life. The Divine Dispensation of each Age is fully in accordance with the teaching of the whole body of the *Shāstras* and is also definitely and clearly stated therein. This is the really authentic evidence of the Divine Dispensation for the present Age. This special form, though existing *potentially* in the record of the Scriptures, requires to be established and proclaimed by the Lord Himself to make it actually available for the Age.

The significance of neither the Form nor the object of Divine Dispensations may be properly grasped by the conditioned soul unless and until he is inclined of his own accord to *seek* for the Truth by the method of giving up every other mode and object of living when and to the extent the Truth actually manifests Himself. This is the *sine qua non*, the only pre-requisite, for the spontaneous attainment of spiritual enlightenment. The points that are to be carefully remembered, are these: 'Spiritual Truth is categorically and eternally different from *all* so-called empiric truth. Spiritual Truth is Eternal and Absolute by His Nature, whereas empiric truth is always tentative and changeable. The proper relation of the soul to Spiritual Truth is, therefore, that of unconditional, perfectly rational, submission; whereas the soul has *no* affinity whatsoever with the so-called empiric truth, which is a material product and towards which the human mind, mimicking the spiritual activity of the soul, pursues the plan of alternative adoption and rejection. It is the process which the mind is always disposed to proclaim as the function of the soul with *whom* it declares *itself* to be identical in order to delude the soul into agreeing to its unnatural domination. The mind is the agent of *Māyā* for deluding the soul. Spiritual Truth cannot be discovered by the efforts of the materialised mind. The clear perception of this fact is the indispensable pre-requisite for experiencing any real desire for the Spiritual Truth. To such a seeker, say the *Shāstras*, the Truth reveals His Own Form. The duty of the conditional soul is, therefore, to disavow all connection with empiric truth in theory *as well as in practice* and to wait upon the pleasure of the Spiritual Truth for all enlightenment. Spiritual Truth, unlike dead material hypotheses.



is a Living Entity possessing the power of the true initiative. Spiritual Truth is pleased to show Himself to the soul who, on realising the inevitable futility of the empiric method of quest, is in search of the right method and object of the true rational enquiry.'

But a person, who is dissatisfied with the limitations and inconclusiveness of the method and object of the empiric search for Truth, need not necessarily accept the alternative of waiting upon the Pleasure of the Divinity, Who is identical with the Absolute Truth, for enlightenment. He may still continue to depend on human contrivance. He may believe in magic, He may believe in blind faith (?) He may believe in asceticism or *yogic* practices based on the principle of the efficacy of control over the mind promised by physical processes such as breathing exercises, etc., etc. He may also believe in *direct* revelation to his heart without the necessity of any extraneous effort on his part. It is always possible to secure a number of texts of the *Shāstras* in apparent support of almost any view that one *has already decided* to adopt. The dissatisfaction, that leads to such futile activities, will be of *no* help in the quest of the Truth.

The instrumentality of the mind and its speculative faculty need not, of course, be ignored. All, that is necessary, is to continue to use them vigorously, but with all due allowance for their limitations, in every endeavour for the attainment of the unalloyed service of the Truth. When the Absolute Truth makes His Appearance to the human soul the cognitive faculty has to be actively employed in His service if the Truth is to be realised. But our cognitive faculty must not be allowed to obstruct or to dominate the Absolute Truth. Our cognitive faculty must submit to be enlightened, not passively after the manner of stocks and stones, but by the full exercise of its active receptive function which is natural and possible for all self-conscious entities. The defect of the empiric method consists in over-estimating the scope and power of the self-conscious (?) principle in the conditioned soul. The self-conscious principle itself *should* not project itself on the material world by wilfully disconnecting itself from the Source of *all real self-consciousness*. Such *wrong* relationship with matter is punished by the increasing curtailment of the

scope of activity of the conscious principle itself. Relationship of the soul with matter is possible and desirable but without losing connection with the very Source of self-consciousness. The purpose of spiritual endeavour is to revive in an active form the dormant connection with the Source. But the mind is to be directed to the Source of its consciousness by the active exercise of all its faculties for the purpose.

