

Sree Chaitanyadeva rescued the teachings of the great Āchāryas in the process of perfecting them and demonstrated the relation of harmony in which their systems stand to the full Truth. But before we finally plunge into the consideration of the religion taught and practised by Sree Chaitanyadeva the issue will be simplified if we stop for a short time to take a passing glance at the views of the four great Vaishnava Founder-Āchāryas who preceded Sree Chaitanya and kept the dim lamp of theistic scholarship burning which was to be merged in the Sunrise of Advent of the Supreme Lord Himself as Teacher of His Word.

VI. HISTORY OF THEISM

THERE is a certain class of people who have the temerity to regard the religion preached by Sree Chaitanyadeva as of recent origin and an original and new conception. The fact, however, is quite otherwise. It is no other than Sree Chaitanya Whom all the Scriptures of every Age and country have been eager to proclaim but have failed to adequately express. The Truth Who is no other than Sree Chaitanyadeva Himself, is the Same Who manifested Himself in the heart of Brahmā at the beginning of material creation. The Word, Who, beginning with Brahmā, made Himself manifest to a succession of persons, was gradually confused in many ways by the influence of time. The Absolute Truth made available by Brahmā in the form of the Word although He appeared in subsequent times in the community of the Rishis being handed down by the process of verbal transmission to the ear from preceptor to disciple has been variously transformed due to the intrusion, into the process, of the triple qualities of this material world. At those periods when the perverted version of the communication manifested to the ear threatens to completely mask and distort the real Truth that Lord Vishnu the Divine Personality Himself Who is both Source and the first Link in the chain of the line of preceptorial succession through whom the Divine Logos manifests Himself as articulated Sound to the ear, causes the Appearance of Himself in this world in different Forms in conformity with particular lines of activities appropriate for the particular requirements of the times. These Plenary Divine Manifestations constitute the series of the *Leelā-Avatāras* of Vishnu.

In this manner Truth manifested Himself successively in different forms in the seven different lives of Brahmā. The first four births of Brahmā took place during the Age of Truth (*Satya Yuga*), the first of the four *Yugas* that form a complete cycle of the Ages. In the first birth of Brahmā, which was mental, the

Fenapas learnt the Absolute Truth from Sree Nārāyana. From *Fenapas* He was heard by the *Baikhānasas* and from them by Chandra. In Brahmā's second birth, which was ocular, by the grace of Nārāyana, Brahmā and Rudra and, from Rudra, the *Bāla-khilyas* attained to the Truth. In the third birth of Brahmā, which was oral, from Nārāyana, Suparna received the super-mental root-formula (*mantram*) of the Rig Veda. At the same time the *Bighashāsi sampradāya* obtained the same from Vāyu and from the *Bighashāsis*, *Mahodadhi* received the experience of the exclusive spiritual function. In the fourth auricular birth of Brahmā the eternal function (*sātvata dharma*) was promulgated in the Vedas along with the *Āranyakas*. At this time from Brahmā, Svārochisha Manu, from him, his son Samkhapada and, from Samkhapada, Subarnābha Manu, the son of Samkhapada, learnt the eternal function (*sātvata dharma*). In the Age of Truth the religion was thus spread by the fourfold manifestation in the form of the mental, ocular, oral and auricular births of Brahmā.