The existence of a *recognisable and accessible* Source of the pure, unobscured conscious principle is the initial necessity if any theory of the Absolute has to be translated into practice. This is supplied by the periodic Appearance of the Supreme Lord in this world. The *Shāstras* are His harbingers. The idea, that Religion is identical with dogma in the empiric sense, is due to fundamental misconception of the nature of the function of the soul in his purely spiritual state. Submission to a half-conviction or un-conviction is dogma in the real sense which is the very life of our ordinary wordly activity in all its forms. The almost unctuous fear of all dogma, that is so much affected by all empiricists, should appear to all consistent thinkers to be a piece of brazen hypocrisy. It is like the inveterate and designing thief warning honest people against the crime of theft in order to disarm all suspicions regarding the real thief who is no other than himself. The *Shāstras* alone are not dogmatic, but are wholly opposed to and free from all taint of irrational empiric dogmas open and disguised. The *Shāstras*, indeed, expose the futility and inconsistency of dogmatism to the chagrin of all hypocritical empiric professors and disseminators of rank dogmatism under the name of rationality. This is the destructive function of the *Shāstras*. Their constructive function is to supply the clue to the Absolute Truth.

But the *Shāstras* are not themselves sufficient for the purpose of effecting the deliverance of conditioned souls, as the latter are on principle disinclined to give them an unprejudiced, complete and patient hearing. The few, who are exceptions to this rule, are bound to attain the Truth if after carefully studying the *Shāstras* they do not misunderstand, or imperfectly understand, or fail to act up to, the method laid down in the *Shāstras*, in a



perfectly convincing and cognisable manner, for the *quest* of the Absolute Truth.

Tapan Misra could understand neither the method nor the object of spiritual endeavour as laid down in the *Shāstras*. He had been confused by his own *honest* endeavour. The methods that he had followed had actually failed, and he was also aware of this fact, to yield the result promised by the *Shāstras*.

It is, no doubt, impossible to fully understand how the instructions of Nimāi Pandit recorded above could produce in such a critically minded, sincere soul complete and instantaneous faith in all the Statements of the Lord. The dogmatic empiricists will object to this on the ground that *it is dogmatism* to which he professes to be opposed *in theory*. But without further wasting our time on these shameless hypocrites, whose folly has already been sufficiently exposed, it would be far better to try to understand how Nimāi Pandit Himself was free from all such hypocritical dogmatism.

What Nimāi Pandit said is this: "Tapan Misra should constantly repeat the *mahāmantra*. The *mahāmantra* consists of sixteen Names and thirty-two letters of the Alphabet. The *mahāmantra*, although it is technically in the form of Name and not of *mantra*, yet possesses all the potency of the *mantra*. The Names in the case of address in their Sanskrit form, constituting the *mahāmantra*, have the following order: 'Harē Kṛṣṇa, Harē Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Harē Harē; Harē Rāma, Harē Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Harē Harē.' This *mahāmantra* is to be constantly recited. There is no condition. The real meaning of the method and object of spiritual endeavour, laid down in the *Shāstras*, would appear spontaneously after the process had been followed to the point when the first tender shoots of spiritual love for the Divinity made their appearance."

This is a very simple creed which also does not apparently rest on the rational basis. A string of Names is to be uttered continuously. How could this apparently non-rational advice fully satisfy Tapan Misra?

The whole answer in a nutshell is this. It is so because Tapan Misra submitted to receive the Truth from the supreme Lord. The

Substantive Truth is communicated by the Power of Mercy of the Lord. He cannot be reached by the uphill effort of the empiric mind. It is no doubt true that Sree Chaitanyadeva subsequently described to this same Tapan Misra in greater detail this very subject. That Discourse is all-important and will appear in this work in its proper place. It will suffice for the present to observe that the process recommended is different from the magical art. The result promised is the knowledge of the right method and object of spiritual endeavour discussed in the pages of the vast literature of the *Shāstras*. Magic produces, and promises to produce, a temporary delusion. Even when magic seems to produce a comparatively lasting result it is also not spiritual in the rational sense of the philosophers. The cure of a disease of the seeming increase of the scope or power of the senses and the mind, in regard to their relation with the objects of this phenomenal world limited by the conditions of time and space, are not spiritual results according to any school. Those who are inattentive to the distinction between the Real Truth and changing hypotheses, between the spiritual and the material, are likely to confound the *mahāmantra* with a magical formula. It is necessary to avoid this possible misconception.

All that can be reasonably urged at this stage is that the proposition is stated but is not supported by any form of argument or elucidation. The answer is that the discussion is deliberately postponed to enable the Narrative to develop to that point at which it will be practicable to resume the further consideration of the subject in this form. Meanwhile the conversation of Nimāi Pandit with Tapan Misra and its effect on the latter may be accepted as a most wonderful event which actually took place but which does not explain itself.

Of course nothing is impossible with the Lord. The empiric dogmatist is not, however, satisfied, or profess to be dissatisfied, unless an effort is made to consider all subjects from the point of view of our limited reason which is confessedly unfit to find out the Real Truth. Such inconclusive discussions by the method of begging the question to be proved, also pretend to carry our



knowledge of the subjects so discussed further in the direction of the Truth. Such discussions undoubtedly serve to direct our attention to all the superficial and misleading aspects of a subject. We gather much information by its means, which is of a negative character and falls within the limited scope permitted to our present mental faculties. Such knowledge is applicable to our circumstances of the phenomenal world and enables us to a more or less extent to obtain the fulfilment of our worldly purposes. This is the principle of worldly utility. It need neither be belittled nor ignored. It is effective in its way. But the attainment of a worldly result is no help in the process of understanding the Absolute *i.e.*, the spiritual or real and abiding nature of those very phenomena. For that purpose they require to be looked at from the point of view of the Absolute Truth. The Lord alone can communicate the spiritual understanding which enables us to know the Absolute Truth. Once we have been enabled to attain the absolute standpoint we are in a position to really share in the discourse about the Absolute Truth which is the subject-matter of the *Shāstras*. The Lord may adopt any method to communicate to us this spiritual enlightenment. There is nothing surprising in regard to the Activities of the Lord. But at the same time the Lord does nothing that is not also perfectly rational in the only true sense. We are, therefore, justified in trying to find out not the empiric but the absolute *rationale* of the Lord's Teachings. We shall revert to this subject in its proper place.

Tapan Misra was, however, convinced that he had at last found out the Truth of Whom he was in search. He made repeated prostrated obeisances to the Lord Who now directed him to proceed to Benares without delay where the Lord promised to meet him again and impart the knowledge regarding the detailed principles of the method and Object of worship. The reader is now in a position to distinguish between the connected processes of the exposition of the principles of spiritual endeavour and imparting of spiritual enlightenment. Misra was not advised to repeat the *mahāmantra* mechanically. Such a piece of advice *gratis* could not have satisfied a real enquirer like Tapan Misra. He was satisfied because he was enlightened by the Grace of the Lord as

regards the substantive existence of the subjects of his enquiry. Such causeless occurrences ordinarily go by the names of miracle and magic. But we should be careful to remember that the Performances of the Lord are not miraculous in the sense of being unintelligible nor magical in the sense of being delusive. They are spiritual that is intelligible to the perfect judgment of the enlightened soul although wholly incomprehensible to the limited reason of the soul with a predilection for the bound state. There is, of course, no question of delusion.

Tapan Misra was spiritually enlightened by the Grace of the Lord; or, in other words, the perfect judgment of the emancipated soul was re-established in him. He was, therefore, in the position to understand the Reality of the Teaching of the Lord. The emancipated soul functions in a strictly subordinate capacity. Such a soul does not try to know anything by his own ascending effort. He simply waits to be enlightened. This may appear to be like total loss of initiative. But it is really the attainment of the true initiative. The enlightened soul is able to distinguish between the results obtainable by the process of the so-called initiative possible for the intellect that seeks its own gratification and the corresponding faculty of the free soul willingly seeking the Gratification of Kṛshna. The initiative exists in both cases. But the power is abused in one case and used properly in the other. It is necessary to lead a healthy life. It is also necessary to understand the principles of the Medical Science for the purpose of being enabled to preserve one's health. It is meaningless to want to understand the principles for any other purpose. It is the only function of the free soul to serve the Truth. But the Absolute Truth is not a general formula, still less an abstraction. The Absolute Truth is a Real Person with Perfect Initiative and Perfect Will. The so-called abstract truth, being a figment of our defective imagination, is really a dead thing which cannot be our master. The Absolute Truth, because He happens to be the Real Person with Will of His Own Who is not identical with our wills, can really command and be really obeyed. The only function of the pure soul is to obey the Highest Person. It is possible to suppose that we realise the nature of the spiritual service when it is