At this time there had not yet begun the promulgation of the *varnāshrama dharma* of the Vedic *Karmakānda* which was instituted in the next Age, *viz.*, the *Tretā Yuga*. *Fenapa*, *Baikhānasa*, *Soma*, *Rudra*, *Bālakhilya*, *Suparna*, *Vāyu*, *Mahodadhi*, *Svārochisha Manu*, *Samkhapada*, *Subarnābha* and other devotees of Hari of this pre-historic age, all belonged to the 'one-path' branch (the *Ekāyana Sākhā*) of the Vedic Tree. At that time there being yet no divisions of the Vedic School the Vedic Rishis are designated as having belonged to the one-path branch. *Fenapa*, *Baikhānasa*, *Bālakhilya* and later the *Auḍumbaras*, in accordance with the four pre-historic divisions, formed a separate branch of those belonging to the *vānaprastha* stage even as early as the time when the *varnāshrama dharma* was established. The *varnāshrama dharma*, a classification of society into a fourfold division according to the twofold principle of quality and work, was introduced at the beginning of the Second Age (*Tretā*) to which also belong three additional births of Brahmā. At the beginning of the *Tretā* Age in the fifth *nāsatya* birth of Brahmā from Nārāyana, *Sanat Kumāra* received admission into the one-path religion. By *Sanat Kumāra*, *Birona*, by *Birona*, *Raibhya*, by *Raibhya*, *Kukshi* were successively admitted into the same one-path religion (*aikāntika dharma*). While in

the sixth birth of Brahmā from the egg, from Brahmā, *Barhisat* and his elder brother *Abikampana*, etc., obtained entry into the one-path eternal religion. The chant of the *Sāma Veda* first appeared in this sixth birth of Brahmā. It is in the seventh birth of Brahmā from the lotus that, from Nārāyana, Brahmā, from Brahmā, *Dakshya*, *Āditya*, *Bibasvān*, *Manu* and *Ikshvāku*, etc., being established in the *Bhāgavata* religion, attained to great fame.

The Sree community (*sampradāya*) sprang from *Ratnākara*. *Ratnākara* obtained the religion from the ancient *Bighashāsi* community and this last again from Vāyu who belonged to the time of the third oral birth of Brahmā. The Brahma and Rudra communities received the mercy of Sree Nārāyana in the fourth ocular birth of Brahmā. Their successors, the *Bālakhilyas*, maintained the lines of Brahmā and Rudra. *Sanat Kumāra* received the one-path religion from Sree Nārāyana in the fifth *nāsatya* (nasal) birth of Brahmā.

The activities of the series of the Plenary Divine Manifestations of this world (*Avatāras*) of the lotus period, are narrated in the Scriptures. The practices of the different communities of the eternal religion who accepted the ten Appearances in this world of Vishnu in the Forms of Fish, Tortoise, Boar, Man-Lion, Dwarf, Rāma son of *Bhṛigu*, Rāma son of *Dasaratha*, *Baladeva*, *Buddha* and *Kalki* as their Objects of worship, are recorded in such works as the *Purānas*, the *Mahābhārata*, etc. Although these books happen to be written in Sanskrit we notice in them mention of the eternal (*sātvata*) religion of the pre-historic Age in the form of hints and also in the shape of a certain amount of descriptive matter. The worshippers of the Divinity in the Forms of His ten *Avatāras* have acquired the designations of '*bhakta*' (devotee), '*bhāgavata*' (godly) or '*sātvata*' (eternal).

Wherever there arises the consciousness of transitory, changeable, finite time and of mundane personality conformably to our worldly judgment there appear two qualitative manifestations of the Godhead, Who are also classed in the category of Divinity. Although the transcendental knowledge is always manifest in the heart of Brahmā, among his successors, due to their sensuous predilections, various temporary experiences have been wrongly assigned to the category of the eternal Truth. Whence there are

to be found in this world in regard to Godhead a great variety of mutually conflicting views. We find accordingly at different places the cults of the village-god, of ghosts, mesmerism, the process of *pancha-pakshi*, the cult of the followers of energy, immersed in the enjoyment of the five pleasures making for a material objective, the creed of the worshippers of the Sun imbued with a mixture of cognitive and active qualities and the system of the worshippers of Ganapati, a product of the cognitive in association with benumbing qualities. These cults setting themselves up as its rivals have been trying by their loud clamours to disturb the eternal religion. The desire of his successors for other things than the spiritual service of Godhead by disregarding the method of service of the Transcendental that had appeared in the mind of Brahmā, drove them into the paths of fruitive work and empiricism of the elevationists and the liberationists respectively. These temporarily excited mental tendencies are checked by the power of Rudra who is adored by the (material) negative or nihilistic quality. The various faces of Brahmā, the *Avatāra* in active quality of the Transcendental Vishnu in this material world, have been imagined, synthetised and made manifest by persons possessed of corresponding natures and, up to the time when those active tendencies are not absorbed in the negative, the worship of qualified Vishnu manifests its potency in this phenomenal world. As a matter of fact the conceptions of qualified and non-qualified worship are correlatives in the mundane apprehension.