presented to us in the form of an abstract discussion like the present one. But the conditioned soul can never realise the nature of spiritual service merely by the process of such discussion, because he has as yet no substantive experience of the spiritual existence. The Truth cannot be experienced by the material senses or the materialised mind. He can only be experienced by the spiritual senses and the spiritual mind. Tapan Misra found his spiritual senses and his spiritual mind by the Grace of the Lord. This settled his doubts regarding the substantive existence, nature, and object of spiritual endeavour. He was, therefore, no longer in need of the *knowledge* of the principles of such endeavour. But a discussion of the principles from the Lips of the Lord Himself was necessary for the *negative* enlightenment of unemancipated souls.

The Lord then embraced Tapan Misra. This produced horripilation all over the frame of the Brahmana due to the manifestation of spiritual ecstatic love that binds all individual (*Jiva*) souls with the Feet of the Lord. The Brahmana, on receiving the favour of the Embrace of the Lord of Vaikunṭha, then experienced for the first time the real spiritual bliss. At the time of taking his leave he unbosomed to the Lord the details of his dream. On hearing his story the Lord observed that 'it was true as far as it was proper and reasonable; but he must not tell all this to any other person.' The Lord repeated this warning once more with earnestness. He then stood up smiling on the arrival of the auspicious moment of His Departure for Home. In this manner Lord Gauranga Sree-Hari prepared to return Home after glorifying the country of Vanga by His Presence on her soil. The Lord reached Home in the evening with a great quantity of valuables in the shape of money and costly objects which He had brought as presents from East Bengal.

The Lord made prostrated obeisances to the feet of His mother and made over to her all the treasures that He had brought and immediately proceeded with His disciples to the Ganges to bathe in the holy stream. The mother, stricken at heart, without delay busied herself in preparations for cooking His meal with the help of other members of the family. The Lord, Teacher of

all persons by His Own Example, prostrated Himself in obeisance to the Ganges in many ways. He sported in the water of the Ganges for a while. The Lord returned Home after having obtained the sight of the Ganges and bathed in her water. Then, after duly performing the daily worship, Lord Gauranga Sree-Hari sat down to His meal. The Lord of Vaikunṭha, having dined to satisfaction, seated Himself at the doorstep of Vishnu's Shrine.

By this time all relatives and friends came to accost Him and sat on all sides round the Lord. The Lord, talking to all in a smiling and jocular manner, told them how pleasantly He had passed His days in East Bengal. Mimicking the mode of speech of East Bengal the Lord laughingly caricatured the people of that country. His friends did not say anything about the disappearance of Sree Lakshmi Devi, being aware that such communication would produce sadness. After a short stay all the friends took their leave of Him. The Lord sat in the same position continuing to chew the betel, indulging in light talk, laughter and jokes.

Sree Sachi Devi was staying away inside the room. She did not come before her Son. The Lord Himself now went up to His mother and found that her countenance was overcast with an expression of deep dejection. The Lord greeted His mother with sweet words. He enquired about the cause of her grief complaining that on His return from a distant land instead of welcoming Him with special gladness she had chosen to wear the appearance of mourning and pressed to know the reason of her sadness. On hearing these words of her Son the mother burst into tears holding down her face and remained speechless in her distress. The Lord told her that He understood everything. Some evil must have befallen her Daughter-in-law. At this all who were present informed the Lord that His Spouse had, indeed, obtained the mercy of the holy Ganges.

Lord Gauranga Sree-Hari on being told of the Departure of Sree Lakshmi Devi, His Consort, paused for a brief space holding down His Head. As a confession of grief at separation from His Beloved, the Life of all the Vedas remained silent for a while.



After indulging His Grief in this manner for a brief space, in imitation of the ways of the people of this world, the Lord repeated with a patient mind this sloka of the *Bhagavatam*, 'Who are, indeed, these husbands, sons, and relatives? Whose relations are they? It is all due to ignorant delusion.'