Sree Chaitanyadeva occupying the seat of the world-Teacher, has uprooted many kinds of perverse and abstruse speculations of the stubborn race of sophists. The contemplation of Vishnu in the Age of Truth, the sacrifice for Vishnu in the following Age (*Tretā*), the ritualistic worship of Vishnu in the third (*Dvāpara*) Age, and the chanting (*kirtana*) of the Name of Godhead in the fourth (*Kali*) Age, are specially suitable for the bound *jīva* for the attainment of the Sight of Godhead and His service. But the eternal Scriptures (*sātvata shāstra*) declare that in the seventh regime of the lotus-born Brahmā the desire to establish the equality of the gods exercising delegated power, with Vishnu will continue to produce the delusion of the sojourners in the domain of fruitive works for the space of twenty-five hundred years. The belief that

the Feet-wash of Vishnu is only ordinary water will continue up to the five-thousandth year, the belief that Vishnu is the equal of the other gods of the hierarchy of gods will be accepted as certain truth by those journeying on the path of misfortune. The spiritual Scriptures (*sātvata shāstra*) say that despite hundreds of defects of *Kali*,—the fourth Age, it possesses one supremely redeeming feature, *viz.*, that in this Age the bound soul (*jīva*) obtains deliverance from the clutches of worldly judgment by listening to the chant (*kirtana*) instituted by Sree Gaurisundar. The individual soul in the *Kali* Age is freed from the vagaries of conflicting views by the power of the chant (*kirtana*) of Krishna to the exclusion of the narrow consideration of the controversialists of the schools of empiric knowledge and fruitive works. It is for this reason that the writer of *Sree Chaitanya Charitāmrita* in the very beginning of that work, in the second chapter, has declared in the form of an emphatic glorification of the chant, the message of the super-mundane and all-pervasive mercy of Sree Chaitanyadeva. Those who follow Sree Chaitanyadeva are alone freed from the clutches of error by the abandonment of all evil association. Those who are so deluded as not to avail the mercy of Sree Chaitanya will remain confined to the worldly point of view within the narrow hole of error by the logic of the frog in the well. They will never obtain the privilege of being employed in the service of the Super-sensuous.

The following brief review of the historical development of the theistic thought will further elucidate the Scriptural position outlined above.

The pursuit of the *summum bonum* is the proper and natural function of the individual soul (*jīva*). The co-eternal associated existence of this eternal function with the soul since his appearance needs must be admitted. This natural function was at first latent and had the form of the conception of his own identity with the *Brahman* as the manifestation of himself. There was not yet any discussion of the bond of the highest love that united the two by the establishment of definite difference between the individual soul (*jīva*) and the *Brahman*. This religious doctrine of the intellectual realisation of the identity of the individual soul with the *Brahman*, continued to prevail for a long time. The Rishis tried

to find out the proper occupation of the soul by formulating from time to time various methods such as sacrifice (*yajna*), asceticism (*tapasyā*), *ijyā*, *sama*, *dama*, patience (*tītikshā*), *dāna*, etc. A long period passed in this quest of a vocation in the domain of works essentially materialistic on abandonment of the thought, 'I am the *Brahman*'. When subsequently the reward attainable in the domain of fruitive works was judged to be trivial and harmful, the mind of the Āryas applied itself to the question of liberation (*moksha*). Sanaka, Sanātana and several others had altogether ignored the path pointed by desire for sensuous enjoyment. But Prajāpati, Manu and Indra and other *devas* hoped to please God-head by sacrifices (*yajna*) leading to worldly improvement. In regard to the fruit of such activities the ideas of heaven and hell were conceived to be final. The pure essence of the soul and the quest for emancipation and final attainment of the highest satisfaction, none of these were at all realized. In the *Sreemad Bhāgavatam* is found an exhaustive discussion of these three subjects and the conclusions are clearly stated.

The most merciful Sree Rāmānujāchārya, the disciple of the illustrious Sathakopa, was the first to bring together the fundamentals of the Vaishnava thought. Some time before him Sankarāchārya by his commentary of the *Vedānta sūtra* gave such a strong impetus to the pursuit of the empiric knowledge that the goddess of devotion was taken by surprise and was checked and remained for a long time hid inside the hearts of her devotees. Sankarāchārya cannot be held to be responsible for this untoward result. Far from blaming him we should rather regard him as the ideal of a patriot because there was in that Age a special reason for undertaking such a task for the indirect service of the Truth. It is well known that a great person bearing the name of Gautama who was sprung from the Sākya clan of Kapilāvastu five hundred years before Christ instituted such a vigorous movement of empiric knowledge that in consequence of it the previously established system of *varnāshrama dharma* was in imminent danger of being wholly obliterated. The Buddhist religion preached by Gautama became a thorn in the side of the whole ancient inheritance of the Āryas. Buddhism soon spread beyond the Punjab, under the patronage of kings such as Kanishka, Huvishka, Vāsudeva, etc.,

of the Scythian dynasty, into the trans-Himālayan regions of Tibet, Tartary, China and other countries. In another direction the Buddhist religion was firmly implanted in Burma, Ceylon and many other places by the efforts of Emperors like Asokavardhana, etc. The ancient holy places (*tirthas*) of the Āryas were changed into centres of Buddhism and became almost wholly Buddhistic in outward appearance. It even appeared possible that all traces of the religion of the Brāhmanas might be destroyed. When this undesirable disturbance assumed the most dangerous proportions, in the seventh century of the Christian era, the Brāhmanas becoming furiously indignant began a steady and organised attempt for the destruction of Buddhism. In this crisis Sreemad Sankarāchārya eventually became the leader of the Brāhmanas with their headquarters at Benares.

From the early Christian epoch onwards the vigour and keenness of intellect that is found in the south of India, is not so much in evidence in other parts of the country. From this time there arose in the southern firmament, like stars of the first magnitude, such extraordinary personalities as those of Sankara, Sathakopa, Yamunāchārya, Rāmānuja, Vishnuswāmi and Madhvāchārya and a host of eminent scholars. Sankarāchārya failing to achieve much success with the help of his Brāhmanised following, having adopted the ten orders of *sannyāsins* bearing the designations of Giri, Puri, Bhārati, etc., winning over the Brāhmanas fond of materialistic activities, by the physical and controversial prowess of those *sannyāsins*, set about to effect the destruction of the Buddhists. In those places where he failed to bring over the Buddhists to his side Sankara did not scruple to obtain even the assistance of the *Nāgā sannyāsins* for his purpose. And, finally, by the compilation of the commentary of the *Vedānta sūtra*, by mixing up therein the doctrine of fruitive works of the Brāhmanas with the principle of empiric knowledge of the Buddhists, he effected the unification of the views of Brāhmanas and Buddhists. After this he changed the names of the Buddhist shrines and idols and made them conform to the religion of the *Vedas*. The Buddhists, partly through fear of violence and partly in view of the partial retention of their own creed, submitted to the Brāhmanas from necessity. Those Buddhists to whom such a procedure

appeared to be hateful fled either to Burma or Ceylon, carrying with them the relics of Buddha. It was at this time that the Buddhist pandits made their way to Ceylon from Puri with the tooth-relic of the Buddha Avatāra. In the fifth century A.D. the Chinese savant Fa Hian visiting Puri wrote with great joy that in that place Buddhism existed in an unalloyed form and there was no oppression by the Brāhmanas. Subsequently, after the change noticed above in the seventh century A.D., the next Chinese scholar Hiuen Tsang wrote from Puri that the tooth of Buddha had been carried to Ceylon and the holy place had been utterly desecrated by the Brāhmanas.