The Lord continued to speak, 'Mother, why do you feel sad? How can that which is pre-ordained be cancelled? Such is the march of Time. No one belongs to anybody. It is for this reason that the Vedas declare this world to be impermanent. The whole world is under the Dominion of the Lord. Who else can bring about either union or severance? Therefore what has happened has been by the Will of the Lord. Where is the use of grieving for what is past? Is there any one who is more fortunate than that departed person of pious deeds who has attained the mercy of the Ganges before the Disappearance of Her Husband? Consoling His mother in this way the Lord turned His Mind to His other duties in the company of his friends and relatives. On hearing these Words of nectarine sweetness from the Holy Lips of the Lord all persons were fully relieved of every cause of grief.

We are accustomed to expect something altogether new and strange and wholly different from everything with which we are now so familiar, on being spiritually enlightened. This accounts for our contempt for the homely and familiar events of our present everyday life. We expect to find the life of saints to be something miraculous and abnormal. This is due to want of clear thinking that leads us to confound the super-natural with the unnatural. We have not to travel through all the vastness of space in order to arrive at Vaikunṭha. We fall into this world as soon as our spiritual vision is obscured. The same Vaikunṭha is then reflected in a most unwholesome manner in the mirrors of our hearts. All that is necessary in order to get rid of the misery of the worldly bondage, is to cleanse the mirror of the heart to enable Vaikunṭha to appear to us in the undistorted form. This function few of us consider it worth our while to set about in right earnest. We want to reach Vaikunṭha by extending the

scope of our wrong activities. But so long as the heart remains unchanged the prospect does not undergo any material change. The whole question is this—'Are we seriously desirous of knowing the Truth? Are we prepared for a change of heart to accomplish this?'

This is hastily supposed to imply the call for the abdication of all functions of this world. If wife and children have not to be 'loved' (?) we are naturally shocked by the requisition. It would be easier to part from them for good which is happening to soldiers and sailors any day of their lives. But that does not make them spiritual, as we know from experience. It is the humdrum duties of the average householder which hang round our necks like the proverbial mill-stone and require to be 'enlivened' by the relieving process of separation, heroism, death, calamities or the like. Without these latter life would be unbearable. The question on the threshold of the spiritual life is not how to retain, or get rid of, the activities that we already have, in a more effective or striking manner. Such an attitude involves a forgone conclusion. How can a temporary thing be retained *effectively*? How can an *actual* thing be got rid of without mangling ourselves? The runaway as well as the preservative methods are alike futile and irrational. But they happen to be the only ones that the resources of our present imagination can suggest for our relief. No third alternative is at present conceivable to us.

That a person, who is acting exactly like ourselves in this very world and with whom we ourselves have most intimate relations, should have to be considered as being altogether different in his outlook and behaviour from ourselves, is difficult to understand or to admit. All that we may be prepared to allow is that he is different from us in the same way as any two persons are different from one another. The esoteric explanation is not of much use either in understanding or in dealing with any person who is also apparently found to belong to this world in the ordinary sense. If a person calling himself or allowing himself to be called a *Vaishnava* have to be allotted a privileged position, that does not accord with the requirements of our common sense, simply on the basis of such esoteric explanations, there would presently be



no necessity for the exercise of common sense at all in any affair of life.

These are the two poles of the empiric attitude. It expects either magic or wholesale surrender to the so-called common sense. It professes the latter, as being the more workable of the two. What change, if any, it accordingly asks, is proposed to be effected in its attitude by the transcendentalists?

Sree Gaur-sundar goes to East Bengal to earn wealth by teaching the people. This is quite intelligible and natural from the common sense point of view. After His return from there He finds that His wife had had a sudden and untimely end. But He is not upset by the information and calmly consoles His stricken mother. This is also quite sensible and nothing extraordinary. It is ordinarily done under similar circumstances by many other persons whose doings are allowed to pass unnoticed, by the ordinary rules of common sense. If there be an esoteric meaning behind all this, which was denied by many of His contemporaries at the time of their occurrence, what difference will it make in our conduct if we refuse to take any notice of the same? We would behave in the same, or sometimes may be in a better way in similar circumstance by the guidance of our common sense without troubling about any supposed spiritual implication.