On a consideration of these events the activities of Sankara would appear to be really wonderful. By divesting the country of the nomenclature of Buddhism, he effected to a certain extent the welfare of India in the national sense in as much as it prevented the further attenuation of the old society of the Āryas, a process which had been in progress. Especially did he change the mentality of the Āryas by introducing into Aryan books the controversial method. The impetus which was thus imparted by him enabled the Aryan intellect to investigate even subjects the consideration of which had been hitherto unattempted by them. By the force of the controversial current of Sankara, the flower of devotion, afloat on the stream of the mind of the devotee, was in a state of flutter. But Rāmānujāchārya, by the vigour of argumentation imparted by Sankara and by the grace of God, by composition of a fresh commentary of the *Vedānta sūtra*, resuscitated the vigour of the Vaishnava thought. Within a short time Vishnuswāmi III, Nimbāditya and Madhvaswāmi, establishing the Vaishnava view in slightly different forms, also wrote commentaries of the *Brahma sūtra* in accordance with their respective opinions. All of them after the manner of Sankarāchārya, wrote a commentary on the *Geetā*, a *bhāshya* of the thousand Names and a commentary on the *Upanishads*. From this time the opinion, *viz.*, that for the recognition of a school it was necessary for it to possess its own commentaries on the four aforesaid books, established its hold on the minds of the people. From the above four Vaishnava Āchāryas the four current schools of Vaishnavism,

viz., those of Sree, Brahmā, Rudra and Sanaka, have had their historical origin.

Sree Chaitanya appeared at Nabadwip in the fifteenth century of the Christian era. At first as house-holder and subsequently as *sannyāsin* Sree Chaitanya elaborated the full knowledge of the two ultimate principles of the Vaishnava religion. That the real significance of the land of Gauḍa (Bengal) is attainable with difficulty even by the *devas*, admits of no doubt by the testimony of the Scriptures. Appearing in this chosen land, the Darling of Sachi Devi, the Most Highly Revered of the Vaishnavas, has given away freely to all the people the boundless wealth of spiritual Truth, that can be compared with nothing else. This is well known to all persons. By rare good fortune it has chanced that we have been born in this unique land. For a long time to come those Vaishnavas who will appear in this land, will also regard themselves glorified by such birth as we have obtained.

Sree Chaitanya, with the help of Nityānanda and Advaita, encompassed by Rupa, Sanātana, Jiva, Gopāla Bhatta, the two Raghunāthas, Rāmānanda, Svarupa, Sārbabhauma, etc., has expounded clearly the true relationship of the individual soul (*jīva*) with Godhead, has shortened our work in regard to spiritual method by demonstrating the superiority of chanting the Name (*Kirtana*), and, in regard to the goal of spiritual endeavour, has laid down the extremely simple end of lasting mellowing quality (*rasa*) to be met with on the Path of complete spiritual endeavour (*Braja*).

The reader will find, if he considers the subject with special care, that the principle of the *summum bonum* has been steadily gaining in clearness, simplicity and consciousness from primitive times on to the present day in proportion as all impurities, deposited by Age and clime, are being expelled, and its beauty, waxing in brilliancy, is appearing within the ken of our direct view. The Highest Object of spiritual endeavour first appeared on the soil, overgrown with the *kusa* grass, on the bank of the Sarasvati. Slowly gathering strength it played out its childish pastimes on the ice-bound settlement of Badarikāsrama. Its adolescence was nursed in the forest land of Nimisha on the bank of the Gomati. Its youthful activities are observed in the Drāviḍa country on the beautiful bank of the Kāveri. The maturity is manifested to our

view on the bank of the stream of the Jāhnabi, that sanctifies the world, in the town of Nabadwip.