Life in Vaikunṭha resembles life in this world, but it does not interest the people of this world. In Vaikunṭha there are far more attractive objects of enjoyment than we find in this world and in an absolutely and fully accessible form; but no one there enjoys or discards them. This is opposed to the so-called common sense of the people of this world. The common sense of this world tells us both to enjoy and to discard. The common sense of Vaikunṭha tells one to do neither. The Vaishnavas are endowed with the common sense of Vaikunṭha. The esoteric explanation is the only real explanation of their conduct which is based on a different common sense, in the same way as the exoteric explanation is the only explanation that is ordinarily given of the conduct of the people of this world.

If it is asked, 'Do the Vaishnavas want to be guided by the common sense of Vaikunṭha, which is claimed to be different from the common sense of this world, in their dealings with the people of this world'? The reply is both 'yes' and 'no'. They behave towards one another unambiguously and in accordance with the common sense of Vaikunṭha. Towards the people of this world they behave in accordance with the common sense of this world which is, however, perfectly amenable to the common sense of Vaikunṭha. So there need not be any quarrel over the matter on the part of the advocates of common sense in its worldly sense.

The only difficulty is that ordinary common sense, being based on the malicious selfish desire for sensuous well-being of oneself, leaves all our problem of existence really unsolved; nay, it actually aggravates the evil of a perpetual state of joyless discord. Our common sense is sound in essence but misguided in practice by the fell disease of hankering for selfish transitory enjoyment. The little acts of everyday life would be endowed with the perfection of Vaikunṭha if only a real change of attitude could be brought about. This is wholly beyond the powers of our mind to conceive, and it is not possible for us to fill in every detail of the scheme of life led in Vaikunṭha by means of our poor, corrupt imagination.

Every activity of Vaikunṭha is productive of more really lasting good and happiness than all the hollow mummeries of the whole range of activities of this accursed world. Sree Gaur-sundar apparently led a most ordinary kind of life as householder. Later He led the ordinary life of a *sannyāsin*. But Both were actually lived on the plane of Vaikunṭha. The Narrative of His Life and its apparently ordinary common-place Events acquaint us with the Archetype of the actual life led by absolutely pure souls in the Realm of Vaikunṭha. The esoteric meaning is the real meaning of such a life. The esoteric meaning of the worldly life is a contradiction in terms. But all entities of this world are capable of being used properly if they are employed in the service of the Absolute Truth. In order to attain that point of view we must try to act up to the common sense of Vaikunṭha.



If we choose to lead a worldly life we can never obtain a glimpse of that transcendental subject. It is not by 'digesting' or 'lecturing' on the Vedānta Philosophy that spiritual enlightenment is attainable. There are unfortunately many clever exponents of the Vedānta in this country and abroad who have done no appreciable good either to themselves or to others by their vanities. The Life and Teachings of Sree Gaurāṅḍar are worth most careful perusal because They raise at every step the gravest issues discussed in the Vedānta, in their concrete, living form. All exposition of the Vedānta has to conform to the Life of Sree Chaitanya before it can be accepted as really True. This is the relation between the two. In this case we have to do with the Actual Reality, while in the case of ordinary worldly Pandits we have to deal with the laboured non-sense of corrupt humbugs who really know nothing of their subject. The mere mechanical perusal of the Genuine Account of the Life of Sree Chaitanya is productive of incalculable good, in as much as it presents to us in a concrete and uncontroversial form the problem of spiritual living. After we have read the Life of Sree Chaitanya we understand that it is possible for a devotee to lead the life of Vāikunṭha before our very eyes without our being aware of the same; and, what is more to the point, that it is possible for us also to lead such a life in this world without really disturbing anybody.

Sree Gaurāṅḍar exhibited the *Leelā* of being smitten with grief on receiving the first intimation of the Departure of His Consort from this world. Sree Sachi Devi was apparently very much grieved by the loss of her Daughter-in-law. Grief at the sad demise of beloved ones is natural and inevitable in the case of the people of this world. There is also grief in Vāikunṭha but there it is a particularly delicious variety of uninterrupted happiness. The reason of this we gather from the Words of Sree Gaurāṅḍar addressed to His mother to console her. All grief is due to forgetfulness of the fact that no one is either parent, child, wife or husband, of any other person. Therefore, there can really be no such thing as bereavement which is experienced by reason of our ignorance of the Truth.