If we consider the history of the whole world we are confirmed in our view that the acme in the progressive quest of the *summum bonum*, has been reached at Nabadwip. The Supreme Soul is the only Object of the love of the plurality of separate individual souls (*jīvas*). If the Supreme Soul, Who is the Integer, is not served with love, He can never be easy of access to the separate fractional souls. He is not easy of attainment even if He is constantly meditated upon by abandonment of all other attachments that bind individual souls to this world. He is captivated by a mellow quality (*rasa*) of the appropriate kind, and by leaving this out He cannot be obtained. This mellow quality (*rasa*) is of five specifications, *viz.*, (1) tranquil (*sānta*), (2) as of the servant (*dāsya*), (3) as of the friend (*sakhya*), (4) as of parents (*bātsalya*), and (5) as of the wife or mistress (*madhura*). The mellow quality whose specific characteristic is tranquillity is the one to appear initially by reference to the *Brahman*, or, in other words, it is equivalent to the merely continued existence of the fractional individual soul in the Greater Principle, on the cessation of the miseries due to the worldly connection. In this state, with the exception of a slight measure of negative bliss, there is no other freedom. At this stage there has not yet been established any reciprocal relationship of the spiritual novice with the Super-soul. The mellow quality characterised by servitude (*dāsya rasa*) is the next in order of manifestation. It possesses all the treasures of tranquil mellowiness (*sānta rasa*) and something more. This new factor is affection, *i.e.*, a sense that an object belongs to me (*mamatā*). In this specific quality (*rasa*) there is found relationship with Godhead which may be expressed thus, 'Godhead is my Master and I am His eternal servant'. However excellent a person may be in himself one does not feel any particular concern for him unless there exists also a definite personal relationship between him and oneself. Therefore the mellowiness of personal servitude (*dāsya rasa*) is very much superior to that of impersonal tranquillity (*sānta rasa*). As servitude (*dāsya*) is superior to the state of perfect unconcern (*sānta*), so also is friendship (*sakhya*) very much superior to servitude (*dāsya*). Because in

servitude (*dāsya*) there is a thorn in the shape of distant reverence. But in friendship (*sakhya*) there is present a great jewel in the form of confidential relationship. Can there be any doubt that he is the greatest among servants who possesses the confidence and is, therefore, as it were, a friend, of his Master? In the mellowness of friendship (*sakhya rasa*) there are present all the values of the mellowness of unconcern and servitude (*sānta* and *dāsya rasas*). Just as friendship (*sakhya*) is higher than servitude (*dāsya*), in like manner parental affection (*bātsalya*) is superior to friendship (*sakhya*). This is self-evident. Of all friends the son is the most liked and is a source of far greater happiness. In the mellowness of parental affection (*bātsalya rasa*) the constituent values of all the four mellownesses (*rasas*) are combined. Although the mellowness of parental affection (*bātsalya rasa*) appears to be so superior to all the other mellow qualities (*rasas*), it appears very insignificant by the side of the mellowness of the sweetness of amorous love (*madhura rasa*). There are many things that have to be kept outside the relationship of parent and child, but not between husband and wife. Therefore, if the subject is very closely considered, all the preceding mellownesses (*rasas*) will be found to have attained their perfection in that of amorous love, as between husband and wife (*madhura rasa*).

If we consider the history of these five distinctive mellow qualities (*rasas*), it is clearly perceived that the mellowness of the tranquil state (*sānta rasa*), first appeared in this world in India. When the soul was not satisfied by sacrificial rites by means of material objects those who professed the doctrine of the highest spiritual good, such as Sanaka, Sanātana, Sananda, Sanatkumāra, Nārada, Mahādeva, etc., renouncing all attachment for the material world, experienced the mellowness of tranquillity (*sānta rasa*) by being thereby established in the Super-soul. Long after this the mellowness of servitorship (*dāsya rasa*) appeared as in Hanumān, the ruler of the Kāpis. The mellow quality of tranquil spiritual servitude (*dāsya rasa*) spreading gradually, was most beautifully manifested in the south-western part of the continent of Asia in a great personage, *viz.*, Moses. Uddhaba and Arjuna, who followed the king of the Kāpis by a long interval, attained to the privilege of the mellowness of tranquil serving spiritual friendship