But are we, therefore, justified in neglecting our ordinary duties towards our dear and near relatives? This way of stating the question is misleading. People of this world are exposed to joys and griefs on account of their friends and relatives. These joys and griefs are of a transitory and unwholesome nature. Their transitoriness as well as unwholesomeness are due to a fundamental misconception of the events which are their cause. After the misconception is removed we may or may not continue to have any dealings with our relatives and friends *as such*. The devotee makes no distinction between these two states. He may or may not continue his intimate relationship with friends and relatives. He is guided by the resolve of doing nothing except the Bidding of Sree Krishna. If by the Will of Krishna he lives as a householder he is careful to discharge his ordinary duties towards the members of his family but without confounding the transitory with the eternal. The transitory cannot be ignored. But it need not, therefore, be regarded as identical with the permanent Verity. On the contrary the transitory is capable of being turned to the account of the permanent interest of a person if he makes the former strictly subordinate and conformable to the requirements of the latter. This will not necessarily make much appreciable outward difference in the conduct of such a person towards anybody, except occasionally under the necessity of being loyal to the spiritual standpoint. But his object and outlook will be nevertheless necessarily altogether different from theirs and it would be convenient to preserve an attitude of unsuspected reserve about the real reason of difference, especially when no useful purpose is likely to be served by its disclosure to unappreciative people. This is no culpable duplicity as it implies preference for Truth as against untruth and a more effective desire to serve Him. It is no doubt possible to live a straight-forward and professed spiritual life even in this world. But this may not always be effective in inducing worldly people to follow the Truth. It is one of the most strange things about spiritual life that one who leads such a life can do good to all by finding a way to associate everybody with himself in his spiritual activities. The form of this connection will not be the same



in all cases not because the tastes and capacities of people vary but because Krishna is Autocrat. It is not to serve worldly people that a devotee willingly lays himself under the obligation imposed by the Truth, of humouring their weaknesses in order to exploit those very weaknesses for the service of the Truth. Those who are not in the secret are likely to find fault with such apparent lapses from the ideal (?) of straightforward worldly conduct. Such lapses should also by no means be imitated by any body. But they constitute the service of the Lord possible in this world.

Sree Gaurasundar and Sree Sachi Devi were, however, acting truly in grieving at the Departure of Sree Lakshmi Devi. They did not grieve like worldly people. The devotees of the Lord are most intimately tied to one another by reason of their association in the common service of the Lord. There is no question of the physical body or the materialised mind in such relationship, nor any desire for sensuous gratification of themselves. But Sree Krishna can be served by and through all forms of relationship and distinctive manifestations which only serve to increase the charm and diversity of spiritual service. The only thing needful is to avoid self forgetfulness and not to suppose oneself to be any other than the exclusive servant of Krishna.

## CHAPTER XV.

### MARRIAGE WITH SREE VISHNUPRIYĀ DEVI.

THE LORD continued to indulge in the sweet taste of learning and thereby prevented any one from understanding His Real Nature. He bathed early in the morning in the Ganges and, after performing His morning worship, made His way to the house of Mukunda Sanjaya, the father of Purushottamdās.

After the Lord had taken His Seat in the Chandimandap of Mukunda Sanjaya His students would turn up one by one. If any of them by chance appeared without the *tilaka* mark on his forehead on any day the Lord sent him back home observing 'that the forehead of a Brāhmana without the *tilaka* resembles the charnel ground being proof that he has not performed his worship of that day.' Thus the Lord took care that all His students strictly followed the injunctions of the *Shāstras* in all particulars.

The making of the *tilaka* mark on twelve different limbs of the body is prescribed by the *Shāstras* as the indispensable duty of every Brāhmana. The *tilaka* is made with the earth of holy ground sanctified by its association with the Lord or His devotees. It is to be made in the form of a line pointing upwards with an aperture running from the base to the top to represent the Temple of the Lord. The horizontal *tilaka*, which is technically called *tripundra*, is forbidden to Brāhmanas who are candidates for the study of the Veda. The *tripundra* is deprecated as being the mark of a non-Brāhmana. The *tripundra* is worn by those who claim to be themselves Nārāyana. The *urdhapundra* or the upward *tilaka* is worn by those who regard themselves as the servants of Vishnu. No one who is not a Vaishnava can be a true Brāhmana. Access to the Veda is closed to a person who does not recognise the superiority of the servants of Vishnu. The non-Brāhmanas do not admit the eternal superiority of the spiritual pre-