with Godhead (*sakhya rasa*) and preached it to the world. By slowly spreading to other countries this mellow quality of the love of a friend for Godhead touched the heart of a religious preacher of Arabia, Muhammad. The mellowness of parental affection (*bātsalya rasa*) appeared in India at intervals in different forms. Of this the variety of love for Godhead, as of a son for his father, but regarded as the most High and Mighty Ruler of the world (*aisvarya-gata*), spreading beyond India, fully manifested itself in Jesus, the saviour of the Jews. The mellowness of amorous love (*madhura rasa*), on its first appearance, irradiated the region of Braja. The permeation of the heart of the individual soul under the thralldom of worldliness, by the mellowness of tranquil, serving, friendly, affectionate, amorous spiritual devotion to Godhead, is supremely difficult to attain, because it is confined only to specially elected and perfectly pure souls (*jīvas*). The Moon of Nabadwip, Darling of Sachi, with His own associates, promulgated this most subtle of all mellownesses (*rasas*). The exquisite sweetness of this relationship with Godhead has not yet spread beyond India.

Not long ago a Western scholar, Newman, realising this mellowness (*rasa*) to a slight extent, gave publicity to it in England by writing a book on the subject. The nations of Europe and America have not up till now been satiated with the sweetness of their filial love for Godhead characterised by reverence, promulgated by Jesus. It is hoped that by the grace of Godhead and at no very distant date they will begin to taste of the wine of the mellowness of spiritual amour (*madhura rasa*), with even greater ardour. It will have appeared that a particular state of the mellow quality (*rasa*) first of all makes its appearance in India and spreads from here to the Western countries, generally after the lapse of a long period. There is, therefore, according to precedent, still a short period to run before the mellowness of amorous devotion (*madhura rasa*) is fully preached to all parts of the world. Just as the Sun rising first of all in India gradually illuminates all the countries of the West, in like manner the incomparable rays of the highest good, at intervals making their first appearance in India, suffuse the West before many days have passed.

VII. THE FOUNDER-ĀCHĀRYYAS

THE contributions of Vishnuswāmi, Nimbāditya, Rāmānuja and Madhva, the Founder-Āchāryas of the four Vaishnava communities (*sampradāyas*) of the present day, to the cause of theism, are so valuable and so necessary to know for a proper understanding of the theological position of Sree Chaitanya that we shall close our brief survey of the historical trend of theistic thought with a short account of the systems of the four great Vaishnava Āchāryas who preceded Sree Chaitanya.

The necessity of *sampradāya* or organised community in the domain of religion, has been explicitly recognised in the Shāstras. The words of Sree Vyasadeva in the *Padma Purāna* on this subject are to the effect that the verbal formulæ that deliver from mental hallucinations (*mantrams*) are never effective except within the spiritual community; and the same authority goes on to observe that in the Fourth (*Kali*) Age there will be for this purpose four theistic (*Vaishnava*) communities (*sampradāyas*) founded by their respective Āchāryas, by the will of Godhead. This is not the advocacy of sectarianism. It upholds the principles of association and continuity in religious life as against anarchism. If rightly understood it is the procedure that is naturally followed by all persons who are sincerely minded, prefer the good law to anarchy and association with good people to egoistic isolation, and are truly catholic, not merely by profession, but also in their conduct. Those pseudo-liberals who pose as being above any class or community, are only anarchists in disguise. The truer instinct of mankind has always been alive to the fundamental necessity of belonging to a good, *i.e.*, well regulated, community.

The four communities (*sampradāyas*) of the Iron Age are connected with the ancient times by their recognition of the ulterior authority of the eternal ancient teachers, *viz.*, Lakshmi, Brahmā, Rudra and the four Sanas (*chatuhsanah*), respectively. The four